Hegemonic rhythms: The role of Hip-Hop music in 21st century American Public diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

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M.A. CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, 2006

HEGEMONIC RHYTHMS: THE ROLE OF HIP-HOP MUSIC IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Advisor: Dr. Robert DeJanes

Dissertation date July 2009

This research addressed two areas of interest: the contemporary role of American public diplomacy in the post-9/11 world and the formal and informal role of hip-hop music in 21st century American public diplomacy. This study examined the formal and informal role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy to determine the degree to which the U.S. government is formally employing hip-hop music as a tool for public diplomacy. The researcher hypothesized that the U.S. government uses hip-hop music as means to champion its foreign policy objectives and American democratic values vis-à-vis cultural imperialism. This study employed the case study model as its principal research method and used three data analysis techniques: content analysis, process model analysis, and voice analysis. The conclusion whether hip-hop reflects or champions American cultural imperialism is mixed. From a formal perspective, the answer is no for three reasons: the stated objectives of the Rhythm Road program, the types of artists that are chosen to serve as cultural diplomats, and the prior existence of hip-hop communities throughout the world. On the other hand, when considering informal hip-hop diplomacy
from an economic and political perspective, it is feasible to argue that it does reflect what James Petras describes as American cultural imperialism. In the final analysis, the researcher concludes that the U.S. government does in fact practice and promote cultural imperialism vis-à-vis public diplomacy; however, the use of hip-hop music in the formal process plays no significant role in this process.
HEGEMONIC RHYTHMS: THE ROLE OF HIP-HOP MUSIC IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

JOSEPH L. JONES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

JULY 2009
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank God for the strength and guidance through these many years in graduate school. Also, I want to thank my immediate family and my children Justice, William, and Josiah for their patience and love. Next, I want to acknowledge my committee members Dr. Abi Awomolo, Dr. Robert DeJanes and Dr. William “Jelani” Cobb for their dedication and support on this study. Finally, I want to recognize Tupac Amaru Shakur whose life, music, and activism inspired this research.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Public diplomacy, the practice of promoting the national interest by informing, engaging, and influencing populations throughout the world via strategic broadcasting, publishing, and advertising, \(^1\) became a trademark of American foreign policy in the early 20\(^{th}\) century. Since then, scholars have debated the underlining intent of public diplomacy, as well as whether it is truly a form of propaganda intended to manipulate the opinion of foreign audiences in favor of the exporting state. The transmission of public diplomacy across borders is manifested in the forms of educational programs, news stories, advertisements, and popular culture. Cultural diplomacy is a variant of public diplomacy by which cultural artifacts, including art, attitudes, and ideas, serve as the primary engines in the transmission of favorable messages. These messages can be broadcast over a variety of media, including newspapers, the Internet, television, periodicals, and, most famously, radio.

Messages transmitted via mass media and popular culture is useful tools in public diplomacy because they often go unrecognized as forms of propaganda, allowing propagandists to disguise their intended messages as entertainment. Aware of the advantages of using popular culture as a form of propaganda, the U.S. government has

recently reinvigorated its use of cultural diplomacy to combat increasingly negative perceptions of the United States by overseas populations.

In the years following September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Iraq, the effects of an antagonistic public have been most acute in the Middle East and the Muslim world. Consequently, these regions have become the most visible targets in the U.S. battle for "hearts and minds" through public diplomacy. In the past five years alone, the United States has launched a number of programs and tools in this battle, including a satellite television station, a magazine for adolescents, multiple radio stations, a series of television advertisements, and a book of personal essays, to name only the most prominent examples.² Joseph Nye describes these efforts as an example of soft power, which he defines as "...the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and polices."³

Parallel to the exportation of U.S. values and national interests across the globe have been the emergence and dominance of hip-hop as a form of popular music and culture throughout the world. Hip-hop music emerged out of the African American community of New York City as a response to the political, social, and economic marginalization of black youth in the 1970s.⁴ From its inception, hip-hop music has

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²Ibid.


become a hegemonic force in popular culture, dominating music sales, radio playlists, and music awards, even contributing to the American vernacular.  

Hip-hop has been able to assume a significant role in public diplomacy due to globalization, defined as "the worldwide phenomenon of technological, economic, political and cultural exchanges brought about by modern communication, transportation and legal infrastructure as well as the political choice to consciously open cross-border links in international trade and finance." As such, globalization "is a term used to describe how places and human beings are becoming more intertwined with each other around the world economically, politically, and culturally." Depending upon the messages and values transmitted via globalization, the process can serve as either a means of liberation or oppression. The globalization of hip-hop music and culture is evident via their transmission by radio, Internet, television, and movies throughout the world.

The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has provoked renewed interest in public diplomacy. This study sought to gain understanding of the role of hip-hop in both its formal and informal manifestations within American public diplomacy in the post-9/11 world by addressing the following questions: What role, both formal and informal, does hip-hop play in American public diplomacy? Does hip-hop foster the same values and interests as the U.S. government?

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5 Ibid.


7 Ibid.
To gain understanding of hip-hop's current role in public diplomacy, it is first necessary to explore its use over the past decades and determine to what extent hip-hop has emerged as a form of worldwide popular culture. Thus, the following sections discuss the global historical development of public diplomacy in the pre-9/11 world and the development and expansion of hip-hop in the 21st century.

**Statement of the Problem**

This research addresses two areas of interest: the contemporary role of American public diplomacy in the post-9/11 world and the formal and informal role of hip-hop music in 21st-century American public diplomacy. The first area addresses the increasingly negative view of the United States by foreign countries. According to the Pew Center, the global perception of the United States by foreign audiences has been declining over the past eight years. Table 1.1 lists the percentage of the population of various countries that maintains a positive view of the United States.

**TABLE 1.1**

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH FAVORABLE VIEWS OF THE U.S.

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Polling organizations including Zogby International and the German Marshall Fund have confirmed the Pew Centers findings and published similar reports reflecting the unfavorable view of the United States in the 21st century. The abandonment of public diplomacy as an economically and theoretically government-supported initiative raises serious concerns over the future perception of the United States by the rest of the world. At the same time, the encouragement of American cultural hegemony via globalization undermines any effort towards public diplomacy and increases the anti-American fervor that exists in the world today.

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The second concern addresses hip-hop music’s place in both worsening and improving foreign perceptions of the United States via public diplomacy. Since hip-hop’s accession, it has been consistently critiqued for its violent, misogynistic, and stereotype-driven lyrics. Established hip-hop scholar Tricia Rose summarized the criticism into five major complaints: “Hip-hop causes violence; hip-hop reflects black dysfunctional ghetto culture; hip-hop hurts black people; hip-hop is destroying American values; and hip-hop demeans women.”

Through this guise, hip-hop music and expression is amplified through this channel, which raises the question of to what extent does the negative reflection of hip-hop have in the U.S. government use hip-hop music current public diplomacy efforts as well as informally through global dissemination.

The purpose of this study was to examine the informal role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy and determine the degree to which the U.S. government is formally employing hip-hop music as a tool for public diplomacy. By doing so, it is hoped that this study assists in broadening the scope of comparative politics and international relations by validating hip-hop music as a lens through which to gain understanding of current political phenomena through public diplomacy. Such hope is based on M. I. Franklin’s argument that music can be used as a lens through which to gain understanding of political situations:

In methodological and conceptual terms, what might emerge if the visual, architectural metaphors (lenses, images, models, levels of political and social science lexicons) were returned, remixed, rearranged, musically speaking? International Relations discourse since the mid-twentieth century rerouted through the “new music” of the post Schoenberg generation of composers? World politics

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perceived along the lines of John Cage’s (in)famous piano piece, *Four Minutes Thirty Seconds*? Globalization brought to us by The Beatles, Elvis Presley, the late (great) John Peel, Britney Spears, Eminem? Who is doing the composing, arranging, performing, listening, dancing, singing, or freestyling along? Who are the agents, impresarios, and reviewers?\(^\text{10}\)

Franklin argues for expanding the traditional approach to international relations as “…a rubric for political theory, political science, international political economy research foci on the ‘global,’ ‘transnational,’ and ‘inter-national’ aspect of political and economic life” to include music as a lens.\(^\text{11}\)

Musicologist and cultural theorist Edward Said affirms Franklin’s position on utilizing music to understand the political world:

> The study of music can be more, and not less, interesting if we situate music as taking place, so to speak, in a social and cultural setting. Another way of putting this is to say that the roles played by music in Western society are extraordinarily varied, and far exceed an antiseptic, cloistered, academic, professional aloofness it seems to have been accorded. Think of the affiliation between music and social privilege; or between music and the nation; or between music and religious veneration—and the idea will be clear enough. The difficulty, however, is to devise modes of articulating musical activity in that larger context…to connect [the study of music] to ideology, or social space, or power, or to the formation of an individual (and by no means sovereign) ego.\(^\text{12}\)

This investigation examined the role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy both formally (as employed by the government) and informally (via globalization). By doing so, this study sought to gain understanding of the role of the U.S. government in employing hip-hop music in public diplomacy in concert with its

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11 Ibid.

overall foreign policy objectives, as well as determine the extent to which hip-hop music mirrors U.S. interests and the feasibility of its use in public diplomacy, both now and in the future.

This research is significant for at least three reasons. First, this study adds to the limited body of literature on public diplomacy in the 21st century, a field that demands serious attention in the post-9/11 world, by critically examining the public diplomacy efforts of the United States and other countries as well as their response to globalization.

Second, this study expands the scope of international relations to include music as a "level of analysis" in understanding political phenomena. As argued by Franklin and Said, music has clearly had a powerful impact on groups, individuals, and, in some cases, nations. This study adds to this discussion by shedding new insight into how music can play a significant role in politics on both a micro and macro level.

Finally, this investigation adds to the interdisciplinary discourse on the impact of American hip-hop music on the broader world. Because of the scope of this research, several academic disciplines were employed, including musicology, cultural studies, history, sociology, international relations, and comparative politics. Thus, this study will aid other academic disciplines in unraveling cultural imperialism, hip-hop, and public diplomacy.

**Research Questions**

The central research question for this research was the following: What is the role of hip-hop music in U.S. public diplomacy? From this central question, the following
sub-questions were derived:

* What significant shifts have occurred in agencies, policies, and recommendations in regards to public diplomacy in the United States?
* How has the U.S. government used music in past public diplomacy efforts?
* What role does the U.S. government have in utilizing hip-hop music as a means of public diplomacy in the post-9/11 world?
* How does hip-hop music informally contribute to American public diplomacy?

**Hypothesis**

The U.S. government has consistently used soft power to induce foreign countries into embracing the American worldview in times of both war and peace. The researcher hypothesizes that the U.S. government uses hip-hop music as means to champion its foreign policy objectives and American democratic values vis-à-vis cultural imperialism. Additionally, hip-hop music acts as an agent in American cultural hegemony by showcasing the American democratic capitalistic values. Moreover, because of the global reach and influence of hip-hop music, in the years to come the State Department will utilize hip-hop as tool for public diplomacy to capture the imagination of youth in areas of the globe that are hostile to U.S. interests.

**Delimitations**

While recognizing other public diplomacy efforts by governmental and non-governmental agencies involving hip-hop music, this research focused on the 2005-2007 Rhythm Road program. Similarly, the identification and utilization of hip-hop music in informal public diplomacy was limited to these same two years. Furthermore, as hip-hop music was the major focus in this study, other variants of hip-hop (e.g., expression) were
The two major concepts addressed in this study, hip-hop and public diplomacy, are discussed and explicated in the following sections.

_Hip-hop_

For the purpose of this study, the concept of hip-hop was limited to hip-hop music, including its lyrics, albums, and songs. Hip-hop music can be classified into two forms: _mainstream hip-hop_ and _underground hip-hop music_. Mainstream hip-hop can best be described as hip-hop music that becomes popularized through traditional media outlets, such as radio and television. Much (although not all) of what constitutes this version of hip-hop usually relates to three primary categories: its entertainment, materialistic, and gangster aspects. Mainstream hip-hop's entertainment aspect focuses on dance and partying/club music; its materialistic aspect focuses on hyper-consumerism and the attainment of wealth and/or material items; and its gangster aspect focuses on territorial representation, drugs, violence, misogyny, or forms of illegal behavior. Although each category has its own distinct sound and lyrics, rappers sometimes combine the categories together into one song (i.e., a song may have both a gangster and materialistic focus).

Underground hip-hop, which usually has an entirely different sound than mainstream hip-hop, can be categorized into the three broad categories of political, B-boy/B-girl, and religious sounds. Its political sound usually relates to criticism of the
government and/or governmental institutions, as well as the economic, political, and social conditions that have resulted from state action. B-boy/B-girl, an expression that is more of an artistic approach to rapping, focuses on lyrical styles and metaphors through rapping. Religious hip-hop is a musical representation of a faith as a means to praise, entertain, or recruit listeners to the faith. Like mainstream hip-hop, each category can be meshed with other categories, including mainstream categories. Most hip-hop music heard abroad is mainstream hip-hop music.

Public Diplomacy/Soft Power

Joseph Nye defined public diplomacy, a key component in the use of soft power as a means of public diplomacy, as:

...the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals. It differs from hard power, the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will. Both hard and soft powers are important...but attraction is much cheaper than coercion, and an asset that needs to be nourished.13

For the purpose of this research, public diplomacy is defined as the act of creating, developing, and sustaining relations with other states by utilizing culture, language, education, and art. The purpose of this form of diplomacy is to present a foreign nation in terms of its political, economic, social, and cultural values, usually as part of a bilateral or multilateral effort between two or more states.

The primary objective of public diplomacy is to persuade public and governmental officials of foreign states to embrace the institutional, political, and economic values of the exporting country. The desired outcome through this dialogue is favorable and preferential policy by the foreign state utilizing the public diplomacy tactic.

Several methods that may be employed in order to secure these outcomes include:

- International cultural symposiums, conferences, lectures, and workshops.
- Study abroad opportunities and exchanges for high school and college students.
- International broadcasts of political and cultural events, concerts, and symphonies/concerts.
- Intercultural exchange programs.
- Orchestral cultural tours of artists, musicians, dancers, and athletes.
- Cultivation of ties with foreign journalists, leaders, academics, and business leaders.
- Publication of books, journals, and newspaper articles.\(^{14}\)

**Methodology**

This study employed the case study model as its principal research method.

According to Paul Leedy, during a case study:

...the researcher collects extensive data on the individual(s), program(s), or event(s) on which the investigation is focused. These data often include observations, interviews, documents (e.g., newspaper articles), past records (e.g., previous test scores), and audiovisual materials (e.g., photograph, videotapes, audiotapes). In many instances, the researcher may spend an extended period of time on-site and interact regularly with the people who are being studied.\(^ {15}\)

\(^{14}\)GAO, 5.

Marshall and Rossman argue that this process is critical in “understanding the framework within which subjects interprets their thought, feelings and actions.” Qualitative research, according to Creswell, “is inductive in that the research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from detail.” This process enables the researcher to generate new concepts and theories and determine how they add to pre-existing ones.

However, the case study model has been traditionally criticized as lacking in rigorous research, providing very little basis for scientific generalization, requiring too much time to employ, and resulting in too many documents that are often difficult to understand. Despite these criticisms, the case study models allows for the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context through descriptive and explanatory analysis of the data, which is especially useful in areas in which there has been limited research, including the role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy.

