The ‘Logics’ of Public Diplomacy: In Search of What Unites a Multidisciplinary Research Field

James Pamment | ORCID: 0000-0001-5128-1007
Associate Professor, Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University, Lund, Sweden
james.pamment@isk.lu.se

Alicia Fjällhed | ORCID: 0000-0002-9681-2585
Doctoral candidate, Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University, Lund, Sweden
alicia.fjallhed@isk.lu.se

Martina Smedberg | ORCID: 0000-0002-0382-2566
Doctoral candidate, Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University, Lund, Sweden
martina.smedberg@isk.lu.se

Received 25 April 2022 | Revised 16 September 2022 | Accepted 8 March 2023 | Published online 13 April 2023

Summary

A decade ago, Matt Armstrong noted that the War on Terror set the scene for US public diplomacy (PD) to be heavily focused on security. Other countries have focused their PD on image promotion, relationship-building or cultural relations. As digital media practices have slowly been adopted by the majority of foreign ministries, the logics governing social and digital media have also been increasingly internalised into diplomatic practice. Lacking in current PD research is a theory of the ‘logics’ that drive and motivate public diplomacy. This article explores the application of ‘PD logics’ as a theoretical framework for interpreting the ways in which foreign policy priorities, such as securitisation, trade promotion and strategic partnerships, shape PD practices. With a particular focus on the most recent wave of social and digital media adoption practices, this article establishes a theory of ‘PD logics’ that could provide new avenues for developing theories of public diplomacy.
Keywords

logics – meta-review – public diplomacy (PD) – theory – digitalisation

1 Introduction

Matt Armstrong once wrote that American public diplomacy (PD) ‘wears combat boots’. By this, he meant that 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror had set the scene for PD driven by international security concerns such as counter-extremism and moving the public opinion needle on unpopular, drawn-out wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. War provided the dominant logic driving US PD engagement.

In subsequent years, countries such as the United Kingdom twisted their PD apparatus in support of trade promotion, while Germany continued to invest in its traditional approach to relationship-building and cultural relations through so-called Mittlerorganisationen. Russia and China developed cagey, assertive PD that contests the information space using troll factories and paid influencers. Countless other countries have prioritised digital innovation and engagement through a long-standing process of digitalisation of public diplomacy. While all of this is undoubtedly public diplomacy, what unites such different activities under the same concept?

It may be said of Armstrong’s claim about combat boots that, depending on where and when one looks, PD equally wears a pin-striped business suit, a shaggy hipster beard and beads, dons a virtual reality headset, and carries a megaphone in one hand and a big stick in the other. The image is confused and contradictory, creating the impression that PD is a fuzzy concept poorly defined and inconsistently used.

So why is it that so many scholars seem to be clear that they are all studying the same, single concept of PD? This article builds on existing scholarship in the field of diplomatic studies and draws inspiration from institutionalism to develop a theory of the logics that drive and motivate public diplomacy practices. Beginning with an assessment of whether public diplomacy is a fuzzy concept, the article argues that a focus on functions and components has dominated the research field at the expense of better understanding the pressures that drive disruption in PD policy and practice. We call these pressures

---

1 Our thanks to funding from the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation.
2 Armstrong 2008.
3 Despite many pleas to the contrary; see, e.g., Zaharna 2010.
logics on the understanding that they provide simple heuristics for expressing complex changes in political priorities, resources, tasks, working processes and technologies.

The article proceeds by conducting a meta-review of the past six years of research articles from two of the leading journals in the field to show the ways in which researchers implicitly engage with public diplomacy according to clusters of logics. In this analysis we identity seven such groupings, though this is not intended to be exhaustive. We do not, for example, include a digital grouping on the grounds that, for the period of the sample, the distinction between digital and public diplomacy has blurred to a point that it makes more sense to speak of a digitalisation of public diplomacy than digital diplomacy per se. Rather, we note that multiple logics overlap and combine in different cases.

The aim of this approach is not to define the logics of public diplomacy once and for all, but more importantly to identify clear principles and trends that set boundaries around the concept. We believe this approach can help to map where different researchers and studies position themselves in relation to the wider field and provide a vocabulary that can accurately represent foundational principles of the research field. In other words, we consider the value of our approach to be in consolidating a research field. This allows for studies of change and disruption in public diplomacy to shift focus away from questions of function and components and to relocate them within their broader subsets of existing research. In doing so, this article establishes a theoretical stance that can support consilience in a multidisciplinary field to more consistently research a subject that is often fuzzy and elusive.

2 The Fuzzy Concept of Public Diplomacy

A fuzzy concept is a concept which is widely used but possesses at least two alternative meanings. The concept is unreliable — fuzzy — since it is often unclear which of the possible meanings authors and readers anticipate. Conceptual fuzziness contributes to a sense in which those who use the concept are talking about slightly different things, whether as researchers, practitioners or policy-makers. In a classic (and scathing) article about declining standards of scholarship within a subfield of political geography, Markusen outlines some key characteristics of a research field dependent on fuzzy concepts. Such research fields:

4 Manor 2019.
5 Markusen 2003.
– use concepts that mean different things to different people;
– rely on selective evidence such as case studies and anecdotes;
– situate causality within processes rather than actors;
– discuss methodology insufficiently; and
– are associated with lower standards of evidence and theory-building.

Surprisingly, only a handful of publications have alluded to the possibility that public diplomacy may be a fuzzy concept.\(^6\) Many more studies have, however, observed or attempted to remedy characteristics, as defined previously, of a research field pervaded by conceptual fuzziness.