Data Collection

This study employed qualitative approaches to investigate two main areas of concern: the formal and informal aspects of hip-hop in American public diplomacy. Data regarding the formal aspects was obtained from both executive and legislative agencies and committees as well as interviews with administrators and participants involved in promoting hip-hop in American public diplomacy. Data regarding the informal aspects,

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which was obtained from identification and analysis of mainstream/popular hip-hop songs, was compared with data obtained regarding the formal aspects of hip-hop. The first phase of the research consisted of identifying and obtaining reports, memos, records of hearings, and publications from both the executive and legislative branches of the government from September 2001 to December 2007 to gather data concerning the use of hip-hop in American public diplomacy. To obtain data regarding the executive branch, the Department of State was culled for pertinent information regarding this data. The Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives was searched for legislative data.

The next data collection technique was reconstructing the process by which hip-hop was introduced as a component of American public diplomacy. Data regarding this process was obtained by conducting elite interviews with individuals in the State Department directly involved in public diplomacy and with hip-hop artists employed by the State Department as part of the Rhythm Road program. Elite interviewing is a qualitative technique in which “…the purpose…is generally not the collection of pre-specified data but the gathering of information to assist in reconstructing some event or discerning a pattern in specific behaviors.” Elite interviews are generally unscheduled because in elite interviewing the researcher is interested in learning what the respondent perceives as important and relevant to the research and [unscheduled interviewing] lets the respondent’s observations suggest what questions should be asked in order to gain useful information. The interview is concerned with discovering facts and patterns rather than with measuring pre-selected phenomena.19

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18 Ibid., 356.
19 Ibid.
However, because elite interviews are usually unscheduled, they often "produce data that are difficult to condense and summarize and that may not allow precise comparisons among respondents."\textsuperscript{20}

Based on these interview criteria, one interview was conducted with Catherine L. Stearns, Public Affairs Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and two interviews were conducted with singer Toni Blackman and two members of the hip-hop musical group AFAR, three artists involved in the Rhythm Road program from 2005 to 2007.

To gather information on the informal aspect of public diplomacy, the top ten hip-hop songs from 2005 to 2007 were identified based on data from the Billboard Top 10 hip-hop album and singles chart. Additionally, the songs of the hip-hop artists involved in the Rhythm Road program were collected so that they could be utilized during the assessment portion of the research.

\textit{Data Analysis}

Once the data was collected, it was assessed using three data analysis techniques: \textit{content analysis}, \textit{process model analysis}, and \textit{voice analysis}. Content analysis, the first technique employed to analyze the data, is

\ldots the systematic counting, assessing, and interpreting of the form and substances of communication. Content analysis provides us with a method—really a set of methods—by which we may summarize fairly rigorously certain direct physical extraordinary.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
evidence of the behaviors of, and the relationship between, various types of political actors.\textsuperscript{21}

The forms of political communication analyzed in this study generally fall into one of three categories:

(1) those that are internally generated by the individual, organization, or government we are studying and internally directed (such communications as corporate memoranda, which represent or reflect the decision-making process itself); (2) those that are internally generated and externally directed (such publications as the Congressional Record, which are purposefully molded to create a particular image for the source among outsiders and which may reflect or obscure the process and outcome of decision-making); and (3) those that are externally generated and externally directed (such as campaign news stores that are read by potential voters). Each class of communication may be different in purpose or effect, as well as in accessibility and usefulness for research, but each provides potential opportunities to further our understanding of political behavior.\textsuperscript{22}

This research utilized \textit{substantive content analysts}, a method "based on a study of words, themes, [or] items that focuses on the substantive content of a given communication,"\textsuperscript{23} as a means of analyzing the data. The unit of analysis of this research was words as rather than themes or items. Within this framework, a set of salient references were established in order to guide this research: \textit{popular music}, \textit{rap}, \textit{hip-hop}, \textit{public diplomacy}, and \textit{cultural diplomacy}. All documents obtained from the literature review and data collection process were analyzed according to this model.


\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 175.
Next, the process model was used to construct a narrative of the design, implementation, and evaluation of the policy of public diplomacy within the Rhythm Road program. The process model, which is

...a series of political activities—problem identification, formulation, legitimating, implementation, and evaluation...allows the students of political science to study how decisions are made, and perhaps even how they should be made. But it does not permit students of political science to comment on the substance of public policy—who gets what and why. [Research] organized around the process theme have sections on identifying problems, formulating proposals, legitimating policies and so on. It is not the content of public policy that is to be studied, but rather the process by which public policy is developed, implemented, and changed.24

All of data gathered regarding the formal aspects of public diplomacy was constructed into a narrative that both explained and described the process by which hip-hop has been employed and is currently employed in American public diplomacy efforts. To explain this process, the need for changing the existing structure of public diplomacy was first identified. Next, the need for introducing hip-hop into the realm of public diplomacy was contextualized, followed by an analysis of the means by which hip-hop was formally employed in public diplomacy. Finally, the success of the use of hip-hop was described through reference to the State Department’s evaluation scheme and the views of the artists involved.

In order to gather data with which to evaluate the informal role of hip-hop in American public diplomacy, the researcher developed a methodological framework called voice analysis in order assess the lyrics of hip-hop music. The basis for

conducting voice analysis is the argument that to authentically evaluate any hip-hop artist, one must examine the entire body of available music written by or for the artist and identify the themes, roles, and voices evident in his or her music. Doing so is important because when studying hip-hop artists, scholars, journalists, and outside observers often take the artist out of context. By focusing on a particular song or lyric without contextualizing an artist’s body of music, those who investigate and/or criticize hip-hop artists marginalize their plurality, leading them to inaccurately define these artists and apply rudimentary labels to their music, such as gangster, conscious, positive, and/or negative rap. Michael Eric Dyson more explicitly describes this phenomenon:

The positive-versus-negative outlook obscures the way challenging concepts of identity can be dismissed as negative because they don’t accord with dominate black views....A focus on the positive simply can’t guarantee a full and engaging view of black life. A preference for hip-hop artists who are positive (no cursing, no self-denigrating epithets, no violent references to the ghetto) often overlook the question of whether they have intellectual depth and the ability to flow. By contrast, rappers viewed as negative—if for no other reason than they employ the word “nigga” in the repertoire, a charge, by the way, that can be made against many rappers otherwise considered to be positive—may possess these abilities in abundance.25

However, moving beyond a micro-analysis to a macro-analysis of collections of songs exported throughout the world, one could reasonably argue that a collection of individual songs (or singles) can be used as a unit of analysis to gain understanding of which values are transmitted around the globe. Thus, voice analysis in the macro sense assisted in this researcher’s assessment of the collective voices of artists heard around the world via their promotion by the Top 10 chart and the Rhythm Road program.

25 Michael Eric Dyson, Is Bill Cosby Right?: Or Has The Black Middle Lost its Mind (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005), 36.
Within this framework, the voice analysis encompassed into fifteen distinct voices:

1. **Hardcore**: The use of profanity and/or championing the use of violence, alcohol and drug uses.
2. **Political**: Critique of political, social, civil, and/or educational institutions and the advocacy of a particular ideology.
3. **Pimp**: Misogynistic suggestions where women are subjected to inferior, exploitative, or submissive position in relationship of society to men.
4. **Lyricist**: Showcasing lyrical skills by way of metaphors, cryptic dialectic, flow, and braggadocio tendencies.
5. **Bling**: Advocacy of hyper-materialism (jewelry, cloths, cares, etc.) and/or currency.
6. **Gangster**: Encompasses violence, alcohol, drug use or selling, and glorifying or encouraging illegal activity at the expense someone else and a heavy emphasis on territorial domination
7. **Religious**: Evangelizing a specific theological orientation through praise and/or critique of nonbelievers and other faiths.
8. **Love**: The expression of affection of the opposite sex, communities, friends, and/or material things.
9. **Sexual**: Explicit references to sexual activity
10. **Social Justice**: The support of equality by supporting civic or civil causes that can collectively improve a society or the world.
11. **Black Nationalist**: Critiques of white and black people who consciously refuse to uplift black people; this theme also addresses self determination and liberation of black and African people at the hands of white power.
12. **Club/Dance**: Music for dancing or parting in a club or party setting.
13. **Inspirational**: Provides hope and/or an alternative worldview to help listeners overcome problems or personal issues
14. **Self Improvement**: Encourages listeners to improve their lives by offering concrete advice and counsel for both self-improvement and improvement of the entire community/word.
15. **Storytelling**: Focuses on telling a story, whether true or fictional, in order to accentuate another voice.

Although each voice is distinct, there are several instances where the voices blend together, creating hybrid songs in which more than one voice is presented.
The songs identified in the data collection phase were used to conduct voice analysis utilizing the framework described above to determine the dominant voices in the music of the both the mainstream and the Rhythm Road artists. Based on the results, conclusions were drawn regarding the formal and informal role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy.

After the data was collected, it was analyzed according to several steps. The first step was organizing all of the data collected according to each technique employed (interviews and content analysis). The second step was examining each category for specific meanings that it may have in relation to the overall research. The third step was assessing the data and each interpretation for patterns or underlying themes that could support or disprove the premise of this research. The fourth step was drawing conclusions and making recommendations that may lead to a broader generalization regarding the issue under study.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the research is presented in five chapters. Chapter two presents the findings from a review of the literature on public diplomacy theory and practice and the impact of hip-hop music abroad. Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework employed in this study compared to other leading frameworks in public diplomacy research. Chapter four provides a description and analysis of the historical and current policies and agencies of public diplomacy fostered by government agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Chapter five describes the Rhythm Road
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Public diplomacy as theory and practice exists within a lexicon of ideas and approaches. Governments, NGOs, individuals, and multinational corporations attempt to engage, influence, and persuade the leaders, elites, and citizens of other nations to buy into the values of their country in concert with traditional diplomacy. Within this maze of perspectives and practices, one can clearly see the confusion and contradictions in public diplomacy theory, buttressed by the plethora of approaches toward public diplomacy practiced by different governments and organizations across the world.

This literature review assesses the complexities within public diplomacy scholarship by (1) describing and assessing the current theories and perspectives in public diplomacy and (2) reviewing the means by which public diplomacy is utilized in other countries outside the United States. After doing so, it provides a brief discussion of the means by which hip-hop music via globalization can be used to influence foreign audiences.
Theories and Frameworks in Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy theoretical frameworks are vast and complex. The evolution of public diplomacy theory has led to the development of a systematic taxonomy of terms that have been used interchangeably and synonymously with the intent of describing, prescribing, and/or analyzing how governments or institutions try to influence foreign audiences. This section compares and contrasts the six major frameworks of *soft power*, *smart power*, *public relations*, *branding*, *public diplomacy*, and *cultural diplomacy*.

The diversity of the frameworks reflects the fact that public diplomacy scholars have had much difficulty conceptualizing public diplomacy into a single workable framework. Early public diplomacy scholars such as Gifford Malone saw public diplomacy as “the core idea...of direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and ultimately, that of their governments.”¹ In contrast, Hans Tuch defined it as “a government’s process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and polices.”²

The lack of consensus in the definition of public diplomacy is reflected in the contemporary literature. Bruce Gregory argues that public diplomacy has evolved into a multidisciplinary form because of modern advancements:

[Twentieth century] study and practice of modern public diplomacy began with World War I and the “big ideas” of the Bolshevik Revolution, the League of Nations, and National Socialism....[In the twenty-first century] public diplomacy [was buttressed by] new ideas, network societies, nonstate actors, digital technologies, and new forms of warfare on a scale comparable to the changes that

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ushered in the state-based model a century earlier. Scholars are engaging in relevant research on identity theory and constructivism, media framing and political communication, governance and soft power, social network analysis, and a "new public diplomacy." Practitioners tend to divide into those seeking reform in government agencies and those who contend public diplomacy requires a new thinking, new tools, networked capabilities, and stronger, more imaginative relations with civil society.3

Cowan and Arsenault describe public diplomacy as based on the three elements of monologue, dialogue, and collaboration. Arguing that collaboration is "at times the most important form of public diplomacy,"4 they explain that "collaborative projects include dialogue between participants and stake-holders, but they also include concrete and typically easily identifiable goals and outcomes that provide a useful basis and structure upon which to from more lasting relationships."5

Arguing that public diplomacy is a weapon in the arsenal of what he terms "smart public diplomacy,"6 Nye suggests that "soft power of a county rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to other), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)."7 Nye's notion of soft power as it relates to public diplomacy "requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and

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3Ibid., 14.


5Ibid., 98.
civil society in generating soft power, which is getting others to want the outcomes you want. ”

In accordance with Nye’s argument, Ernest J. Wilson argues that a synthesis of hard and soft power must build upon what Suzanne Nossel had termed smart power, which she defined as “…the effective and efficient combination of hard power (the power to coerce) and soft power (the power to convince) in pragmatic ways that help nations advance their international interest.”

Wilson builds on this theory adding his own perspective:

A sophisticated smart power approach comes with the awareness that hard and soft power are separate and distinct institutions. A sophisticated smart power approach comes with the awareness that hard and soft power are separate and distinct institutions and institutional cultures that exert their own normative influences over their members, each with its own attitudes, incentives, and anticipated career paths. Smart power must begin with the assumption that hard power is essential and the national interest is best advanced by effectively combining hard power and soft. Smart power advocates must learn to articulate the advantages of soft power combined with hard power in a politically compelling language. [Thus] achieving smart power requires artfully combining conceptual, institutional, and political elements into a reform movement capable of sustaining foreign policy innovation into the future.

Established public diplomacy scholar Nicolas J. Cull conceptualizes public diplomacy into the five elements of “listening, advocacy, exchange diplomacy, international broadcasting and cultural diplomacy.” Listening is “an actor’s attempt to

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8 Ibid.


10 Ibid.

manage the international environment by collecting and collating data on the opinions of overseas publics and using that data to redirect policy or a wider public diplomacy approach accordingly.\textsuperscript{13} Whereas advocacy is "an actor’s attempt to manage the international community by undertaking an international communication activity to promote a particular policy, an idea, or an actor’s general interest in the minds of a foreign public."\textsuperscript{14} A nation engaged in exchange diplomacy "sends its citizen overseas and reciprocally accepts citizens from overseas for a period of study and/or acculturation."\textsuperscript{15} International news broadcasting is "using the technologies of radio, television, and the internet to engage with foreign publics."\textsuperscript{16} Finally, cultural diplomacy is "making its [the state’s] cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad."\textsuperscript{17}

The last of Cull’s elements of public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy, a form of public diplomacy that uses culture to champion the ideals and objectives of the host country. Although used extensively in the past, this method has seen little use in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. The absence of cultural diplomacy in 21\textsuperscript{st}-century foreign policy has received scrutiny by several scholars in the field of international relations. Helena Finn, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, argues that the U.S. government has abandoned a tactic that worked effectively in the past:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 34.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 40.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{17}\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 42.
\end{itemize}
Early in the Cold War, U.S. efforts at cultural diplomacy were funded by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as well as the U.S. State Department's Division of Cultural Relations. Although CIA sponsorship would be inappropriate and counterproductive today that history is a useful reminder of how the U.S. once took the promotion of mutual understanding through cultural exchange. Such a perspective is lacking today, when many policy makers appear to believe that military force has become a sufficient response to radical Islamic terrorism.¹⁸

Therefore, she suggests that “if the U.S. want to cultivate a better image of itself overseas, it should concentrate on five areas of activity in particular: encouraging foreign educational reforms; extending existing foreign exchange programs; improving the access of foreign publics to U.S. institutions and values; encouraging better cross cultural understanding at home; and revitalizing U.S. volunteerism abroad.”¹⁹

Former Ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider echoes this critique of the American government’s lack of cultural diplomacy in the “War on Terror.” She claims that cultural/public diplomacy has been used by the U.S. government in a reactionary fashion rather than as a means of consistent engagement with foreign audiences:

Experience has shown that using public diplomacy as a rapid response tactic tends only to alienate foreign publics even further. For example, a Southeast Asian diplomat told of a U.S. library that had opened six times during the 1960’s, always in response to crisis. Each time the crisis abated, the library was shut down. According to one Egyptian diplomat, “Cultural diplomacy emerges at times of crisis. But this should be a process of building bridges, not a one way street.” Developing respect for others and their way of thinking—this is what cultural diplomacy does.”²⁰

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¹⁹Ibid., 19.

Schneider proposes the use of cultural diplomacy initiatives based on film, music, and literature, which "can be wholly original, or they can build on extant programs, exhibitions, or performances; they can be sponsored by the government or by the private sector."21

The utilization of cultural diplomacy has been viewed by some scholars as propagandistic and imperialistic. The most scathing critiques of cultural diplomacy (and to some extent public diplomacy) are based on references to the theory of cultural imperialism, a concept that was conceptualized in the 1970s by Marxist scholars who believed that all forms of media promoted a one-way, top-down transmission of propaganda from a dominant to a dominated country that theoretically gave rise to a passive audience and a powerful media. Cultural imperialism proposes that "a society is brought into the modern world system when its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping its social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system."22

Other constructs beside public diplomacy that involve cultural imperialism include "culture dependency, domination, media imperialism, structural imperialism, cultural synchronization, electronic colonial, communication imperialism, ideological imperialism, and economic imperialism, all present in cultural imperialism literature."23

A common theme among all the different interpretations of cultural imperialism is that

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21Ibid., 196.


cultural imperialism is the domination of one nation over another, whether directly or indirectly, through a combination of political or economic controls.

The ways in which information is exchanged between nations (i.e., cultural/public diplomacy) has been explored by scholars as a manifestation of cultural imperialism. For example, Wagnleitner and Wolf describe the tactical use of cultural diplomacy as a disguise for U.S. propaganda:

The cultural diplomacy of the United States, with its concept of “peoples speaking to peoples,” stood completely in the liberal tradition of the four fundamental human freedoms proclaimed by President Roosevelt on January 6, 1941: freedom of opinion, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. However, Emily Rosenberg has pointed out that the insistence on a completely free flow of information, cited as a fifth fundamental freedom, touched upon an insoluble dilemma. While the United States controlled the networks that make possible the contracts to other nations, these societies had no chance to respond. The liberal idea of free flow, like that of the economic open door, logically led not to a wide-open market full of varied and competing products but to dominance by the most technologically advanced producers. For exactly this reason the “peoples speaking to peoples” concept quickly acquired the character of “the United States speaking to peoples” programs, which, for the most part, were conceived to fulfill two primary duties. The interest of the U.S. government were to be brought home, first and foremost, by bombarding foreigners with never-ending information broadcast using all conceivable channels. U.S. culture was always of secondary importance, even if the rules called for its total representation.24

Critics of the theory of cultural imperialism suggest that the theory has four substantial weaknesses: “it has not been adequately defined; it is difficult to measure; and does not acknowledge an audience’s ability to process information and interpret messages differently based on their individual background; and the theory does not hold true in all situations of the phenomenon that it attempts to explain.”25

Beyond these established frameworks is the integration of public diplomacy with mass communication and public relations. Several studies have found clear correlations between media coverage and the perceptions of foreign nations. One study found that states receiving the most attention in the American media were perceived by the public to be more vital to the U.S. national interest.26 Although negative coverage most often resulted in negative opinions, positive coverage did not necessarily lead to positive opinions. Another study evaluated U.S. public diplomacy activities toward the Muslim world through analysis of news coverage on Al-Jazeera compared to other sources of anti-American views, focusing on both macro-level variables such as socioeconomic factors and individual-level variables such as demographics, television exposure, and general views of the West.27 The investigators found that in nine different Muslim countries, television news viewing influenced anti-American sentiment more than any other macro-level or individual-level variable.

In recent years, more and more scholars have conducted research into public diplomacy using public relations theories, models, and methodologies. Arguing that his classic public relations models could be extended to public diplomacy, noted public relations scholar James Grunig classified his models according to the two basic interrelated principles of

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...direction—one way communication versus two-way communication; and purpose symmetrical versus asymmetrical. One-way communication refers to information dissemination from one side to another, while two-way communication means information exchange between sides. In asymmetrical relations, the public relation goals is to change the opinion, policy, or behavior of another states; while in symmetrical relations, there is also willingness on the part of the state using public relations to change its own policy or behavior.28

Despite his efforts, scholars have not effectively applied Grunig’s models to public diplomacy.

The most promising aspect of research into public relations and public diplomacy has been Juyan Zhang’s refinement of terms. He defines public diplomacy as “a symbolic interactionist process in which states and organizations actively participate in constructing and negotiating meanings of symbols and performing actions based on meanings...symbolic interaction include: identity—meaning attached to self by the self and others; symbols; interactions; and power relations.”29 Utilizing this framework, Zhang used media framing to examine competing diplomacy efforts from 2004 to 2005.

Another genre of media studies, place branding, has gained a level of currency in public diplomacy research similar to that of public relations. Simon Anholt coined the term to describe the process of using strategies developed within the commercial sector (advertising, public relations, product placement, etc.) to manage, if not necessarily wield, the soft power of a government.30 Peter Van Ham agrees with Anholt that place branding

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...along with soft power and public diplomacy, is part of a wider spectrum of postmodern power...place branding stands in a long tradition of reputation management, "spin doctoring," and propaganda. Public diplomacy can be compared with place branding since they both combine foreign policy goals with internal soft power strategies and objectives.31

However, Ham argues that place branding is not a useful theoretical tool to gain understanding of current international relations phenomena because "place branding, as a part of soft power, centers on concepts like values, norms, and rules in international politics."32 He finds constructivism the most practical lens through which to gain understanding because "its emphasis on norm, values, and identifies as vital elements in international politics ensuring stability and predictability, is an important point of departure in the study of place branding."33 Still, constructivism has its flaws, particularly that "it says very little about the mechanism through which international norms reach the domestic arena...and [it] fails to explain why the same place branding strategy will have a dramatic impact in one state and not another."34

Public Diplomacy Practices

Although most governments throughout the world practice public diplomacy, they do so according to different definitions of public diplomacy and using approaches drastically different from Western or American concepts. This section reviews the public


32Ibid.

33Ibid., 143.

34Ibid., 147.
diplomacy practices of several countries and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) within the larger scheme of public diplomacy practiced in the wider diaspora.

Many of the great number of public diplomacy scholars who have focused on Chinese public diplomacy over the past decade have tried to explain how the Chinese have used public diplomacy as a tool to expand their financial markets globally. Arguing that "the Chinese government have demonstrated a limited understanding of public diplomacy, seeing it either as external propaganda or a form of internal public affairs,"35 Yiwei Wang asserted that in order for the Chinese government to execute public diplomacy effectively it "...needs to learn from Chinese history inquiring into ideas, environment, resources, and challenges for public diplomacy and put forward a systematic Chinese public diplomacy strategy with Chinese characteristics."36 Specifically, Wang argues that the Chinese government must pursue five main objectives: (1) more strongly publicize the Chinese government's statements and assertions to the outside world, (2) transmit a desirable image of the state, (3) issue rebuttals to distorted overseas reports about China, (4) improve the international environment surrounding China, and (5) exert influence on the public decisions of foreign countries.37

Other scholars, however, believe that Chinese soft power has had an impressive effect on its regional neighbors. In contrast to Wang, Joshua Kurlantizick argues that the Chinese definition of soft power extends from Nye's notion of soft power, which "excludes investment and aid and formal diplomacy." He explains, "In the context of


36 Ibid., 261.

37 Ibid., 268.
Asia today, both China and its neighbors enunciate a broader idea of soft power, the idea that soft power implies all elements of outside of the security realm, including investment and aid. Through this lens, the Kurlantzick argues that China has used its soft power to establish a hegemonic presence in Southeast Asia:

China’s primary goal is simply to maintain peace on its periphery. Peace allows China’s economy to grow and provides opportunities for Chinese companies looking for outlets. Beijing also may wish to gain bases along Southeast Asia’s sea lanes, dominate Asia’s inland waterways, and ultimately, gain control of the South China Sea. Beijing also want to reduce Taiwan and Japan’s influence in Southeast Asia, pushing them out of regional diplomacy; since 1994, Beijing has pursued a policy it calls “us[ing] all of economic and diplomatic resources to reward countries that are willing to isolate Taiwan.” China appears to be using its soft power to incrementally push Japan, Taiwan, and even the United States out of regional influence.

Similarly, Ingrid d’Hooghe argues that Chinese public diplomacy is focused beyond the attainment of regional hegemony, even extending beyond the centralist authoritarian state apparatus, evidenced by the increasing role of Chinese individuals and civil society in public diplomacy. D’Hooghe argues that those engaged in Chinese public diplomacy have four major goals:

First, China wants to be seen as a country that strives after building a harmonious society and that works hard to give its people a better future. Second, China wants to be seen as a reliable and responsible economic partner, a rising economic power that does not have to be feared. Third, Beijing wants China to be seen as a trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community, capable of and willing to contribute actively to world peace. Last, but not least, China wants to be acknowledged an respect as an ancient but vibrant culture.

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39 Ibid.

D’Hooghe also describes the existence of a well-established nongovernmental faction in China committed to public diplomacy that includes "academics and (transnational) epistemic communities; NGOs; overseas Chinese communities; friendship association; twin sister organizations; students; and tourists."41

Perhaps the most striking example of Middle Eastern public diplomacy can be found in the 24-hour news station Al-Jazeera, which aims to inform both Arab and non-Arab audiences about Middle Eastern politics and life. Scholars continue to debate whether Al-Jazeera is truly an objective alternative to state-owned media in Middle Eastern countries or simply a partisan news outlet. Regarding the question of who Al-Jazeera truly serves, all the contributors to The Al-Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media hint at the financial ties between the station and Qatar, its host country, specifically the connection between financial dependency and ideological dependency by way of government loans to the station.42 Because of this connection, they unanimously debunk the position that Al-Jazeera is a critical medium of news dissemination, strongly either criticizing it as being the "slave of the two masters" that drive the Qatari government (i.e., the American administration and Arab public opinion) or as overly docile, arguing, "Al-Jazeera is not a mouthpiece for the diplomacy of Qatar; at the same time, it is not at odds with it either."43

41 Ibid., 219.


43 Ibid., 76, 56.
In contrast, Miles Hughes claims that Al-Jazeera has been effective in challenging both Western and Arab states. He argues that Al-Jazeera’s uncritical news coverage of Qatar (which he argues is the aversion of criticism of the Qatari government) can be explained by the fact that events in Qatar tend not to be newsworthy or regionally relevant. He suggests that the news agency has so consistently countered pro-Western foreign policy by challenging the American coverage of events in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine that is has become a target of the U.S. military.

The Russian government focuses its public diplomacy efforts primarily within its own borders to champion what it calls sovereign democracy. Centre for European Policy Studies fellow Nicu Poescu explains,

> The idea of sovereign democracy has a number of functions. The first is to provide Putin’s authoritarianism with respectable “democratic” clothes in order to strengthen it internally and insulate it from international criticism. The second is to challenge the West’s idea of democracy and human rights with a set of universal values and practices.

Poescu believes that this concept will be exported to Russia’s neighbors:

> The scope of their activity [public diplomacy] is truly all-encompassing. Russia-friendly and Russia-financed NGOs and think-tanks have emerged in many CIS states and even in the secessionist entities. For example, in Ukraine, Russian political technologists are busy advancing the idea of a “sovereign Ukraine”

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45Ibid.

46This concept is centered on two core ideas. First is the idea of sovereignty, understood as non-interference from the West, as a counterexample to post-revolutionary Ukraine and Georgia, which are in Moscow’s view and ruled from the outside. Second is the idea that Russia has its own set of values that are democratic but have emerged from Russia’s unique historical experience, and thus are distinct from those that the West understands as democratic. Thus, Russia’s democracy does not necessarily correspond to Western standards of democracy.

which should not "sacrifice its long struggle for independence and national revival" and should not give away its national sovereignty to the European bureaucracy. In the South Caucasus, a so-called "Caucasus Institute for Democracy" with branches in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, has been very active recently. In Moldova, a Free European-Moldova Foundation was created recently and its links to Russia have been obvious. The Russian authorities have been boosting a CIS election monitoring organization (CIS-EMO) whose verdicts for election conducted in the CIS have always been diametrically opposed to OSCE opinions on the elections. 48

Regarding Latin American diplomacy, although Cuban and Venezuelan public diplomacy have the same aims and purposes, Cuban efforts have been much more effective than those of Venezuela. Michael J. Bustamante and Julia E. Sweig argue that Cuba's success at public diplomacy is evident in its outreach programs to developing nations (e.g., its Organization for Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America), medical aid to developing countries, and cultural promotion activities. 49 Likewise, Venezuela has created the Bolivarian News Agency and the Telesur television network to compete with CNN and other dominant Western media outlets; given away oil to regional allies; and most importantly, provided more direct aid to Latin America than has the United States. 50

Another important facet of public diplomacy is the role of IGOs in diplomacy. The most striking example of public diplomacy by an IGO is that of the European Union (EU), a conglomerate of twenty-seven member states with the purpose of coalescing on issues involving security, economics, and politics. Individual members practice public

48Ibid.


50Ibid., 248.
diplomacy as a means to join and champion the organization whereas the entire body
practices public diplomacy as a means of engaging regional and foreign audiences around
the world. Regarding Poland's recent petitioning to join the EU, Beata Ociepka and
Marta Ryniejska explain, "The main goal of Polish public diplomacy in the period was to
create a positive image of the country and the society, shaping a new, positive brand
Poland...aimed in the first instance at opinion leaders, and elites of the then EU members
countries." To achieve its aims, Poland developed "the Framework Program for the
Foreign Promotion of Poland EU Accession Process," which engaged in image
building, and "the Program for the Promotion of Poland in the EU during the
Ratification of Accession Treaty," whose goal "was to achieve the ratification of the
Accession Treaty by the parliaments of the EU members."