A common characteristic of the field is to contrast the idea of public diplomacy with traditional diplomacy conducted behind closed doors — a dichotomy which has been challenged.\(^7\) Emphasis is also placed on foreign publics to indirectly influence foreign governments and their policies, as PD targets public opinion abroad\(^8\) — while PD studies also cover practices targeting domestic actors, as in campaigns aiming to build national identity or domestic legitimacy for foreign policies and organisations. Another common signifier among definitions is the ethical emphasis in which PD is a ‘good’ practice which moves from one-way propaganda towards a dialogical approach.\(^9\) However, others have questioned the realisation of such dialogue in practice,\(^10\) and the ethical PD tool of listening has become the subject of critical discussions about surveillance.\(^11\)

There are also questions about exactly what public diplomacy is and is not. In their meta-review of publications in the field, Sevin et al. found that the topics covered by peer-reviewed articles about PD are skewed by the geographical contexts on which they focus.\(^12\) The authors find that PD research involves slightly different content matter depending on which countries are analysed and the academic traditions to which the authors belong. Ayhan found limited consensus over whether PD is conducted by state actors only or also by non-state actors,\(^13\) something that may be considered a defining principle of the term. Pike and Kinsey surveyed US PD practitioners on the attributes that make for a good diplomatic communicator and found that the results landed in two distinct groups with quite different expectations.\(^14\)

\(^6\) E.g., Seib 2009; Ayhan 2019, 32; Brown 2002; Ninkovich 1996.
\(^7\) Pamment 2016a, 2016b.
\(^8\) See, e.g., Cull 2008; or ‘ordinary people’ as referred to in Fitzpatrick 2007.
\(^9\) Melissen 2005; Cull 2008, in his emphasis on the practice of listening.
\(^10\) E.g., Comor and Bean 2012.
\(^11\) Di Martino 2020; Pamment 2016d.
\(^12\) Sevin, Metzgar and Hayden 2019.
\(^13\) Ayhan 2019.
Problems of conceptualisation also draw from how PD relates to near-lying terms. Hayden attempts to unravel the ‘practical reasoning’ that links PD to the ‘vague concept’ of soft power. In his PhD dissertation, Arceneaux interviewed academic experts to establish consensus around the conceptual boundaries between public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda and psychological operations. While a 2014 overview identified at least eight credible taxonomies designed to explain how PD’s moving parts fit together, Arceneaux’s contribution sits alongside several further efforts since then which cumulatively demonstrate that the problem still stands today. Cull probably remains the most widely adopted taxonomy, though it mixes best practice (listening to improve decision-making) and goal-oriented behaviour (advocacy of a policy position) with different forms of engagement (culture, exchanges and broadcasting) and is biased towards most closely interpreting the US Information Agency’s (USIA) Cold War best practice.

The problem of data availability is certainly endemic to the field. Public diplomats in many cases get to define their own stories. Fitzpatrick features survey answers from some 200 USIA alumni, while Pike and Kinsey engaged 37 active foreign service officers. Ethnographic methods and interviews are reasonably prevalent, the latter certainly in greater number than some suggest. Indeed, a recurring problem with many case studies and historical overviews is their dependence on interviews with (often, former) practitioners supported by sometimes sketchy documentation. Hayden identifies a disjuncture between claims of how PD is supposed to influence others and its everyday practice. Studies that tell the story of a country’s PD over time tend to rely on simplified cases that exemplify a particular period and preserve practitioners’ legacies. Attempts to compare countries are equally selective, and less coherently so when each chapter has a different author.

PD research does not seem to have an issue with causality and the roles of different actors. While Ayhan demonstrates a lack of conceptual consensus
over who does PD, reflections over ‘actorness’ are frequent, particularly from a diplomatic studies perspective. Studies of framing and agenda-setting in PD are also clear on actors, roles and capabilities. The power dimension is well covered, arguably because questions of (soft) power are at the very core of the PD endeavour.

That methodology is treated insufficiently in the field is the point of departure for Sevin and Ayhan’s special issue of the journal Place Branding & Public Diplomacy (PB&PD). Although not the first publication in the field to consider methodological concerns, it is certainly the most ambitious and comprehensive. The comparative studies mentioned previously have considered methodological issues but use relatively conservative approaches such as case studies. The need for a dedicated special issue in 2022 supports the view that methodology has not been a priority for the PD research field.

Likewise, it has long been a cliché that PD lacks theoretical grounding. In their seminal articles, Gregory and Gilboa argue that PD draws its theories from many academic disciplines, which means there is a rich variety of theoretical standpoints but no single theory of PD as such. Much PD theory is deferred to similarly fuzzy concepts such as soft power or digital diplomacy. Where theory-building has been most prominent, such as in the idea of a ‘new’ PD using relational communication models, theory has been normative and derived from other fields. Alexander, Surowiec and Manor, and Kaneva and Cassinger are recent collections that expand the relatively limited literature that engages with theory more rigorously. However, overall, few would maintain that PD has traditionally been a concept supported by strong theoretical insights and sophisticated theoretical development.

This brief overview suggests that PD as a field demonstrates many qualities of a fuzzy concept, although there have been significant recent efforts to further develop the quality and rigour of research. It therefore seems appropriate to conduct a meta-review with a special focus on some of the more recent,
progressive research by emerging scholars. It is in this context of concept fuzziness — and in recent efforts to develop fundamental principles of the field — that this article identifies the need for a new approach to conceptualising PD, one which marks a break from the traditional ‘toolbox’ and ‘new public diplomacy’ approaches, and which encourages a clearer and more comprehensive interpretation of the logics underlying PD research and practice.