The EU's use of public diplomacy is problematic and enigmatic because of the
anatomy of the institution. Because public diplomacy is most often used to further a
national interest as opposed to a collective interest, pursuing a collective interest poses
some serious conflict within its own structure. More specifically, Phillip Fiske de
Gouveia and Hester Plumridge explain, "Such activity has tended to be competitive
rather than cooperative." A large part of EU public diplomacy has been geared towards
"facilitating greater co-operation between member states" by way of the Consociato
Institutorum Culturalium Europaeorum Inter Belgas (CICEB), which:

51 Beata Ociepka and Marta Ryniejska. "Public Diplomacy and EU Enlargement: The Case of
52 Ibid., 3.
53 Ibid., 4.
54 Philip Fiske de Gouveia & Hester Plumridge. European Infopolitik: Developing EU Public
...consists of 12 members, with plans to expand to the full 25 members states. CICEB attempts to co-ordinate activities conducted by the various European cultural relations institutes. CICEB output typically includes language diversity training awareness, journalist networking initiatives, and European active citizenship programs. Thus far CICEB's focus has tended to be intra-EU but the organization is reportedly keen to expand its sphere of activity to third countries.

Likewise, external efforts can be seen

...among the EU's own institution, the Council, and Parliament. Parliament does have a symbolic public diplomacy role, but it is the Commission which is the chief actor. As many European officials acknowledge, the European Council is currently an organization unsuited to effective public diplomacy. Its discussions are shielded from audiences, at any one time it is presided over by a single member state (whose instincts are typically either to promote itself or limit projection of the Council's activities), and its presidency changes every six months.

Although none of the current literature in public diplomacy reflects any serious discourse on public diplomacy in African countries, much focuses on the policies or approaches of other countries towards public diplomacy in Africa. For example, de Gouveia and Plumridge reported that the Chinese have established the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which is designed to "...strengthen consultation and expand cooperation...[with a] focus...on cooperation...[and] promote both political dialogue and economic cooperation and trade, with a view to seeking mutual reinforcement and common development." Likewise, the United States has developed the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in order to expand its diplomacy and military interest on the continent. Articulating the intent of this initiative, it states:

55Ibid., 12.
56Ibid.
The designers of U.S. Africa Command clearly understood the relationships between security, development, diplomacy and prosperity in Africa. As a result, U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM, reflects a much more integrated staff structure, one that includes significant management and staff representation by the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other U.S. government agencies involved in Africa. The command also will seek to incorporate partner nations and humanitarian organizations, from Africa and elsewhere, to work alongside the U.S. staff on common approaches to shared interests. 58

Among the efforts of states to impose their agendas on African countries, only the African Union (AU) is committed to public diplomacy. The AU has taken substantial steps to foster and develop public diplomacy inside and outside of the continent of Africa in accordance with its institutional vision:

- The AU is Africa's premier institution and principal organization for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent, which will lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.
- The AU is based on the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa.
- As a continental organization it focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as a prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union. 59

Despite this vision, there is no practical arm of the AU actively engaged in public diplomacy outside of Africa (within the Western framework of public diplomacy). However, if one were to utilize the Chinese approach toward public diplomacy (i.e.,

foreign aid, peacekeeping, etc.), then it is quite clear that the AU is very active in public diplomacy on the continent of Africa.

Hip-Hop and Globalization

Hip-hop studies is a relatively new academic field that is expanding and evolving each year. To date, much research into hip-hop studies has been conducted by those who have embraced or been influenced by hip-hop at some point in their lives. Only a handful of scholars study hip-hop exclusively, with the remainder being scholars who study hip-hop in addition to their other scholarly efforts. Because of this lack of focus, there is little to no rigor or frameworks, and hip-hop studies remains (as does the art form itself) abstract and polemical at best. Carlton Usher best explains this problem:

Scholarship regarding the unique thirty-year old African cultural product of Hip Hop offers a prescriptive and descriptive assessment of youth culture. The centrality of [Hip Hop Culture] in contemporary American culture has created a virtual scramble by writers of diverse disciplines or orientation to write about [Hip Hop]. Most of these works are devoid of epistemological structures that would allow us to distinguish between the positive and negative dimensions of [Hip Hop]. Much of the writing is deficient because it lacks a systematic, theoretical orientation. There is a need for such an orientation because it can clearly indicate the normative assumptions that the writers have regarding [Hip Hop] and the broader American culture.60

Tony Mitchell’s *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside of the United States* is perhaps one of the most comprehensive works on hip-hop in the global community. In this edited volume, Mitchell presents case studies of hip-hop’s global effects and interpretations, portraying how rap has been embraced and taken up by diverse peoples. Collectively, the authors agree that hip-hop is a vehicle that may have begun as an

“American” art form in other countries but now mediates and articulates local social and cultural concerns. For example, in New Zealand and Israel hip-hop is used as a vehicle to express indigenous political concerns. One disturbing aspect of this text is that Mitchell overtly downplays the significant influence of African Americans on hip-hop music by stating, "[It] can be explicated from its signification," which is completely misguided. Mitchell criticizes the "hegemony of U.S. rap" in the areas of music, images, and even hip-hop studies.

Conclusion

Perhaps the richest and most appropriate analysis of public diplomacy is conducted by observing and studying its understanding of and practice by other countries. This review uncovered the various distinctions between the Western-style (soft/smart power) and Eastern-style (hard/economic/soft power) public diplomacy practiced both internally and externally by many countries. It also identified the lack of literature on public diplomacy in African countries, which suggests that a new form of image and cultural colonization is being waged on the continent by both Western and Eastern countries. This comparative analysis speaks volumes regarding the various methods and means by which countries are engaging in public diplomacy.

This review unveiled several serious theoretical weaknesses. Most research is historical and related to U.S. experiences during the Cold War. Historical accounts of public diplomacy are significant, especially if they are analytical and not simply

anecdotal, but their contribution to the development of theory and methodology has been limited. Additionally, many scholars and professionals have confused public diplomacy with propaganda, public relations, international public relations, public affairs, and even psychological warfare. Furthermore, scholars and practitioners have often equated public diplomacy with "soft power" and measured results solely by public opinion polls and media coverage. It is obvious for almost any scholar or practitioner that public diplomacy today encompasses much more substance than these terms convey individually. Moreover, since September 11, 2001, many governmental and public agencies and organizations have published numerous reports that mostly repeat the same challenges, ideas, and principles.

When reviewing the literature, it becomes apparent that public diplomacy has several variations in terms of both theory and practice. By assessing the areas of consensus within public diplomacy, it becomes clear that many Western practitioners and scholars agree that public diplomacy should, in the final analysis acts as an extension of traditional diplomacy and hard power. Terms such as place branding, soft power, smart power, and public relations seem geared toward the same goal, that of engaging with foreign audiences.

Reviewing the literature also indicates serious areas of contention within public diplomacy. The theory of cultural imperialism is the most strident critic of public diplomacy that denies that any effort by Western nations towards Southern countries is an extension of hegemonic and in some instances colonial ambitions, evident by previous and ongoing historical engagements. The researcher agrees with this assessment and
discusses this notion in terms of the theoretical framework for this study in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CULTURAL IMPERIALISM
AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Introduction

Public diplomacy has several conceptual variants, depending on how a government or NGO conducts a public diplomacy campaign. As discussed in the previous chapter, the theory of cultural imperialism is the strongest critic of public diplomacy, as it calls into question the intent of diplomatic activities under the auspices of political, economic, and social hegemony by the disseminator. This chapter discusses the utility of cultural imperialism as a lens through which to view this study compared to the myriad of other public diplomacy frameworks discussed in the literature review. Before this discussion unfolds, the following section addresses the distinction between a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework.

Deduction and Induction in Political Science

In the discipline of political science, theoretical and conceptual frameworks can best be understood by understanding the processes of inductive and deductive logic.

Inductive reasoning involves “generalizing from what we have observed to what we have not or cannot observe”¹ such that “in the process of induction, we reason from what we

¹
not or cannot observe”¹ such that “in the process of induction, we reason from what we
know to be the case in some situation to what might be the case in other, similar
situations; we make a logical leap from what we have seen to a prediction about what we
have not seen based on the assumption that there is some constant underlying patterns to
events in the world.”² Thus, a conceptual framework is a “skeletal structure of
justification, rather than a skeletal structure of explanation,” and is based on formal logic
or experience. As such, it is an argument that employs various points of view that
ultimately culminates in an articulation of a rationale for the adoption of several concepts
or ideas in favor others. These ideas then serve as guide for data collection and analysis.
Likewise, a conceptual framework, like a theoretical framework, concerns beliefs and
values, but the former is designed to be more fluid whereas the latter is confined to the
body of the theory to which it adheres.

Deduction is “the process of reasoning from the abstract and general to the
concrete and specific...[which] enables us to use theories to explain real world events.”³
Accordingly,

...if we can show by a process of deduction that some observed event can be
logically predicted from the set of assumptions that constitute our theory, then the
theory provides an explanation for the observed event. Theory helps us to
understand the event by giving a reason why it is as it is. The role of deduction is
to provide this link between the theory and our observations.⁴

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., 18.
⁴ Ibid.
Therefore, a theoretical framework encompasses a host of beliefs and values not unique to the researcher but rather shared by other scholars who have conducted similar research within a common paradigm. Researchers generally do not identify their work within a new theoretical framework, attempting to create something unique to their own research; rather, they seek to identify the perspectives that align their research with that of other researchers.

Cultural imperialism was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because it most accurately reflects the assumptions and hypothesis of the researcher. A working model of this framework was constructed by assessing the various definitions of the term and then conceptualizing them to accord with this study. As part of this process, the two frameworks of soft power and media were debunked to justify the application of the theory of cultural imperialism to this study.

**Debunking of Public Diplomacy Frameworks**

Concepts regarding public diplomacy are referred to by several different names and, as made clear in the literature review, one should not rely solely on a particular label to convey what could be understood as public diplomacy. Rather, it is more useful to understand the various strands and methods that they entail. Therefore, this section discusses what the research identifies as the soft power theories involved in public diplomacy, including soft power, smart power, new public diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy. The following section on media addresses other theories concerning branding and public relations.
Nye’s theory of soft power rests on the principles of culture, political values, and foreign policy. Essentially, Nye argues that in order for public diplomacy to be effective, these three elements must work interchangeably. However, Nye’s notion of soft power has the same intent as hard power, which is ultimately domination. Nye’s soft power leaves no room for dialog with the engaged foreign audience but presents itself as monologue by which powerful states use coercion and persuasion to accomplish foreign policy objectives. According to Matthew Fraser,

The United States global domination has been achieved largely through non-military means—in short, through the extension, assertion, and influence of its soft power. If hard power, by definition, is based on facts, soft power is based on values. American hard power is necessary to maintain global stability. American soft power—movies, pop music, television, fast food, fashions, theme parks—spreads, validates, and reinforces common norms, values beliefs and lifestyles. Hard power threatens; soft power seduces. Hard power dissuades; soft power persuades.³

Questioning the legitimacy of the use of soft power by the United States, Joffe suggests that American soft power has had the exact opposite effect and is more in line with hard power in terms of its intent:

In recent years, a number of American thinkers, led by Joseph S. Nye of Harvard, have argued that the United States should rely more on what he calls its “soft power”—the contagious appeal of its ideas, its culture and its way of life—and so rely less on the “hard power” of its stealth bombers and aircraft carriers. There is one problem with this argument: soft power does not necessarily increase the world’s love for the United States. It is still power, and it can still make enemies... In the affairs of nations, too much hard power ends up breeding not submission but resistance. Likewise, great soft power does not bend hearts, it twist minds in resentment and rage... So the United States soft power is not only seductive but also subversive.⁶


The theory of smart power, which Nye calls a refinement of his soft power concept, makes these same arguments regarding soft power, but is more explicit about the role of hard power. Gilboa argues that even with this expansion of soft power (vis-a-vis the concept of smart power), there are several fundamental flaws in both frameworks:

Smart Power and integrated power are still far from being clear and operational concepts and they have not resolved the theoretical weakness of the soft power idea. Soft power has become a popular currency in political and ideological debate among scholars, politicians, and diplomats. The meaning of “smart” in many formulations is not clear, and it has been loaded with different and sometimes misleading contents. Nossel, for example, argued that “conservative policy makers” in the United States have adhered to hard power, while “progressive policy makers” were in favor of smart power, which she equated with “liberal internationalism.” Any analysis of soft or smart power is quickly evoking public diplomacy, but the conceptual and operational relationship between the two has not yet been sufficiently clarified.7

Despite the refinement of the term public diplomacy, the notion of new public diplomacy is problematic. Rhiannon Vickers suggests that new public diplomacy “can be characterized as a blurring of traditional distinctions between international and domestic information activities, between public and traditional diplomacy, and between cultural diplomacy, marketing and news management.”8 This definition is cryptic and ambiguous because Vickers provides no clear notion of how the “blurring of traditional distinctions” within a working model increases understanding of contemporary public diplomacy. Moreover, adding a qualifier like new to the term public diplomacy to highlight the

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advent of the information age does not change the fundamental goal or objective of public diplomacy.

Media notions of public diplomacy, such as public relations and branding, use symbols and images to exert control, engage in elite and government relationship building, and use mass media techniques to obtain public diplomacy objectives in a similar manner. However, they differ in their goals (increasing sales versus achieving foreign policy objectives), means and types of communication, management, language, and culture. Advertising and branding of products are specific and self-defining; movie-makers want to entertain, political strategies work in familiar domestic settings, and public relations goes beyond clichés. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, must address complex and multifaceted issues, provide appropriate context to foreign policy decisions, and cope with social and political factors not easily understood abroad. Robert Callahan best describes this process:

...public diplomacy is neither advertising nor movie making. Nor is it public relations or political campaigning. It may be related to those disciplines as baseball is distantly related to cricket, but it is most assuredly not close kin. For while all these occupations, including public diplomacy must communicate a message to large groups of people, the difference is in the complexity of the product....We [public diplomacy practitioners] seek to explain and promote foreign policy issues, which are by their nature complicated and multifaceted. We must also describe American society, culture, history and values, a task that is, if anything, even more challenging. Yet we cannot reduce our arguments to slogans or images, no matter how appealing. We have to provided context and nuance, explain our motives and goals and describe those many factors, domestic and international, that shape the policy. Although the policies we are pursuing, and why we are pursuing them, may be self-evident to Americans, that’s rarely the case for a foreign audience.9

In short, public diplomacy cannot be reduced to slogans and images.

Criticism of Cultural Imperialism

There are some scholars who espouse cultural imperialism or systematically debunk the theory as valid framework. One such scholar that has been mentioned several times is Joseph Nye and his theory of soft power. In *The Paradox of American Power*, Nye argues:

...U.S. hard power is needed as an implied threat, and should be used when necessary....American leadership in the world must depend on the assertion of soft power—namely, the global appeal of American lifestyles, culture, forms of distraction, norms and values. In short, American leadership is more effective when it is morally based.10

Nye's notion focus on soft power is shared by another American geopolitical strategist, Zbigniew Brzezinkis, who argues,

...the United States stands supreme in the four decisive domains of global power: militarily, it has unmatched global reach; economically, it remains main locomotive of global growth; technologically, it retains the overall lead in cutting-edge areas of innovation; and culturally, despite some crassness, it enjoys an appeal that is unrivalled, especially among the world's youth—all of which gives the United States a political clout that no other state comes close to matching. It is the combination of all four that makes the United States the only comprehensive global superpower.11

Interestingly, Brzezinski and Nye are quite candid about how important it is for the United States to enhance the appeal of American culture abroad. They like other critics and apologists, refrains from using the term cultural imperialism except perhaps to questions its usefulness.

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Other scholars, including David Rothkopf, who served as a senior official in the
Department of Commerce during the first Clinton administration, are not as cryptic in
their employment of the term:

Globalization has economic roots and political consequences, but it also has
brought into force the power of culture in this global environment—the power to
bind and to divide in a time when the tensions between integration and separation
tug at every issue that is relevant to international relations....For the United
States, a central objective of an information age foreign policy must be to win the
battle of the world’s information flows, dominating the airwaves as Great Britain
once ruled the seas. 12

Based on his experience, Rothkopf argues,

Many observers contend that it is distasteful to use the opportunities created by
the global information revolution to promote American culture over others, but
that kind of relativism is as dangerous as it is wrong....The United States should
not hesitate to promote its values. In an effort to be polite or politic, Americans
should not deny the fact the all of the nations in the history of the world, theirs is
the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly assess and improve
itself, and the best model for the future. 13

Perhaps the most compelling and systematic critic of cultural imperialism is John
Tomlinson, a leading British media specialist. In his classic work Cultural Imperialism,
he attempts to debunk the theory of cultural imperialism by reference to two areas, “the
first being the charge of imperialism, and the second being the assumption of the
consequent homogenization of cultures.” 14 In place of the concept of cultural
imperialism, Tomlinson uses the concept of cultural loss, which does not presuppose the
existence or use of a coercive power relation to describe the processes of cultural change

12 David Rothkopf, “In Praise of Cultural Imperialism?” Foreign Policy 107 (Spring 1997) : 42.
11 Ibid, 45.
14 John Tomlinson, Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
that appear to occur with globalization. Initially defining culture as "the context within which people give meaning to their actions and experiences, and make sense of lives," Tomlinson later refined this definition to include all the "mundane practices that directly contribute to people's ongoing 'life narratives,' the stories by which we chronically interpret our existence in the Heidegger calls 'the thrownness of human situation.'"  

In turn, several scholars have criticized Tomlinson for his criticism. Arguing that Tomlinson's critique "rests on a peculiar understanding of the concept of culture," Balmurli Natrajan argues that Tomlinson's assertion that current protests against globalization are ultimately caused by an individually and collectively experienced sense of cultural loss fails to capture the fact that the most compelling protests against globalization "can be argued to be about loss of entire contexts of politics, economic, and culture." Arguing for the continued relevance of a political economy based upon the conception of cultural imperialism, Natrajan posits, "Tomlinson's understanding of culture as 'context for meaning production' rather than 'meaning production in context' seems to fatally isolate narratives of meaning from their political economy and enable a veiling of the coercion that is ever present within globalization."  

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15Ibid.


18Ibid.,

19Ibid., 227.
Cultural Imperialism as a Frame of Reference

The theory of cultural imperialism is part of the larger framework of the *structural theory of imperialism* developed by Johan Galtung. Galtung explains, “This theory takes as it point of departure two of the most glaring facts about this world: the tremendous inequality, within and between nations, in almost all aspects of human living conditions, including the power to decide over those living conditions; and the resistance of this inequality to change...the world consist of Center and Peripheral nations.” Based on this point of departure, he argues that there are at least five types of imperialism—political, military, economic, communication, and cultural—the last of which spawned the discussion and discourse on postcolonial theory that led to the development of the theory of cultural imperialism.

Postcolonial theory scholar Frantz Fanon, who some argue initiated the adaption of the theory of cultural imperialism by chronicling the perspective of colonized peoples, argues that “cultural values are internalized, or epidermalized into consciousness, creating a fundamental disjuncture between the black man’s consciousness and his body.” Ashis Nandy, who explored the colonialism of India by the British, argued that the British “structured their imperial hegemony on two sets of polarities: the ideal of masculinity versus femininity, and that of adulthood and versus childhood.” Susantha Goonatilake began to bridge the gap and spawned what is now known as cultural

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imperialism by examining the impact of neo-colonialism as it relates to popular culture and the implementation of technological systems.\textsuperscript{23}

Earlier scholars such as Herbert Schiller refined cultural imperialism by describing it as the “the sum of the processes by which a society in brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even to promote, the values and structures of the dominant center of the system.”\textsuperscript{24} Contemporary scholars across the field have embraced Goonatilake’s generic notion of cultural imperialism as “an imposition of a cultural package against the informed will of the recipients.”\textsuperscript{25}

Overall, the theory of cultural imperialism regards how culture is defined and understood within globalization. Bernd Hamm posits,

\ldots it is not “cultures” which act, it is humans in social contexts who act and who impose, and it is human beings in other social contexts on whom something is imposed. Culture is communication, although asymmetric in this case. Therefore, the concept of cultural imperialism necessarily implies that we are precise and concrete in pointing out who the imperialist is, who the victim is, and in which structures they operate.\textsuperscript{26}

Such precision and clarity regarding the concept of cultural imperialism can be found in James Petras’ conceptualization of American cultural imperialism:

U.S cultural imperialism has two major goals, one economic and the other political: to capture markets for its cultural commodities and to establish

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Susantha Goonatilake, \textit{Crippled Minds: An Exploration into Colonial Culture} (Delhi: Vikas 1982).
\item \textsuperscript{24} Herbert Schiller, \textit{Communication and Cultural Domination} (New York: M.E. Sharpe 1976), 14.
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Crippled Minds}, 8.
\end{itemize}
hegemony by shaping popular consciousness. In the economic sphere, U.S. cultural imperialism plays a major role in dissociating people from their cultural roots and traditions of solidarity, replacing them with media created needs, which change with every publicity campaign. The political effect is to alienate people from traditional class and community bonds, atomizing and separating individuals from each other.27

The clear and concise theoretical framework offered by Petras is employed in this study because of its emphasis on both the economic and political aspects of cultural imperialism. Additionally, Petras argues that “the principle target of U.S. cultural imperialism is the political and economic exploitation of youth...cultural imperialism focuses on youth not only as a market but also for political reasons: to undercut a political threat in which personal rebellion could become a political revolt against economic as well as cultural forms of control.”28 Since hip-hop music is primarily a youth-driven genre, Petras’ framework provides a useful lens through which to understand the role of hip-hop in American public diplomacy vis-a-vis cultural imperialism.


28Ibid
CHAPTER FOUR
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: AGENCIES, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

American public diplomacy has greatly evolved since the United States began to reach out to the world in earnest in the early 20th century. Between the establishment of the Committee on Public Information in 1919 to the development of the sustaining Fulbright program for teachers and scholars abroad, the U.S. commitment to public diplomacy has been quite significant. This chapter focuses on the role of four areas that have been and are significant in the historical and current realities of U.S. public diplomacy: governmental agencies, NGOs, major legislation, and policy recommendations.

Governmental Agencies

The origins of American public diplomacy can be traced back to World War I, when public diplomacy as a policy and bureaucratic tool coalesced into the form of various governmental offices. After reaching its height of importance during World War I and II and the subsequent Cold War in the 20th century, public diplomacy decreased in importance as the Cold War came to an end. Therefore, the role public diplomacy in American history can be understood by examining the various offices and agencies established to support it over the past century. This section describes nine critical offices
and agencies that have used and/or are using public diplomacy: the Committee on Public Information, the Office of War Information, the Voice of America, the U.S. Information Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the Undersecretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, and the Office of Global Communication.

President Woodrow Wilson made the first attempt at the use of public diplomacy during World War I, but his effort was directed toward American citizens rather than foreign audiences. On April 13, 1917, Wilson issued Executive Order 2594 to create the Committee on Public Information (CPI), whose chief task was to persuade the American people to support World War I by means of a systematic propaganda campaign. George Creel, the chief administrator and strategist of the committee, produced falsified pictures and stories of German soldiers killing children to incite American citizens to embrace the war and created a volunteer service corps called the Four Minute Men, whose sole purpose was disseminate and propagate the gospel of the CPI by way of radio, posters, movies, and newspapers. Several divisions of the CPI focused on creating movies and photographic images that complemented its other efforts.

Despite overwhelming evidence that the CPI engaged in a blatant attempt to propagandize the war, Creel argued,

> In no degree was the Committee an agency of censorship, machinery of concealment or repression. Its emphasis throughout was on the open and the

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2 ibid.

3 ibid., 54.

4 ibid., 55.
positive. At no point did it seek or exercise authorities under those war laws that limited the freedom of speech and press. In all things, from the first to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world’s greatest adventures in advertising....We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case at to feel that no other argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of the facts. 

After the Armistice was signed at the end of World War I, the committee was formally dismantled by Wilson on August 21, 1919 through Executive Order 3154. 

On June 13, 1942, the United States Office of War Information (OWI) was established as a means to consolidate military and governmental information services. Unlike the CPI, the OWI had a myriad of oversight and responsibilities in terms of propagandizing War World II and monitoring important information that could be passed on or obtained by foreign operatives. Like the CPI, the OWI invested a considerable amount of time and resources in producing media (radio and movies) that would both strengthen the American people’s resolve against the enemy and decrease the morale of the enemy. An official Motion Picture Bureau established to oversee these efforts produced over 250 newsreels that it showed to both domestic and overseas audiences. However, many congressional members voiced a strong opposition to the committee’s domestic operations and sought to undermine its funding. Their efforts were ultimately successful, as the OWI officially ended operations in 1945 after transferring its foreign 

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5 George, Creel, How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information That Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe, (New York: New Harpers and Brothers 2008), 4-5.

6 Ibid, Snow, 60.


8 Ibid., 65.
functions to the Department of State. Although the OWI was dismantled, its legacy can be observed in its most effective tool in the public diplomacy arsenal: the Voice of America.

The Voice of America (VOA) was established in 1942 under the auspices of the OWI to serve as a radio news mechanism that broadcast information about World War II and the United States to foreign and domestic audiences. In its early years, the VOA strategically targeted countries under Nazi occupation (i.e., France and the Netherlands) by sharing medium wave transmitters with its ally (and competitor), the BBC. It also established regional stations such as Radio Free Europe (RFE), Radio Liberty (RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and, eventually, Radio Marti and Frada. During the Cold War, the VOA countered Soviet propaganda directed at American polices and leaders. In response, the Soviet Union, as well as other communist nations, began to electronically jam VOA radio signals.

Domestically, the VOA was again another congressional hot topic, with both conservatives and liberals arguing over its utility inside U.S. boarders. David Krugler describes this contention:

Was the agency the voice of the United States, or the voice of the administration? For both congressional conservatives and the State Department, the meaning of loyalty began with allegiance to the United States and its government. But for conservatives the definition of loyalty did not end there; it also crossed party lines. The VOA was an offshoot of the OWI, itself a controversial agency that had demonstrated to conservatives the excessive government spending and activities that they associated with the New Deal. Moreover, since the VOA’s recourses yielded its staff an opportunity to disseminate abroad information about domestic politics, critics wondered openly whether or not the true purpose of

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9 Ibid, 167.


11 Ibid., 123.
VOA was to promote liberal politics. If so, then the VOA's employees were disloyal because they supported political principles that conservatives believed (or at least hoped) did not represent the mainstream United States.\textsuperscript{12}

Despite the controversy on the domestic front, VOA continues to broadcast today to over 70 countries in 44 languages.\textsuperscript{13}

With the exception of the VOA, most early committees and agencies focused on exercising public diplomacy, whether internally and externally. A watershed moment in public diplomacy occurred with President Dwight D. Eisenhower's founding of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) in 1953, whose explicit purpose was championing public diplomacy through fulfilling three main objectives:

1. Increasing understanding and acceptance of U.S. policies and U.S. society by foreign audiences.
2. Broadening dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts overseas.
3. Increasing U.S. Government knowledge and understanding of foreign attitudes and their implications for U.S. foreign policy.\textsuperscript{14}

Authorization for the USIA to perform its duties came from the passage of two legislative acts: the Smith-Mundt Act and the Fulbright-Hays Act. The Smith-Mundt Act authorized programs such as the VOA (which after the establishment of the OWI was rolled into the State Department and then into the USIA) as well as television and radio programming in Cuba by establishing a charter that mandated value-free news, plural sourcing, and peer review. The Fulbright-Hays Act provided support for cultural and educational exchanges that allowed American citizens to study abroad and foreign...
students to study at American institutions. In 1999, the Foreign Affairs and Restructuring Act placed the USIA and its exchange functions under the jurisdiction of the State Department and its broadcasting functions under the jurisdiction of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBB).

Moving beyond communication and exchange programs, American public diplomacy expanded its scope into the provision of foreign assistance by establishing the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1961. In the same year, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act, which reorganized American foreign assistance programs and differentiated between non-military and military aid. Acting as an independent federal government agency, the USAID supports foreign policy objectives in three areas—economic growth, agriculture, and trade; global health; and democracy, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance—in five regions of the world: Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Eurasia, and the Middle East.

Since September 11, 2001, the role of the USAID in public diplomacy has expanded tremendously. Currently, it coordinates its actions with the State Department to achieve the three critical public diplomacy goals described in the U.S. Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan: "outreach to younger and wider audiences through people-to-people contacts; quickly counter propaganda and disinformation; listen to foreign audiences; use advances in communication technology while continuing to

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16Ibid.
embrace effective tools and techniques; and promote international education exchange and professional exchange.”

Despite its goal of providing assistance to foreign citizens, USAID has been used as a vehicle to undermine sovereign governments. Regarding USAID actions in Bolivia, journalist Benjamin Dangl reported,

…the primary programs that the US government is using to undermine Bolivia are—it’s happening through US Agency for International Development. And in 2002, a declassified memo explained clearly that a “USAID political party reform project aims at implementing an existing Bolivian law that would…over the long run, help build moderate, pro-democracy political parties that can serve as a counterweight to the radical MAS or its successors.” That’s a declassified document that I’m quoting here, and the MAS is the Movement Toward Socialism, the political party of Evo Morales. So that shows that at least for the last five or six years the US government has been interested in weakening the influence of the Evo Morales political party. And most recently, after Evo was elected in 2005, the US government has been acting to empower rightwing groups across the country by funding them through USAID.18

Such USAID efforts complement earlier efforts by another public diplomacy agency working in the region, the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean (OPD), which was created by President Ronald Regan in 1983 to provide a forum for explaining American foreign policy in Latin American and the Caribbean to domestic and foreign audiences. The OPD began its tenure under the sponsorship of the State Department, where it was directed by a large staff who directly reported to the then-National Security Advisor Oliver North. The OPD collaborated with the CIA and military officials to disseminate what has been called “white propaganda” to convince the


American public to support domestic military action against Nicaragua’s Sandinista government. In a letter to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Comptroller Harry R. Van Cleve made the following conclusion regarding the OPD:

It pursued its public diplomacy mission, S/LPD [OPD] used its own staff, and let a number of contracts with outside writers, for articles, editorials and op-ed pieces in support of the Administration’s position. Generally, S/LPD employed direct and overt methods in using the media to favorably influence the public to support the Administration’s Central American Policy. However, information developed during the course of our investigation demonstrates that, on occasion, S/LPD also arranged for the publication of articles which purportedly had been prepared by, and reflected the views of, persons not associated with the government but which, in fact, had been prepared at the request of government officials and partially or wholly paid for with government funds....We conclude that the described activities are beyond the range of acceptable agency public information activities because the articles prepared in whole or part by S/LPD staff as the ostensible position of persons not associated with government, and media visits arranged by S/LPD were misleading as to their origin and reasonably constituted “propaganda” within the common understanding of that term.19

With the demise of the USIA in 1999 came a massive restructuring of federal public diplomacy programs under the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998,20 which gave all responsibility for operating cultural and education exchanges as well as providing information to foreign audiences to the State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of International Information.