3 From the PD Toolbox to Nascent Theories of PD Logics

Discussions about the PD toolbox have been important in the research field’s development. They allowed for the rational conceptualisation of PD’s functions and components derived from historically and culturally specific examples. They encouraged consideration of best practice and ideological positioning, for example in distinguishing between engagement approaches and propagandist communication. In our opinion, the toolbox approach to theorising PD remains necessary, but it has been insufficient to reduce conceptual fuzziness. Something is missing.

Perhaps the most iconic example of the taxonomy approach is that of Fisher and Bröckerhoff, which outlines a range of seven ‘options for influence’. Listening implies relationships based on equality and involving shared interests, whereas ‘broadcasting’ and ‘telling’ are asymmetrical and support hierarchical authority. While similar efforts have added the dimension of time frames to distinguish between media handling and long-term cultural engagement, the idea of the toolbox being sharper (or more transmissional and propagandist) at one end, and softer (or more inclusive and relational) at the other, has become a truism in the research field.

However, the problem with these types of approaches is that they construct the public diplomat ‘as an entirely rational being, divorced from organizational cultures and institutional realities’. Rather than making the concept clearer and better defined, such an approach risks obfuscating and idealising the hard choices that shape PD work. Furthermore, the strongly normative relational approach means that ‘new’ PD is defined against a strawman; nobody identifies themselves with propagandist approaches to communication, yet

38 Pamment 2014a.
40 Leonard 2002; Cull 2008; Zaharna 2009; Gilboa 2008; Evans and Steven 2010.
41 Pamment 2014a.
listening and engagement can be carried out to support propagandist goals if one assumes even a slightly critical lens on the empirical evidence.\textsuperscript{42}

The clearest counterpoint to conceptualisations of a PD toolbox is Brown. In an unpublished conference paper, Brown proposed four ideal types of PD derived from historical examples: as an ‘extension of diplomacy’, as an ‘instrument of cultural relations’, as an ‘instrument of conflict’ and as a ‘tool of national image construction’\textsuperscript{43}. This differs from many other approaches to the field because it seeks to interrogate why PD is used in different circumstances, without any judgement imposed on each type. Viewed as an \textit{instrument or extension of an established practice} such as diplomacy, war or cultural relations, the pragmatic — rather than normative or idealist — aspects of the concept are made integral to its theorisation. More recently, Cull revised his five components of PD to include nation branding and partnerships.\textsuperscript{44} In doing so, the approach more closely tracks the ‘spirit’ of different styles of PD, rather than simply categorising them.\textsuperscript{45} Inspired by Brown’s approach, Pamment identifies seven unique articulations of PD as it was conceptualised in the UK context between 1995 and 2015,\textsuperscript{46} showing that, for example, cultural relations activities may not be about mutuality if they are articulated within and subordinate to an overall branding strategy, or if they are used as a means of gaining strategic access to international university campuses.\textsuperscript{47}

A nascent theory of PD logics exists most prominently in work on the digitalisation of PD, as exemplified by Manor, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, when digitalisation truly was disruptive.\textsuperscript{48} Drawing on a body of theory established within media sociology and adapted to diplomatic studies, mediatisation theory refers to the processes by which the logics of media have forced change upon the institution of diplomacy.\textsuperscript{49} It may be argued that much work on the digitalisation of PD draws implicitly upon mediatisation theory.\textsuperscript{50} Similarly, studies of PD that focus on agenda-setting explore (albeit often implicitly) how media logics permeate diplomatic activity.\textsuperscript{51} In mediatisation theory, media logic is a mode of thinking that sees diplomats and ministries of foreign
affairs (MFAs) internalise considerations such as the formats, time frames and conventions of different media when planning their diplomatic activities.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, the institution of diplomacy has adapted in fundamental terms to a proliferation of communication channels, languages and norms characterised by the ‘logic’ of (digital) media.\textsuperscript{53} In addition to media logic, other studies have touched upon the ways in which logics of things such as two-level diplomatic games,\textsuperscript{54} affect and emotion,\textsuperscript{55} strategy and leadership,\textsuperscript{56} and conflict impact on PD practice.\textsuperscript{57} However, they have not focused on logics as an approach to interpreting institutions, instead simply implying the existence of a guiding logic at the anecdotal level.

Unifying these approaches is a sense in which taxonomies only tell part of the story. Creating categories of PD activity is all well and good, but it doesn’t capture how these activities are articulated in specific circumstances, which may be further broken down into the logics that drive their use. Indeed, the obsessively normative aspects of some category-based characterisations may obfuscate practice and take us farther from an accurate representation of the empirical materials. Building on the studies just discussed, we contend that the concept of PD can be further developed by establishing a theory of PD logics that unpacks the underlying dynamics of the PD concept in different scenarios. Logics can help to identify what unifies PD research and reduce concept fuzziness, by showing how researchers approaching PD from different perspectives imply similar underlying principles.

4 Identifying PD Logics

In building a framework that seeks to reduce conceptual fuzziness, this article uses a sample of recent research in the field. The literature review consists of 131 journal articles from the period 2016-2021. Each article abstract was coded inductively, then the codes were clustered into themes.\textsuperscript{58} This approach relates

\textsuperscript{52} Spörrer-Wagner and Marcinkowski 2010; Hayden 2013; Cornago 2018.