On October 1, 1999, all broadcasting duties were transferred to the newly independent BBB,21 which became the hub of all “U.S. government and government

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sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting.” The BBB supports six major international broadcasting networks: the VOA, Alhura, Radio Sawa, RFE/RL, Radio Free Asi, and Radio and TV Marti. As previously discussed, the VOA is a radio and television conglomerate that directs broadcasting towards “countries that lack a strong, independent media...[and] reflect[s] American life along with discussion on United States foreign and domestic politics.” Alhurra (Arabic for “the free one”) is a “commercial free Arabic language satellite television channel for the Middle East devoted primarily to news and information.” Radio Sawa is also an Arabic radio station but is unique in that “it broadcasts an upbeat mix of Western, and Arabic pop music along with up to the minute news, news analysis, interviews, opinion pieces, sports, and features on variety of political and social issues.” RFE/RL attempts to “promote democratic values and institutions by disseminating factual information and ideas” from “Central Europe to the Pacific, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Russia to Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, [to] countries [that] are struggling to overcome autocratic institutions, violation of human rights, centralized economies, ethnic and religious hostilities, regional conflicts, and controlled media.” RFA is a nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to “provide a forum for a variety of opinions and voices from within Asian countries...[by] provid[ing] accurate and timely news and information to Asian countries whose governments prohibit

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22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


access to free press.” Finally, Radio and TV Marti focuses exclusively on broadcasting “accurate and objective news and information on issues of interest to the people of Cuba...[and] about events in Cuba and elsewhere to promote the free flow of information and ideas in that country.”

Following September 11, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld created the Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) to develop a propaganda campaign that would improve public perception of the U.S. “War on Terror” among U.S. enemies and foreign civilian populations. Discussing the leadership and scope of the OSI, James Dao and Eric Schmitt reported,

OSI, headed by Air Force Brig. Gen. Simon P. Worden, began “circulating classified proposals calling for aggressive campaigns that use[d] not only the foreign media and the Internet, but also covert operations.” Worden envisioned “a broad mission ranging from black campaigns that use[d] disinformation and other covert activities to ‘white’ public affairs that rely on truthful news releases,” according to Pentagon officials. “It goes from the blackest of black programs to the whitest of white,” a senior Pentagon official said.

Designed to operate as a “black ops” of information propagation, OSI activities alarmed many watchdog groups and congressional members. In 2003, the OSI was dismantled in theory but not practice, as Secretary Rumsfeld describes:

I’m gonna keep doing every single thing that needs to be done and I have. That was intended to be done by that office is being done by that office, NOT by that office in other ways.

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In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the White House established the Office of Global Communication (OGC), its own public diplomacy program, with the intent of...advis[ing] the President, the heads of appropriate offices within the Executive Office of the President, and the heads of executive departments and agencies on utilization of the most effective means for the United States Government to ensure consistency in messages that will promote the interests of the United States abroad, prevent misunderstanding, build support for and among coalition partners of the United States, and inform international audiences. The Office shall provide such advice on activities in which the role of the United States Government is apparent or publicly acknowledged.30

Opponents of the OGC, including Kari Lydersen, see it as an extension of the OSI and the executive branch’s way of streamlining and manipulating information directed towards domestic and foreign audiences:

In an effort coordinated by the White House Office of Global Communication, everyone connected to the government during the war on Iraq is echoing a prescripted message of the day....Each night U.S. embassies around the world, along with all federal departments in DC, will receive a “Global Messenger” e-mail containing talking points and ready to use quotes....The PR industry, as many may know, was actually started by military during World War I, when persuasive techniques were developed to recruit soldiers. “After the war a lot of those people went to work for the private sector and are seen as the grandfathers of PR,” says Laura Miller, associate editor of PR Watch (www.prwatch.org), a corporate and media watchdog group. “They were very up front about the fact that in a democracy, public opinion needs to be controlled by a small number of people who know what’s best for the public.” In the case of the war against Iraq, that means that there should be no confusion or dissent about the aims and progress of the war. In what was apparently meant as a compliment to the OGC network, PR Week noted that “The network is intended not only to disseminate, but also to dominate news of the conflict around the world.”31

The U.S. Congress has oversight and exerts influence on matters pertaining to public diplomacy through two committees: the U.S. House of Representatives on


Committee Foreign Affairs (CFA) and the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee (FRC). The CFA, called the Committee on International Relations until 2007, has responsibility for investigations and bills concerning U.S. foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{32} The FRC "reviews and considers all diplomatic nomination and international treaties, as well as legislation relating to U.S. foreign policy."\textsuperscript{33}

Non-Governmental Public Diplomacy Committees and Organizations

The United States has extended its efforts to advise and enact public diplomacy abroad beyond governmental implementation of public diplomacy. This section discusses the two primary advisory committees that advise the government and three major non-partisan agencies that focus exclusively on influencing and championing public diplomacy policy.

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (USACPD) was "created by Congress in 1948 to formulate and recommend policies and programs to carry out the public diplomacy functions vested in the U.S. government (USG) and to appraise the effectiveness of USG public diplomacy activities."\textsuperscript{34} The commission is composed of a bipartisan panel of seven members appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate, each of whom serves a three-year term with the possibility of reappointment. The State Department describes the functions of the USACPD thus:

\textsuperscript{32}United States House of Representative "About the Committee on Foreign Affairs" http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/about.asp?nav=history (accessed July 13, 2008).


The Commission, now in its 60th year, was reauthorized in June 2007 pursuant to Public Law P.L. 110–21 (2007). It formulates and recommends to the President, the Secretary of State, and Members of Congress policies and programs to carry out the public diplomacy functions vested in the State Department, Broadcasting Boards of Governors, and the other government agencies. It also appraises the effectiveness of the public diplomacy policies and programs carried out by government agencies.\(^{35}\)

The Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (USACPD), created after September 11, 2001, was

...authorized by Congress and PL 107-228, the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (ACCD) was appointed in March 2004. It was charged with advising the Secretary of State on programs and policies to advance the use of cultural diplomacy in U.S. foreign policy, paying particular attention to: 1) increasing the presentation abroad of the United States finest creative, visual, and performing artists; and 2) developing strategies for increasing public-private sector partnerships to sponsor cultural exchange programs that promote the national interest of the United States.\(^{36}\)

The USACPD defines cultural diplomacy as “the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding... [as such it] is the linchpin of public diplomacy; for it is in cultural activities that a nation’s idea of itself is best represented.”\(^{37}\)

Although there are at least twenty-six (by the researcher’s count) organizations that examine public diplomacy in some manner, only three organizations maintain a primary focus on public diplomacy.\(^{38}\) The first organization is the Public Diplomacy


\(^{37}\) Ibid.
Alumni Association (PDAA), formerly known as the USIA Alumni Association, which is a “non-profit voluntary organization [that] has more than 400 members who have worked in or with the information, education, and cultural programs which the U.S. Government incorporates into the conduct of its diplomacy abroad.” The association “actively engages in social, education, and information activities related to the profession and discipline of public diplomacy...it actively promotes greater awareness in the United States of the public diplomacy dimension of American foreign relations.”

The second organization is the Public Diplomacy Council (PDC), a nonprofit organization “committed to the academic study, professional practice, and responsible advocacy of public diplomacy.” Founded in 1988, the PDC is

...dedicated to fostering greater public recognition of public diplomacy in the conduct of foreign affairs....The Foundation evolved to serve also as a resource and advocate for teaching, training, and development of public diplomacy as an academic discipline....The Foundation changed its name to the Public Diplomacy Council and became a membership organization with an elected board of directors. The Council maintains close ties with the USIA [PDAA], whose president is an ex-officio member of the Council’s board of directors.

The PDC has six purposes:

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38 The twenty-six organizations involved in public diplomacy are the Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Endowment, the Center for Next Generation Internet, Diplo, the Federation of American Scientists, the Freedom Forum, the Global Century Project, the Heritage Foundation, the Institute of Communication Studies, the Internet Society, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, Phillip M. Taylor’s Communication Studies Links, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, NUA Internet Services, ReliefWeb, the Rober McCormick Tribune Foundation, the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the Virtual Diplomacy Initiative, the Wilson Center, the State of American Newspaper, Teledesic, the Information Society, Trends in Latin America Networking, and the Unit for Internet Studies.


40 Ibid.


42 Ibid.
1. Increase understanding of the public dimension of world affairs and of public diplomacy as an essential instrument of statecraft.
2. Encourage teaching, research, and writing about public diplomacy.
3. Develop and promote high standards in the professional practice of public diplomacy.
4. Encourage cooperative relations between the U.S. Government and civil society, communications, arts, and educational and cultural institutions.
5. Foster dialogue between the government and non-governmental sector about the changing role of publics in a globalizing world and the impact on publics of new communication technologies.
6. Build bases for understanding public diplomacy and public perceptions by supporting the preservation of archival materials.43

The last organization actively involved in public diplomacy is the American Academy of Diplomacy (AAD), which was created in 1981 by former ambassadors and senior-level diplomats fulfill the following objectives:

- To foster high standards of qualification for, and performance in, the conduct of diplomacy and the foreign affairs of the United States.
- To increase public understanding and appreciation of the contributions of diplomacy to the national interest of the United States.
- To study and, as appropriate, to disseminate findings and recommendations with regard to the conduct and content of American foreign policy.
- To encourage the strengthening and improvement of American diplomatic representation abroad.44

The ADD has six active programs: Diplomacy and Democracy, Foreign Affairs Budget of the Future: Fixing a Hollow Service, Diplomacy and Terrorism, Recognizing Contributions, Encouraging Creative Thought on Diplomacy, and Integrating Instruments of Power and Diplomacy. The second program will soon produce a report for submission to the Obama Administration that highlights "what human and financial resources the State Department and the Foreign Service need to accomplish their missions in classic

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
diplomacy, public diplomacy, development diplomacy, and crisis response.\textsuperscript{45}

**Major Legislation and Post-9/11 Reports on Public Diplomacy**

Public diplomacy as a policy has been refined and evaluated since its conception. Congressional oversight and review of public diplomacy activities have proceeded according to two distinct ideological goals: limiting the use of public diplomacy domestically and downsizing public diplomacy programs abroad. Table 3.1 lists the major legislative acts pertaining to public diplomacy.

**TABLE 4.1**

**MAJOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY LEGISLATIVE ACTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Established the programming mandate that still serves as the foundation of U.S. overseas information and cultural programs and brought the VOA under the Office of International Information at the Department of State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Program</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Established to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange.</td>
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\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zovinsky Amendment</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Instituted a ban on domestic public diplomacy activities by the USIA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs Reform and Reconstruction Act</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Eliminated the USIA and divided public diplomacy programs between the State Department (cultural and educational exchange) and the BBG (broadcasting functions).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom Promotion Act</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Provides direction regarding the manner in which public diplomacy is conducted by the State Department and develops public diplomacy initiatives aimed at the Muslim world and at creating an international broadcasting agency.</td>
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Reactions to these legislative acts have been contained in various reports that critique, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding U.S. public diplomacy. Since September 11, 2001, government agencies, non-governmental agencies, and individual scholars have assessed public policy and provided their recommendations for improvement in various reports. This section describes, compares, and contrasts the reports produced by five agencies: the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO), the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (USACPD), the U.S. Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (USACCD), the USAID, and the PDC. The GAO is an independent, nonpartisan agency that acts as a congressional watchdog by “auditing agency operations to determine whether federal funds are being spent efficiently and effectively; investigating allegations of illegal and improper activities; reporting on how well government programs and policies are meeting their objectives; performing policy
analysis and outlining options for congressional considerations; and issuing legal
decisions and opinions, such as bid protest rulings and reports on agency rules.\textsuperscript{46}

These agencies produced twelve reports (the GAO produced 6, the USACPD 3, the USACCD 1, the PDC 1, and the USAID 1) after September 11, 2001 that assessed the efforts of American public diplomacy efforts. The recommendations contained in these reports are listed in Tables 4.2 to 4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Public Diplomacy: Actions Needed to Improve Strategic Use and Coordination of Research</strong></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>• Secretary of State adopts a research based “campaign style” approach to implement thematic communication.</td>
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<td>• Secretary of State develop protocols for sharing audience research information, establish a research staff form, and create a clearing house of U.S. Government sponsored research.</td>
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<td>• Secretary of Defense ensures that planned improvements to DOD’s internal and external media monitoring coordination efforts are implemented.</td>
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<td><strong>U.S International Broadcasting: Management of Middle East Broadcasting Services Could Be Improved</strong></td>
<td>Aug. 2006</td>
<td>• BBG take steps to improve the efficiency of MBN and its ability to address challenges by ensuring that MBN develops a comprehensive long-term strategic plan.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve controls and performance monitoring by having BBG require MBN to implement additional elements of internal control, establish a regular mechanism for undertaking annual programs reviews, implement performance indicators consistent with other BBG entitled,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006 U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges</strong></td>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>• Secretary of State develop written guidance detailing how the department intends to implement the Under Secretary’s priority goals and tactics as they apply to the Muslim world.</td>
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<td>• Development of a sample country-level communication plan to accompany this document as a guide for posts to use and adapt to their environment.</td>
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<td>• Secretary of State develop a systematic mechanism for sharing best practices data to address long-standing program challenges, which have been particularly acute in Muslim world.</td>
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<th>Report Title</th>
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<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Public Diplomacy: Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
<td>• Director of the Office of Global Communications fully implement the role mandated for the office in the President’s executive order, including facilitating the development of a national communication strategy</td>
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<td>• Secretary of State develops a strategy to guide department efforts to engage the private sector in pursuit of common public diplomacy objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department and Broadcasting Board of Governors Expand Post-9/11 Efforts but Challenges Remain</td>
<td>Aug. 2004</td>
<td>• State Department develop a strategy that considers the use of private sector public relations techniques to integrate its public diplomacy efforts, improve performance measurements, and strengthen efforts to train Foreign Service officers in foreign languages and public diplomacy.</td>
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<td>• BBG revise its strategic plan to include audience size and other key measurable program objectives, implementation strategies, resource requirements, and project time frames, as well as a clear vision of the requirements, project time frames, and the Board’s intended scope of operations, particularly plans to reduce overlap.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Public Diplomacy State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges</td>
<td>Sept. 2003</td>
<td>• Secretary of State develop a strategy that considers private sector public relations techniques in integrating its public diplomacy efforts and directing them toward common and measurable objectives;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Strengthen efforts to train Foreign Service officers in foreign languages and public diplomacy.</td>
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Source:
http://www.gao.gov/docsearch/locate?searched=1&o=0&order_by=rel&search_type=publications&keywordpublic+diplomacy
### TABLE 4.3