\textsuperscript{53} Pamment 2014b.

\textsuperscript{54} Putnam 1988; Friedman and Kampf 2014.

\textsuperscript{55} Markwica 2018; Graham 2014.

\textsuperscript{56} Hall and Smith 2013; Balmas and Sheafer 2014; Aggestam and Hedling 2020.

\textsuperscript{57} Szostek 2020; Esser 2009.

\textsuperscript{58} The sample is from The Hague Journal of Diplomacy (HJD) and Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (PB&PD), two leading venues for PD scholarship. Both samples included articles retrieved through the portal Web of Science (WoS), including articles classified as containing ‘public diplomacy’ in the title, abstract, or among key words. The first sample (N=33) covered articles published in 2020. The second sample covered all years recorded.
closely to similar efforts to inductively establish logics within other research fields.\textsuperscript{59} While some of the logics are suggestive of representing academic disciplines, it is important to note that relatively few examples exclusively belong to a single academic discipline as such. Rather, \textit{logics} help to encapsulate how and why themes from different disciplines are expressed in studies of PD, out of needs identified in PD studies rather than imported as standard preoccupations from other disciplines.

The following sections introduce each logic separately. Each section starts by outlining the main principles of the logic. Second, we offer a brief overview of how the research literature has historically centred, explicitly or implicitly, on this logic. Third, we discuss the ways that the most recent literature uses and develops upon the logic. While based on a systematic review, our review is qualitative in style and attempts to capture wider trends or types derived from patterns of logics.

\textbf{4.1 Diplomacy Logic}

PD can be seen as appearing in the intersection between political science and communication studies. When reviewing the articles published in the \textit{PB\&PD} and the \textit{HJD}, a pattern emerges where a set of articles in the \textit{HJD} lean more distinctively towards the side of diplomatic studies and another set of articles towards branding in \textit{PB\&PD}. The first emphasis draws attention to a clear logic identified in the sample, dealing with the understanding of PD becoming a more significant instrument of diplomacy and statecraft over time. As we will see in each logic, the digitalisation of PD is addressed in multiple papers. In the diplomacy logic, it is expressed in the discussion about how ‘modern media and (digital) public diplomacy seem to have transformed’ the practice of gift exchange,\textsuperscript{60} or it is raised implicitly through the study of audience engagement on social media to seek insight into the public’s perception of diplomatic relations.\textsuperscript{61}

The existence of this logic is well documented in research. Multiple studies have observed a proliferation of governmental, non-governmental, civil society, paradiplomatic, public and private representatives vying for recognition in WoS (N=131), a period of six years from 2016 to 2021). The first tier resulted in a codebook of seven ideal types, reviewed in relation to the wider sample. This second review confirmed the presence of the same ideal types in the wider sample and revealed a more nuanced understanding of each ideal type with distinct sub-themes.

\textsuperscript{59} Dijksterhuis, Van den Bosch and Volberda 1999.

\textsuperscript{60} Ceulemans 2021, 135.

\textsuperscript{61} Enverga 2021; Valencia and Moscato 2021; Kim and Ting Lee 2021.
as legitimate players in complex diplomatic issues. Others have focused on the crucial role of public communication in establishing legitimacy as diplomatic players. While this leans to questions of how media logic weighs upon diplomatic decision-making, there nonetheless remains a clear logic of public diplomacy as a continuation of traditional diplomacy, tied to questions of representation and recognition.

From the literature review of research articles 2016-2021, we find articles discussing public diplomacy as an extension of diplomatic practice in the form of studies on first lady diplomacy, gift exchange, and the mediatisation of diplomatic incidents. A subset of articles focus on diplomatic events such as summits — either on the PD strategy and following media depiction, or through expressions of gastro-diplomacy at such events — and visits. Other articles emphasise rhetorical aspects of building bilateral relations, the promotion of foreign policies such as Sweden's gender equality, and the link to, for example, trade diplomacy. As with all logics, there are many papers that can be classified in multiple logics — that is, summits draw attention to the media logic as focused on mediatisation, or to the security logic in peace summits.

4.2 Media Logic
In studies on media logic, the focus is on PD as a set of activities that involve advocacy, strategic communication, media production, public affairs, news management, international broadcasting and campaigns — including use of social media — as part of objective-driven PD. Recognisable characteristics are a focus on the mediated texts of public diplomacy, their contents, the ways in which they are organised and produced, and their impact on the information environment. We include digital diplomacy predominately under this logic and under the organisational logic for the period 2016-2021, when digital diplomacy was a widely adopted practice. However, we note that while some

---

62 E.g., Kelley 2010; van Ham 2013; Cornago 2018.
63 E.g., Sharp 1999; Jönsson and Hall 2003.
64 Sharp 2009.
65 Wang 2018.
66 Ceulemans 2021.
67 Cornago 2018.
69 Matwick and Matwick 2020; Moscato 2018.
70 Kalu 2021; Valencia and Moscato 2021.
71 Kalu 2021.
72 Karlsson 2022.
73 Pigman 2018.
studies have dropped the label of ‘digital’ public diplomacy as now rather a matter of course, many studies continue to treat digital diplomacy as though it is a distinct logic rather than a ubiquitous reality that informs all logics — such as, for example, studies focusing on the sub-practice of ‘Twiplomacy’ and the use of hashtags as part of a promotional strategy by PD authorities to create engagement on social media.74

The existence of a media logic is one of the more well-documented in PD literature since it has been assessed from at least two disciplinary backgrounds. Public relations scholars since Signitzer and Coombs have identified the role of media planning in diplomatic activity,75 via work on media diplomacy,76 framing and agenda-setting, which together are sometimes referred to as mediated public diplomacy.77 Mediatisation theory has been applied from a media sociology perspective,78 while production of digital content has been widely discussed from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.79

Contextualised as a theme in the reviewed sample of PD research, there are two primary interpretations of this logic — one focused on studies of media’s framing of PD activities, and the other on the strategic management of media. Many articles also deal with the ‘new’ public diplomacy emerging in conjunction with digital and social media — here emphasising the new arenas for communication80 or focusing on specific countries, Mfas or campaigns. In these studies of mediatisation,81 scholars focus on social media82 alongside other forms of communication such as news releases, speeches, factsheets and so forth.83 This logic also covers studies about PD strategies for traditional media management beyond the digital context,84 as well as studies focused on content strategies specifically and the use of storytelling or narratives.85

As examinations of the execution of PD, this often connects with the value

---

74 Valencia and Moscato 2021. Among others also mentioning twiplomacy, hashtag diplomacy, or eDiplomacy in the paper are Kampf, Manor and Segev 2015; Collins, DeWitt and LeFebvre 2019; Pilegaard 2016; Yarchi, Samuel-Azran and Bar-David 2017.
77 E.g., Entman 2004; Golan, Manor and Arceneaux 2019.
78 Pamment 2014b; Manor and Crilley 2020.
79 Ittefaq 2019; Mazumdar 2021.
80 Duncombe 2019; Pilegaard 2016.
81 Manor and Crilley 2020.
82 Al-Rawi 2020; Byrne and Johnston 2015; Eichert 2021; Kampf, Manor and Segev 2015; Samei 2015; Samuel-Azran and Yarchi 2018; Spry 2020.
83 Bravo and De Moya 2015.
85 Hedling 2020.
logic — primarily in discussions about new media enabling listening\textsuperscript{86} and dialogical PD.\textsuperscript{87}

4.3 Relational Logic

Research that explores the relational logic tends to focus on the relations shaped through formal and informal networks of people and ideas, as an extension of cultural relations and other long-term engagement functions. A preoccupation of the logic is with which actors in the public, private and non-governmental sectors legitimately participate in PD. The view of PD is generally normative, as an expansive and inclusive set of multi-stakeholder activities conducted through intermediaries including diasporas. Arguably, this logic constitutes the epicentre of the digitalisation of PD, as an enabler of a new form of direct access to one’s audience without having to bypass the gatekeepers traditionally holding the keys to available mass media. As previously mentioned, we see it both in the digitalised media strategies developed by PD actors, and in scholars’ turn towards social media analysis to describe a campaign and assess its impact or even determine its success. This new landscape seems to have widened PD actors’ view of relevant stakeholders as either the intended recipients or the mediators of one’s message, unpacked as the key to a relational logic in PD.

The existence of a relational logic is well documented from both a theoretical and an empirical perspective. Inspired for some by public relations approaches to communication symmetry,\textsuperscript{88} and for others by cultural relations traditions embodied by cultural, exchange and education diplomacy,\textsuperscript{89} a core theme is the role of people-to-people experiences in the conduct of international relations. Relational approaches provide a strongly normative perspective on the ways in which public diplomacy can provide an alternative model of diplomatic relations outside of hierarchical governmental control.\textsuperscript{90}

In the PB&PD and HJD sample, the articles expand the concept of PD actors beyond traditional state actors to also discuss the collaboration with and importance of, for example, corporate diplomacy,\textsuperscript{91} think tanks,\textsuperscript{92} domestic

\textsuperscript{86} Di Martino 2020.
\textsuperscript{87} Cull 2019; Kampf, Manor and Segev 2015; Collins, DeWitt and LeFebvre 2019; Manor 2017.
\textsuperscript{88} Signitzer and Coombs 1992; Fitzpatrick 2010.
\textsuperscript{89} E.g., Fisher and Bröckerhoff 2008.
\textsuperscript{90} Cowan and Arsenault 2008; Zaharna 2010; Zaharna, Arsenault and Fisher 2013; Zaharna 2021.
\textsuperscript{91} Bier and White 2021; Fitzpatrick, White and Bier 2020.
\textsuperscript{92} Li, Chen and Hanson 2019.
publics\textsuperscript{93} or citizen diplomacy,\textsuperscript{94} diasporas,\textsuperscript{95} organisations such as the US Peace Corps,\textsuperscript{96} Spanish casas,\textsuperscript{97} or more broadly defined non-state actors\textsuperscript{98} and non-governmental organisations.\textsuperscript{99} Such papers highlight PD from the strategic angle of managing a ‘network’ and engaging in ‘participatory’ or ‘collaborative’ approaches.\textsuperscript{100} Within such overarching logic, we can furthermore identify sub-forms of relational ties to actors as, for example, related to higher education — emphasising the role of universities\textsuperscript{101} and exchange programmes\textsuperscript{102} — or through PD practices of cultural diplomacy,\textsuperscript{103} sport diplomacy,\textsuperscript{104} science diplomacy,\textsuperscript{105} and religious diplomacy,\textsuperscript{106} as a few examples of related practices through which PD is expressed through human contact.