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<th>Report Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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| *Getting the People Part Right: A Report on the Human Resources Dimension of U.S. Public Diplomacy* | 2008 | • State Department make a more concerted effort to recruit candidates for the PD career track who have experience and skills that are more directly relevant to the conduct of public diplomacy.  
• State Department modify its examination process, particularly the Oral Assessment, to include questions about tasks directly germane to the conduct of public diplomacy.  
• State Department's Foreign Service Institute develop courses, comparable in quality to graduate-level university courses, in the area of communication theory...and establish a nine-month in-depth public diplomacy course for mid to senior level PD officers.  
• State Department build a specific PD requirement into the EER form itself, whereby Foreign Service officers are required to undertake a certain number of outreach events per rating period in order to be eligible for promotion that cycle.  
• State Department undertake a zero based review of the PD area office staffing structure to determine if the current arrangement is functioning optimally.  
• State Department undertake a zero based review of the overseas PD staffing model to determine if the current staffing structure, particularly at large posts, makes sense in the post-USIA era.  
• State Department appoint suitably qualified PD officers to senior positions within the State Department with approximately the same frequency that it appoints other career Foreign Service officers to such positions, thus eliminating the “glass ceiling” that continues to prevent PD officers from rising to the same levels as other Foreign Service officers. |
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<tr>
<th>Report Title</th>
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<th>Recommendations</th>
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• Expand the London Media Outreach Center’s ability to communicate with Arab press by creating a network of 24-hour message dissemination and monitoring centers.  
• Model a public diplomacy strategy in a test region through concentrated programs, programming, exchanges and initiatives.  
• Bridge disparate public diplomacy mechanisms within the State Department by tasking the Policy, Planning and Resources office with overseeing the strategic planning of all public diplomacy programming and resources.  
• Require embassies to maintain networks of individuals interested in communicating positive concepts on behalf of the United States.  
• Provide electronic products through the Bureau of International Information Programs to support the efforts of individuals interested in advocating U.S. policies and perspectives.  
• Implement the language continuum strategy aggressively to help Foreign Service officers achieve language proficiency, and provide cross-cultural and language training for other government personnel/contractors abroad.  
• Support the administration’s efforts to negate certain terrorist messages and convey ideas through the skillful use of semantics.  
• Fund a significant marketing campaign, either through the private sector or the government, to explain visa processes and recruit visitors and help the United States maintain its competitive advantage.  
• Encourage Congress to ensure that international citizens not bear the entire costs of new security measures dedicated to visa processes. |
• Phase out redundant and duplicative checks based primarily on ethnic origin and gender, once US-VISIT is completely functional, and encourage Congress to allow Visa Waiver Program countries sufficient time to incorporate biometric identifiers in their passports.
• Allocate the resources necessary to develop a comprehensive exchange alumni database.
• Encourage the resourcefulness of posts in offering exchange programs by requiring the submission of competitive proposals for such programs.
• Encourage each American Corner with Internet access to provide a Virtual Consulate Web site as a start-up page on all workstations.
• Fund American Centers/Libraries wherever security constraints permit their existence in order to continue benefiting from the great public diplomacy value they provide.
• Encourage Congress to give the Secretary of State the authority to create American Presence Posts, and thereby expand this concept, by notifying the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
• Create, for multiple areas of the globe, director of public diplomacy positions in the Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs, as has been done for the Middle East.
• Continue to enhance efforts to publicize the substantial amount of financial aid that the American people contribute abroad.
• Continue to coordinate with USAID to better publicize the numerous contributions America makes to foreign societies.
• Seek the support of the private sector to bolster programs designed to increase knowledge of the English language around the world.
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<th>Report Title</th>
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<th>Recommendations</th>
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- Fully implement the White House Office of Global Communications |
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<th>Report Title</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Review the consolidation of USIA into the State Department.</td>
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<td>• Integrate Congress into public diplomacy efforts.</td>
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<td>• Involve the private sector.</td>
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<td>• Recognize that money alone will not fix problems and that monies must be tied to short and long term objectives and strategies, and should be phased in over an appropriate time frame.</td>
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<td>• Assess the state of the United States's readiness worldwide for implementing public diplomacy worldwide.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Examine the nations' public diplomacy investment relative to other areas.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: [http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf); [http://www.state.gov/r/adcomrd/rls/36522.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/adcomrd/rls/36522.htm)  
**TABLE 4.4**  
**USACCD PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy | 2005 | • To increase funding and staffing for cultural diplomacy and, in a larger sense, public diplomacy  
• To provide advanced training and professional development opportunities for Foreign Service Officers with particular attention to research, polling, and the uses of media.  
• To create an independent clearinghouse to promote the national interest; support missions in their efforts to bring the best artists, writers, and other cultural figures to their audiences; develop public-private partnerships; and raise funds, with separate housing from the embassies so that cultural events can attract wider audiences.  
• Set aside funds for translation projects, into and out of English, of the most important literary, intellectual, philosophical, political, and spiritual works from this and other countries.  
• Streamline visa issues, particularly for international students.  
• Implement the recommendations issued by the Center of Arts and Culture in Cultural Diplomacy: Recommendations and Research.  
• Revamp Al-Hurra, the Arabic-language television station, in keeping with the highest traditions of American broadcasting. |
### TABLE 4.5

**PDC PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Call for Action on Public Diplomacy* | 2005 | - Establish an agency within the Department of State and National Security Council process, the U.S. Agency for Public Diplomacy (USAPD), to manage the U.S. government's civilian information and exchanges functions and to coordinate all U.S. government public diplomacy efforts.  
  - Increase public diplomacy overseas staffing by 300 percent over five years, through increased recruitment, contracts, and recall appointments for necessary skills; expand language and cultural awareness training to ensure public diplomacy officers fluent in the local language at every overseas post; and increase programs budgets for public diplomacy, including international broadcasting and exchange programs, four-fold over five years.  
  - Provide the long-term resources necessary for global international broadcasting capability, including 24-hour per day English language world innovative broadcasting and Internet programs for youth, and interactive radio programming.  
  - Establish by Presidential Directive an Interagency Committee on Public Diplomacy at the Cabinet Level to coordinate and direct the national public diplomacy strategy, with a permanent secretariat and associated working groups, co-chaired by the Deputy National Security Advisor for Communication and the Director of the new USAPD agency.  
  - Create a public-private partnership “Foundation for the Global Future” to provide permanent off-budget funding for international exchanges conducted by civilian and military federal agencies. |

Source: [http://www.pdi.gwu.edu/merlin-cgi/p/downloadFile/d/7536/n/off/other/1/name/ACALLFORACTIONONPUBLICDIPLOMACY01-2005prin/](http://www.pdi.gwu.edu/merlin-cgi/p/downloadFile/d/7536/n/off/other/1/name/ACALLFORACTIONONPUBLICDIPLOMACY01-2005prin/)
TABLE 4.6
9/11 COMMISSION PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>• Provide the Broadcasting Board of Governors with increased funding for greater broadcasting to Arab and Muslim populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• U.S. government should identify what it stands for and communicate that message clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• U.S. government should join with other nations in generously supporting a new international Youth Opportunity Fund, as education and literacy lead to economic opportunity and freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish a forum for engaging both Western and Arab and Muslim representatives to discuss each culture’s needs and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Create a Corporation for Public Diplomacy with tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the U.S. tax code that would receive private sector grants and coordinate private and public sector involvement in public diplomacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reconstitute USIA or some other entity that would have U.S. public diplomacy as its sole mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase the emphasis on public diplomacy throughout all U.S. government agencies, with organizational changes in the White House, National Security Council, and the State Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Require all foreign policy agencies to train key staff in public diplomacy and languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Measure the success of public diplomacy efforts by blending the best practices used in the public and private sectors and improve public diplomacy program effectiveness with the knowledge attained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These reports provide at least twelve general recommendations in regards to improving public diplomacy policy, including

- Redefine overall strategy.
- Increase student/citizen exchanges.
- Increase private sector involvement.
- Establish a new public diplomacy agency.
- Redefine the role of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.
- Increase embassy involvement.
- Improve communication.
- Expand public diplomacy across government agencies.
- Increase human capital funding.
- Increase technology funding.
- Increase oversight.
- Issue a presidential directive to reorganize public diplomacy at the White House.

These collective recommendations for the post-9/11 world support the need for major reform that expands the current scope of public diplomacy and emphasizes reorganizing its current organization existences as well as its implementation.
CHAPTER FIVE
DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF JAZZ AND HIP-HOP DIPLOMACY

Introduction

As part of its public diplomacy efforts, the U.S. State Department utilizes cultural diplomacy programs that champion American cultural and traditional values throughout the globe by promoting foreign exchange programs and American art and music. This chapter focuses on cultural diplomacy via promotion of American music, so-called “jazz diplomacy,” which, to some extent, is now known as “hip-hop diplomacy.” This chapter describes the process by which both jazz and hip-hop music was utilized as elements of American public diplomacy. It then proceeds to describe the voice analysis conducted on two artists involved in the Rhythm Road Tour and the top ten rap singles from 2005 to 2007 before offering conclusions concerning the role of hip-hop in American public diplomacy.

History of Jazz Diplomacy

The first official event at which the U.S. government employed jazz musicians as a part of a public diplomacy campaign was the 1956 Dizzy Gillespie Middle East Tour, which operated under the auspices of President Eisenhower’s President’s Emergency
Fund. However, as Von Eschen describes, the government was not the first institution to use jazz diplomacy:

The idea of promoting jazz musician as cultural ambassadors was the brainchild of an alliance of musicians, civil rights proponents, and cultural entrepreneurs and critics. The precise mechanics of how Ike [President Dwight D. Eisenhower] got Dizzy as the first official jazz ambassador may never be clear. Since the Gillespie tours, and the early cultural-presentation programs in general, emerged in a highly opportunistic and haphazard fashion, records of the protean institutional life remain spotty. But it is clear that Adam Clayton Powell Jr., the controversial Democratic congressman from Harlem and long-time civil rights advocate, was instrumental in setting up the Gillespie gig. Wielding the new diplomatic authority he had gained earlier that year at the Asian-African Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Bandung, Indonesia (he had defied the State Department by attending but then emerged as an unabashed defender of the West), Powell sketched a vision in which bandleaders such as Gillespie, Armstrong and Count Basie and their bands would be sent "into countries where communism has a foothold."2

Jazz diplomacy was quickly embraced by government officials because "unlike classical music, theater, or ballet, jazz could be embraced by U.S. officials as a uniquely American art form."3

After the Dizzy Gillespie Middle East Tour ended, three other high-profile cultural ambassadors were officially sponsored by the Fulbright Hays/Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961: Louis Armstrong, Berry Goodman, and Duke Ellington. The first official jazz ambassador tour sponsored by the State Department was Louis Armstrong’s 1960 tour across the African continent. Armstrong was uncomfortable serving as the U.S. jazz ambassador because of the visceral racism that engulfed the South during the civil rights movement. He had been asked to serve as

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2 Ibid., 6-7.

3 Ibid.
an ambassador in 1957, but had declined because of President Eisenhower’s refusal to
enforce court-ordered desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas. The following year, he
found himself in Congo in the aftermath of the CIA-directed assassination or the newly
elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Echen describes the political perspective at
this time:

Indeed, in what might be described as a “can-do” foreign policy culture, which
extended across Democratic as well as Republican administration, policy makers
exhibited extraordinary confidence in the United States’s ability to shape the
world in its image with whatever tools it had, be they covert operations, carpet
bombing, or jazz musicians. Indeed, given Eisenhower and Dulles preference for
covert action over conventional warfare (covert technique were elevated to a cult
of counterinsurgency by the time of the Kennedy administration), it is not
surprising that many of the jazz tours appear to have moved in tandem with CIA
operations.

Little Rock, in concert with the larger black freedom struggle at home, propelled
Armstrong to become more critical of the State Department and his newfound position as
a formidable jazz ambassador. In response, he collaborated with Dave Brubecks to
produce The Real Ambassadors, a production that “satirized State Department objectives,
personnel, and protocol, and voiced a powerful and unequivocal indictment of Jim Crow
and the United States.”

Because of Armstrong’s strong rebuke, the State Department decided to employ
Benny Goldman, a white jazz musician who had been part of an earlier effort in 1956

4 Eric Poter, What is This Thing Called Jazz? African American Musicians as Artist, Critics, and


6 Ibid., Idem, Jazz Ambassadors, 5.

7 Ibid., 79.
after Gillespie’s tour, to tour the Soviet Union. Goodman, traditionally credited with legitimating jazz in mainstream circles in the late 1930s, had a very different view of racial issues in the United States, as explained by Echen:

...Goodman held firmly to the view that jazz was a race-transcending music. Calling jazz “a completely democratic music,” Goodman wrote that “neither a difference of race, creed, or color has ever been the slightest importance among the best of the jazz bands. While Goodman’s statement illustrates the heartfelt convictions that animated his role in the integration of jazz, it was also a view that would be hotly contested by many African American musicians, who experienced on a daily bases the way racial discrimination limited their access to venues (such as Carnegie Hall), their control over recording productions, and their share of the profits from their labors...Thus, from the beginning of his goodwill ambassador tours in 1956, Goodman’s was a voice declaring that the victory over racism in the United States had already been achieved—a position markedly different from those black musicians, who saw the tours as a way to advance the struggle for equality.8

The State Department’s attempt to use Goodman as a poster child for racial harmony only led to a watered-down version of jazz and disappointment as Soviet fans and musicians became instantly disenchanted by Goodman’s lack of authenticity in what they understood as his attempt at black improvisation and style.9 After the embarrassment of the Goodman tour, in 1963 the State Department turned to Duke Ellington, a veteran jazz musician more ideologically in tune with its Cold War views as well as an established and respected jazz musician in his own right. Ellington’s zeal to represent the United States abroad was newfound; as early as 1957 Ellington had argued, “The United States’s inability to go far ahead or at least keep abreast of Russia in the race for space can be traced directly to this racial problem.”10 However,

8 Idem., ibid., Jazz Ambassadors, 44-45.
when Kennedy endorsed the civil rights movement six years later, it meant that Ellington had witnessed, in his own lifetime, the imposition of Jim Crow in Washington and the unprecedented challenge of the movement in the late 1950’s, leading to Kennedy’s condemnation of segregation. It was the dramatic shift that made him optimistic about the prospects for American liberalism. Thus, as Ellington embarked on his first ambassadorial trip in 1963, it was the civil rights movement that created the conditions under which he could endorse the potential of the United States to enter the modern world.\(^{11}\)

Although he had no ideological agreement with the State Department over the purpose of the tour, Ellington found discontent with the target audience of his music. Explaining that they had hoped to introduce their music to “the people,” Ellington and his fellow musicians expressed disappointment over playing to elite audiences already familiar with their music.\(^{12}\)

From the Ellington tour until 1978, the State Department experimented with other genres of music to curb mounting criticism:

Caught in a whirlwind of reaction to unprecedented attacks on U.S. policies, the State Department did not immediately rethink its cultural exchange strategies in a systematic fashion. Yet as policy makers strove to answer harsh criticism of the nation’s foreign policy, they attempted to reach larger audiences. Toward this end, officials began to take notice of a new musical development, turning more and more to popular forms rather than insisting on the high-modernist art extolled in the early tours. The State Department employed such musical forms as gospel, soul, and rhythm and blues, but it did not push jazz aside. Rather, it embraced a multiplicity of black musical forms.\(^{13}\)

In 1978, the jazz tours as well as other cultural exchanges and presentations were placed under the auspices of the newly created United States International Communication

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\(^{11}\)Idem, ibid, Jazz Ambassadors, 124.