4.4 \textit{Promotional Logic}

Just as the diplomacy logic is more prevalent in the \textit{HJD}, publications from the \textit{PB\&PD} tend to lean towards a promotional logic. This logic encapsulates the belief that ‘nation-branding professionals have the same goal as diplomats and politicians’,\textsuperscript{107} which indicates a shift in professional practice. Other papers start with the open question of whether nation branding can be a successful tool in achieving public diplomacy goals.\textsuperscript{108} This promotional logic thus covers a range of PD practices tied to brand promotion, trade and investment, tourism, national image and perceptions of national image. Again, we see the impact of the digitalisation of this practice; for example, one paper suggests a shift from the mass approach of broadcasting in an advocacy model to emphasise the value of a narrowcasting model supported by micro-marketing — an effective approach ‘enhanced in recent years due to a number of technological

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{93} Pisarska 2015.
\textsuperscript{94} Samuel-Azran et al. 2019.
\textsuperscript{95} Bravo and De Moya 2015; Brinkerhoff 2019; Dolea 2022; Uysal 2019.
\textsuperscript{96} Palmer, Nyantakyi and Fullerton 2021.
\textsuperscript{97} Ruiz 2015.
\textsuperscript{98} Pantoja 2018; Popkova 2019; Popkova 2020; Yang 2019.
\textsuperscript{99} Vera and de la Casa 2020.
\textsuperscript{100} Chaban and Elgstrom 2020; de Beer and van Buitenen 2016.
\textsuperscript{101} Fominykh 2017.
\textsuperscript{102} Bettie 2020; Goirizelaia 2020; Krasnyak 2021; Pisarska 2015.
\textsuperscript{103} Bourgeois 2019; Brett and Schaefer 2019; Grincheva 2019; Zaharna 2019; Zhao 2019.
\textsuperscript{104} Abdi et al. 2019; Cooper 2019b; Dubinsky and Dzikus 2018; Dubinsky 2019, 2022; Moscato 2021.
\textsuperscript{105} Krasnyak 2018.
\textsuperscript{106} Constantinou and Telepou 2017.
\textsuperscript{107} Sasikumar 2017.
\textsuperscript{108} Xuereb 2017.
\end{flushleft}
and social developments’ such as the previously mentioned advantage as ‘the Internet bypasses traditional channels of communication and broadcasting’.\textsuperscript{109}

The integration of promotional approaches to PD took off in the 1990s and owes a particular debt to the work of Leonard and Anholt in both theorising and enacting these practices in a variety of countries.\textsuperscript{110} Work such as Szondi wrestled with the appropriate conceptual framework to tie the two terms together, with dozens of publications eventually settling on allowing the empirical evidence to define the relationship on a case-by-case basis.\textsuperscript{111}

In the reviewed sample from the \textit{HJD} and PB\&PD, the promotional logic covers articles about how PD strategically engages in nation, state or country branding\textsuperscript{112} as well as the resulting national image abroad,\textsuperscript{113} where non-traditional PD actors are described as ‘image communicators’.\textsuperscript{114} Papers within the promotional logic sometimes overlap with those in the relational logic — for example, by emphasising cultural resources that can be aligned with PD initiatives or in ties to business by discussions in the promotional logic papers about positive country-of-origin effects. We also see papers in both the promotional logic and diplomacy logic, in one paper explicitly describing how ‘hosting of the historic summit is an extension of the city-state’s larger place branding strategy’.\textsuperscript{115} The promotional logic also covers case studies of PD campaigns, such as the European Union’s efforts to deal with crises\textsuperscript{116} and various PD actors’ strategic communication during the COVID-19 pandemic\textsuperscript{117} — whereby managing the crisis also means by extension to manage one’s reputation. The promotional logic also covers papers emphasising the damaging impact of a negative national image, tied either to historic heritage\textsuperscript{118} or to contemporary events.\textsuperscript{119} Through this move from the promotion of one’s own brand to the strategic management of contesting images of one’s nation and foreign politics abroad, the promotional logic also oftentimes cover papers linked to the security logic.

\textsuperscript{109} Aharoni and Grinstein 2017, quote from 294.
\textsuperscript{110} Leonard 2002; Anholt 1998; Valaskivi 2016a.
\textsuperscript{111} Szondi 2008.
\textsuperscript{112} Aharoni and Grinstein 2017; Aziz, Friedman and Ilhan 2015; Valaskivi 2016b.
\textsuperscript{113} Fan and Poshinova 2016; Hauptli and Vogler 2021.
\textsuperscript{114} Ban and Pan 2020.
\textsuperscript{115} Kim and Lee 2021, 155.
\textsuperscript{116} Elmatzoglou 2020.
\textsuperscript{117} Falkheimer and Raknes 2022.
\textsuperscript{118} Just 2015.
\textsuperscript{119} Cross and La Porte 2016.
4.5 Security Logic

Studies that emphasise the security logic place PD within a context of defence and security policy, covering a variety of topics related to peace, conflict and stabilisation. This can include questions such as warfare, geopolitical rivalries, counter-extremism, studies of propaganda, as well as work on traditional and non-traditional threats in the information environment. It covers both offensive and defensive communications. Again, there is a recurring emphasis on PD actors’ ability to ‘shape the narrative and thus the nature of a regional order that will be favourable for their national interests’, where one directs these efforts towards the public to ‘inform, engage, and influence public audiences’ in a ‘hyper-connected world’, with an emphasis of such practices now occurring ‘online and in real time’.120

The security logic permeates much of the post-9/11 literature, as public diplomacy found a new role in conjunction with the War on Terror.121 Briant, and Bjola and Pamment, explore in detail some of the ways in which PD came to be shaped by counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and the use of psychological operations, with a more recent emphasis on counter-disinformation and hybrid threats.122 We may also anticipate an increasing interest in security issues raised by war, populism, climate change, health, cyber and migration, among others.

In the public diplomacy journal articles from 2016-2021, a few clusters of topics emerge within the security logic — related to the different arenas in which these activities are observed. On the one hand, we have the link to peace summits and peace projects,123 as treatments of aid diplomacy,124 or tied to actors such as the US Peace Corps.125 On the other hand, in contrast to this sub-logic related to peace, we also find a set of studies about PD’s role in international conflict,126 or other forms of geopolitical rivalry — emphasising the strategic advantage of universities and exchange programmes127 — or sometimes conceptualised as ‘disputes’,128 or PD ‘between hostile nations’.129 Here, studies cover PD activities by military organisations130 and PD campaigns in the context

120 Byrne 2019, 182-185.
121 Zaharna 2010.
122 Briant 2015; Bjola and Pamment 2018.
123 de Beer and van Buiten 2016; Kim and Lee 2021.
125 Palmer, Nyantakyi and Fullerton 2021.
126 Jeong 2021; Yarchi, Samuel-Azran and Bar-David 2017.
128 Aguirre 2020.
129 Wiseman 2019.
130 Samuel-Azran and Yarchi 2018.
of war, arguments for why PD is to be considered a tool in counter-terrorism strategies, and descriptions of PD ‘in the context of non-traditional security threats and conflicts’.

The new geopolitical landscape has given rise to a set of studies discussing crises such as global migration and its impact on PD practice, others describe geopolitical tensions manifesting in a context of ‘the contested world order’ or in relation to a new situation ‘driven by a toxic mix of populist politics and disruptive social media’. Within this security logic, papers also cover discussions about ‘state-sponsored disinformation campaigns’, linking the security logic to the value logic as part of an ongoing process of placing boundaries around legitimate PD practices. With the COVID-19 pandemic, this cluster has also come to include articles on the strategic communication of policy tied to ‘reputational security’ and a defensive form of PD communication not only boosting one’s own credibility but also discrediting others. In this cluster, we thus see how crisis policy links to the promotional logic by building national image, including evolving forms of influencer and celebrity diplomacy.

### 4.6 Organisational Logic

Research on organisational logic focuses on the internal and coordination issues behind PD. This can involve organisational principles, management functions, and questions of objectives and evaluation across domestic spheres, government, foreign ministries and overseas posts. It also includes an interest in the profession, including desirable skills and capabilities. The assumption is that PD is best explained by understanding how and why it is organised, since this can reveal intent, capabilities and limitations. It also covers a discussion on how new organisational structures may accommodate the digitalisation of PD, where ‘digital technologies change the way in which knowledge circulates, whether inside, outside, or between organisations’, which in turn has a fundamental impact on the organisation and ‘sets a tremendous strain on the professionals’.

---

131 Manor and Crilley 2020.
132 Seib 2019.
133 Chaban and Elgstrom 2020.
134 Uysal 2019.
135 Byrne 2019.
136 Cull 2019.
137 Nisbet and Kamenchuk 2019.
138 Cooper 2019a.
139 Bjola 2022; Cull 2021; Falkheimer and Raknes 2022.
140 Lee 2021; Lee and Kim 2021.
141 Rosamond and Hedling 2021.
142 Pamment 2018b, 53.
The organisational logic is often identifiable because of a preoccupation with the production of public diplomacy, and especially best practice. For example, Cull and Pamment chart the organisational histories of US and UK PD respectively, exploring the personalities, policies, examples and problems that enabled and constrained certain PD practices at any given time. The organisational logic is reflected in comparative work on different countries and multilateral organisations, studies of evaluation practices, and of efforts to systematise public diplomacy techniques or optimise their usage. More recently, the sub-state diplomacy of cities and provinces and the diplomacy of non-state actors raises questions of national PD organisation and strategy.

In relation to the digital landscape, articles from the literature review clustered as this organisational logic has also engaged in organisational questions related to various forms of digital diplomacy — sometimes more specifically expressed as, for example, Facebook diplomacy and Hashtag or Twitter diplomacy — as well as covering discussions of e-residency, e-diplomacy and virtual diplomacy. Beyond the digital context, papers tied to the organisational logic also include studies on organisational re-structuring initiatives, studies on the institutional boundaries between PD and nation branding in practice, and the formation and development of national PD institutions — in some papers also dealing with the evaluation practices of PD activities. This also ties to articles about ethnic diversity management within MFAs, women’s agency within diplomatic institutions, and the character of public diplomats and its impact on their practices.

### 4.7 Legitimisation Logic

A great deal of public diplomacy research is dedicated to examining the existence of the research field itself. Research into definitions, norms, values and
boundaries of public diplomacy is perhaps the most difficult to define since these approaches are spread across many academic disciplines and may have little in common with one another. However, a great deal of research into PD (as well as discourse around PD’s practice) may be characterised by efforts to legitimise PD as inherently ‘good’. This is often supported by theorising PD’s unique role in peaceful international relations,\(^{157}\) by drawing distinctions between PD and propaganda,\(^{158}\) and by highlighting the overall benevolence of value-based concepts such as listening,\(^{159}\) engagement or transparency, otherwise described as ‘public diplomacy’s new global mandate for collaborative problem solving for the global good’\(^{160}\). Among those commenting on the digital landscape’s effect on PD, there are those arguing for both its positive and its negative effects:

PD is losing its connection with wider diplomacy which is based on reciprocity and consensus-building. The digital revolution has enabled PD self-promotion [...] that has immersed itself in the confusing and decisive nature of online engagement. While the Internet has brought massive benefits and opportunities to both diplomacy and PD, the consensus-building part of true diplomatic engagement is receding.\(^{161}\)

As previously mentioned, the legitimisation logic ties back to previously presented logics as, for example, linked to the security logic when discussing how PD should respond to toxic and disruptive communication in the new political and media landscape,\(^{162}\) as well as in relation to how one should engage in PD interactions with hostile nations.\(^{163}\) In connection to other previously presented logics, we also see pieces linking the media and relational logic to a value-driven discourse within the literature on how new media could enable PD to become more dialogical and inclusive — this while, as already emphasised, finding that studies contest the use of these mediums in a mostly normative way.\(^{164}\)

The legitimisation logic also concerns other expressions of a normative view on where to draw the boundaries of PD practices in view of the ‘radical changes in diplomacy’s global environment’ as well as the blurry divide

\(^{158}\) Wu, Thomas and Yu 2021.  
\(^{159}\) Di Martino 2020; Cull 2019.  
\(^{160}\) Zaharna 2021.  
\(^{161}\) Hare 2020, 153.  
\(^{162}\) Cooper 2019a; Cull 2019.  
\(^{163}\) Wiseman 2019.  
\(^{164}\) Tam 2019.  

between foreign and domestic.\textsuperscript{165} It describes tools and practices of PD and how one can review such activities ethically, as, for example, in the case of listening as a tool for empathy or surveillance\textsuperscript{166} and media management illustrated through Russia's use of global media platforms and other examples of how PD approaches or perhaps engages in 'sharp' PD practices.\textsuperscript{167} In this way, we see a pattern of explicitly or implicitly expressed normative statements or papers clustered into this legitimisation logic that not only covers the ethical values of right and wrong but also ties back to the organisational logic where researchers engage in the negotiation of what should be included within the boundaries of PD in terms of activities and actors,\textsuperscript{168} some suggesting how to systematically understand PD in a framework of two axes manifested as ethics and efficiency,\textsuperscript{169} and scholarly reflections on 'the evolution of the "public" in public diplomacy', starting with value-driven questions such as 'should diplomacy be public?'\textsuperscript{170}

5 Conclusions

The public diplomacy research field has struggled with conceptual fuzziness, caused in part by its reliance on multiple disciplinary backgrounds, and in part by an overemphasis on identifying its functions and components. While many researchers have studied PD with an eye on improving the practice, there remains only implicit agreement over the field's principles and conceptual boundaries. A focus on functions, components and best practice has been important to establishing the research field as we know it today, but it should be clear from the evidence presented here that a new wave of PD scholarship is pushing the bounds of theory and method and asking increasingly difficult questions of the fuzzy PD concept.

Rather than assessing numerous practices as functions performed to a lesser or greater degree well, the field is increasingly seeking to understand the dynamics and rationales behind those practices and to build theory at a step removed from practice. Yet it is crucial that this work builds on existing PD scholarship, regardless of which academic discipline it is from. As a point of departure for exploring these underlying principles, this study attempts to

\textsuperscript{165} Gregory 2016.
\textsuperscript{166} Di Martino 2020.
\textsuperscript{167} Potter 2019.
\textsuperscript{168} Hare 2020.
\textsuperscript{169} Zhang 2020.
\textsuperscript{170} la Cour 2018.
establish PD logics as a baseline for further research. By acknowledging and understanding the dynamics behind the various practices or clusters of practices, the PD concept is opened up to transdisciplinary consilience; that it to say, regardless of the disciplinary background of the scholar, it is possible to identify contributions to knowledge grounded in the same purposes and principles. We contend that logics can provide a means for clustering PD research into common issues and developing knowledge of them in a systematic way.

Future studies can test the validity of our logics on a larger sample, perhaps adding logics, dividing logics into sub-units, or identifying geographical and historical patterns that shed more light on the field. Others could dive into one particular logic and nuance the depictions of its emergence and scope.

The benefits are of course many. For one, the field can continue to build based on the demands of rigorous scientific knowledge rather than on the demands of the practice, which ultimately benefits practitioners far more in the long term. Secondly, clustering the research field into logics and identifying research as drawing on one or more of them will better support consilience and, over time, help to better identify the evolution of the practice and the field as logics wax and wane. It is for each individual researcher, and each individual study, to determine which PD logics they draw upon, how and why.

Thirdly, it better prepares the field for the more fundamental (long-running and long-promised) shift away from state-centric PD towards what could be variously described as human-centric, non-state, private sector, activist, multilateral or disruptive public diplomacy. By investing in PD as a field of scholarship with a history, clear boundaries and an established body of knowledge, we may finally be able to state, with a high degree of confidence, that there are indeed theories of public diplomacy.171

Bibliography


171 Gilboa 2008.


James Pamment
is an Associate Professor at the Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University. He is the editor of Place Branding & Public Diplomacy and the author of British Public Diplomacy and Soft Power: Diplomatic Influence and Digital Disruption and New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century.

Alicia Fjällhed
is a Doctoral candidate at the Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University.

Martina Smedberg
is a Doctoral candidate at the Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University.