\(^{12}\)Ibid.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., 149.
Agency (USICA), which was created to assume the functions of the State Department’s Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs as well as USIA responsibilities from 1978 until 1997.14

**Contemporary Program Goals and Objectives**

In January 1996, U.S. Department of State representatives attended the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) annual meeting in Atlanta to launch the Jazz Ambassadors initiative in conjunction with John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with a small group of leading jazz educators. Catherine Stearns, the Public Affairs Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau Educational and Cultural Affairs, describes in detail how this program unfolded:

The first groups went abroad in the late spring or summer of that year. For the first group of tours we recruited the musicians directly from university jazz education programs around the country. All the participants were students or recent graduates from bachelor’s or master’s programs in music. In the first year, we asked them to give us jazz duos instead of the usual trio or quartet. The reason was to reduce cost and to encourage U.S. embassies to arrange for the U.S. musicians to perform together with local musicians. That worked well. Only later was the management of the program awarded by cooperative agreement to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Kennedy Center used trios/quartets and selected the artists by open audition rather than by recommendation of universities. The name “Jazz Ambassadors” was used until Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) took over the program in 2004.15

From 1997 until 2004, the Jazz Ambassadors program employed over 100 American jazz musicians and ensembles to tour over 260 cities in 100 countries in six

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14 Ibid., 316.

15 Interview with Catherine Stearns September 9, 2008.
Each year, the program presented various aspects of jazz history and culture as part of the tour, including general jazz (1992-1998), Duke Ellington's music (1999-2000), Louis Armstrong’s music (2001), the blues (2002), Latin jazz (2003), and vocal jazz (2004).

The Jazz Ambassadors program has eight program goals and objectives:

1. Fostering mutual understanding.
2. Extending the range and reach of traditional diplomacy through cultural diplomacy.
3. Serving as an alternative mechanism for policy dialogue through public diplomacy.
4. Targeting and reaching key audiences.
5. Fostering learning and awareness of American culture and cultural heritage through cultural exchange.
6. Providing music, jazz, and cultural education.
7. Raising awareness Post program and initiatives.
8. Providing musicians with professional, artistic, and personal development opportunities.

The first goal of fostering mutual understanding includes "improving attitudes about the American people (as demonstrated by the program—creativity, freedom of expression, innovation, liberality of thought, independence, diversity, and individual, civil, and human rights). Also it hopes to generate goodwill and encourage mutual exchange while increasing awareness of American culture and values." The second goal of extending cultural diplomacy emphasizes four major elements: improving attitudes and beliefs about the U.S. government; forming in-country institutional contacts and connections that can strengthen foreign relations; facilitating friendly relations

16 Ibid.


18 Ibid, 22.
between the U.S. and foreign governments by offering new perspectives on the United States, its society, and its culture; and fostering support for other areas of U.S. foreign policy.\textsuperscript{19}

The third and fourth goals have three specific sub-goals: offer activities that provide alternative venues for policy dialogue and bring together opposing parties, government leaders, foreign diplomatic corps, business people, etc.; provide a neutral venue in which to enjoy music and engage with others; and achieve specific goals articulated by individual embassies.\textsuperscript{20} The program seeks to reach out to ethnically diverse, low-income, underserved, Muslim, and youth populations and extend the program to the greatest extent possible.\textsuperscript{21}

Both goals five and six concentrate on exposing foreign audiences to jazz. The purpose of goal five is to provide and expand an awareness of U.S. cultural history, expose audiences to jazz and jazz education, identify cultural commonalities, and create linkages.\textsuperscript{22} Likewise, goal six aims to support music and jazz education where it is lacking; work with students; train educators; and offer a variety of activities including workshops, master classes, teaching session, lectures, and school presentations.\textsuperscript{23}

In terms of raising awareness of Post programs and initiatives, this goal has four distinct objectives: celebrate special events such as Black History month; establish

\textsuperscript{19}ibid.
\textsuperscript{20}ibid.
\textsuperscript{21}ibid.
\textsuperscript{22}ibid.
\textsuperscript{23}ibid.
linkages with local institutions and organizations; support/promote local programs; and announce the opening of new facilities, such as American Cultural Centers.24

The final goal of providing musicians with professional, artistic, and personal development opportunities aims at catalyzing musicians' professional careers; extending their artistic visions and products; enriching their personal lives; and providing them with opportunities to make contact and collaborate with local musicians, learn about other musical forms, and initiate career changes.25

These clearly established goals and objectives were conceptualized at the conclusion of the 2004 Jazz Ambassadors Tour when the State Department brought in an outside company to evaluate the Cultural Exchange program for the first time in its history. In that same year, the Jazz Ambassadors program ended as a new era in music diplomacy began with the initiation of the American Music Aboard program, which promoted a more urban selection of music, including hip-hop music.

History of Hip-Hop Diplomacy

With the growing success of the Jazz Ambassadors program, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) called for proposals to continue what would be called the American Music Abroad program in 2005.26 This solicitation process became a competition process for ECA funding opportunities among academic and non-profit institutions seeking grants or cooperative agreements to support international exchange

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
programs. Grant proposals deemed technically eligible upon receipt of the ECA undergo an internal review process, including partial panel review by agency staff that represent both domestic and international perspectives and make recommendations for grant funding to the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Once the internal review process is complete, all approved grant packages undergo Congressional notification.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center program was awarded a grant to continue operations and expand to include urban music quartets in great part because of the State Department’s public diplomacy emphasis on reaching youth audiences by offering music reflective of the current American music scene. The new program evolved beyond jazz to become The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program. Under a cooperative agreement the grantee (Jazz at Lincoln Center) and the grantor (the State Department) interact, collaborate, and cooperate on a frequent and regular basis. The grantee selects the artists and the Department of State and ECA select the tour countries in cooperation with the embassies at the host countries. The tours are under the official auspices of the State Department and the American embassies in the countries where the artists perform.

The official program summary of the Rhythm Road program describes the initiative as such:

The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad is a partnership between Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and

See the ECA “Request for Grant Proposals” at http://www.grants.gov and in the Federal Register.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.
Cultural Affairs. The Program is designed to foster cultural exchange with audiences worldwide through performance and educational outreach. Selected ensembles tour such regions as Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin, the United States, and the Middle East for approximately one month. International activities include public concerts, master classes, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, media outreach, and collaborations with local musicians.\(^{30}\)

Toni Blackman and Opus Akoben, the first hip-hop artists to officially tour under the auspices of the 2005-2006 Rhythm Road program, were eventually joined by the Atlanta hip-hop group AFAR. Blackman was chosen because of her participation in the ECA Cultural Program in 2000 as an American Cultural Specialist in Senegal.\(^{31}\) Both artists were selected in part through recommendation of jazz artists who, having traveled as jazz ambassadors, were aware of the special nature of the officially sponsored program and had knowledge of the current urban music scene. Tables 5.1 to 5.3 display the artists’ Rhythm Road tour itinerary from 2005 to 2007.

\(^{30}\) The Jazz at Lincoln Center. “Rhythm Road Tour” http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad_noFl/thetour.html [accessed August 12, 2008].

## TABLE 5.1

**TONI BLACKMAN ITINERARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Jan. 27-Feb. 4</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Feb. 4-8</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Feb. 8-13</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Feb. 13-18</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad_noFl/tourcountries0506.html](http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad_noFl/tourcountries0506.html) [accessed August 12, 2008].

## TABLE 5.2

**OPUS AKOBEN ITINERARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Feb. 20-25</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Feb. 25-Mar. 2</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Mar. 2-5</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Mar. 5-6</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Mar. 6-9</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Mar. 9-15</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>June 9-18</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad_noFl/tourcountries0506.html](http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad_noFl/tourcountries0506.html) [accessed August 12, 2008].
TABLE 5.3

AFAR ITINERARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Nov. 28-Dec. 5</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dec. 5-10</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dec. 10-15</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dec. 16-20</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Oct. 24-28</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Oct. 28-Nov. 2</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nov. 2-7</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nov. 7-13</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nov. 13-18</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nov. 18-24</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following section focuses on Toni Blackman and AFAR, two of the three hip-hop artists who participated in the Rhythm Road program. They are discussed in terms of their background, how they became involved in the program, their experiences as part of the tour, and their overall impression of the program. All information presented is based on interviews with Blackman and AFAR band members Richard Johnson and Demonterious Lawrence.

Blackman is a self-described emcee, poet, activist, and staunch promoter of hip-hop music and culture. Beyond her involvement with the Rhythm Road program,
Blackman has served as a fellow for Echoing Green and the Open Society Institute.  

She also worked with the Girl Scouts of the United States by founding the Girls Hip-Hop Project, "a program that provides workshops for teen girls from the Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and many other places." Her foundation, Freestyle Union, uses free styling to stimulate social responsibility, and currently partners with the New School University Institute for Urban Education in New York.

Blackman can easily be defined as an underground hip-hop artist; she does not have a major record company deal, nor is her music sold at retail stores or online music stores. However, she is currently working on a complete album to be released by a major label. Her music can only be found on her website and Myspace.com page. The songs on her website, as well as impromptu freestyles, were the songs that she performed on the 2005 tour.

Blackman describes her experience on the tour as both complicated and enriching. When touring in Southeast Asia in 2005, she found that her level of engagement differed in each country. In Indonesia, the cultural attaché at the American embassy who served as her primary contact (which would subsequently be the case for the other countries that she toured) focused heavily on cultural exchange. There Toni had the opportunity to hear an Indonesian band play one of her songs and to engage the band as well as other musicians.

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33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Interview, Blackmon, 2008.
The mandate, according to Toni, changed as she traveled from country to country. The expectations depended on the various factors involved with planning, equipment, security, the commitment of embassy workers to assisting her, and their knowledge of hip-hop. Many of her performances took place in malls, university campuses, movie theaters, and gymnasiums due to either security reasons or lack of equipment. Although her engagement with local artists and fans was limited in both Indonesia and the Philippines for security reasons, she had opportunities to roam the cities and speak freely with the people in Thailand and Taiwan.

Overall, her impression of the tour was positive, but “...there is still huge room for improvement.” She enjoyed traveling in Africa and Asia to the various countries and meeting various people. She especially enjoyed engaging different youth through her travels, as this is an important part of her work at home. However, she was quite critical of the program because of the lack of organization and commitment by some of the people involved, which made it difficult for her to stage a good show. She revealed that it took the State Department almost seven years to own up to hip-hop diplomacy, which it finally acknowledged in an interview with NPR in January 2007.

The Atlanta-based AFAR is one of the few hip-hop live bands performing today. The group consists of pianist Richard Johnson, guitarist Marc Baldwin, bass player Demonterious “Double D” Lawrence, drummer Che “BlackFist” Marshall, and emcee

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36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
Jason "Jahah" Berry. The five-piece band has background in and been influenced by rock, jazz, gospel, and R&B. The group infuses both unity and education into their performances and conducts workshops at schools to teach children the importance of live instrumentation as opposed to electronic music.

AFAR was created by its pianist Richard Johnson, who earned an undergraduate degree from the Berklee College of Music and a Masters in Jazz Pedagogy from the Boston Conservatory. In 2000, he began seeking members for his band by visiting the most popular clubs in Atlanta. After surveying various clubs, he selected the other members, who started performing together as a band within a year. To date, the members have released two albums as a group, AFAR (2004) and The Exchange (2006), and Jahah has released his solo album, The Melting Pot (2005), in Japan. Like Blackman, they consider themselves underground performers of hip-hop music.

AFAR participated in Rhythm Road's 2006 tour in South Africa and 2007 tour in South America. As had Blackwell, they were expected to perform as well as conduct workshops with local artists. A U.S. embassy report regarding the tour in Zimbabwe provides a snapshot of AFAR's involvement:

The socially conscious hip hoppers kicked off their schedule in the country with a workshop at Parkare Paye Arts Center in Norton (40 Kilometeres South of Harare)....During these workshops, discussions focused on rehearsals and the importance of communication during live performances. The group listened to, and commented on, performances from local groups. Local artist were also given an opportunity to comment on AFAR's music. The highlight of these interactions was the eventual selection of one of the local groups, Bongo Love, to jointly perform with the hip hoppers during their show at Andy Millar Hall in Harare.42

40Johnson, Richard. Interview by author. Atlanta, GA July 16.
41Ibid.
Likewise, in Johannesburg

...the group engaged aspiring artists by conducting workshops at the Gauteng Academy of Arts, the University of Johannesburg, and the Mmabana Cultural Center. All of the workshops were carefully structured to include performances, demonstrations, and joint jamming sessions between musicians, as well as discussion about forming music groups and advancing careers in the music industry. In between the performances the group also stressed the importance of living a good life and encouraged the youth to stay away from crime and irresponsible behavior.43

Both band members interviewed had been inspired by both tours. However, their overall impression of the South American tour was quite different from that of the South African tour because of the growing hostility toward American foreign policy that they experienced during the former. For example, Demontrious recalls being whisked from a local market in Columbia because a citizen began charging them with murder.44 Likewise, both recall being asked an excessive number of questions by local artists and local media regarding U.S. foreign policy in Bolivia. Jonathan, who had traveled abroad extensively with jazz ensembles internationally before the Rhythm Road tour, says the contrast was quite clear in regards to the reception and perception of Americans abroad before and after September 11, 2001.

Voice Analysis of Rhythm Road Artists

Both Blackman and AFAR used original compositions in their Rhythm Road concerts and workshops. Blackman, as stated earlier, has not released an album to date, but provides access to several of her songs on her website. AFAR has released two


albums as a group and Jahara has released a solo album in Japan. This study assessed only the two group albums. The following voices were used as assessment tools in the evaluation of each song.

1. **Hardcore**: The use of profanity and/or championing the use of violence, alcohol and drug uses.
2. **Political**: Critique of political, social, civil, and/or educational institutions and the advocacy of a particular ideology.
3. **Pimp**: Misogynistic suggestions where women are subjected to inferior, exploitative, or submissive position in relationship of society to men.
4. **Lyricist**: Showcasing lyrical skills by way of metaphors, cryptic dialectic, flow, and braggadocios tendencies.
5. **Bling**: Advocacy of hyper-materialism (jewelry, cloths, cares, etc.) and/or currency.
6. **Gangster**: Encompasses violence, alcohol, drug use or selling, and glorifying or encouraging illegal activity at the expense someone else and a heavy emphasis on territorial domination
7. **Religious**: Evangelizing a specific theological orientation through praise and/or critique of nonbelievers and other faiths.
8. **Love**: The expression of affection of the opposite sex, communities, friends, and/or material things.
9. **Sexual**: Explicit references to sexual activity
10. **Social Justice**: The support of equality by supporting civic or civil causes that can collectively improve a society or the world.
11. **Black Nationalist**: Critiques of white and black people who consciously refuse to uplift black people; this theme also addresses self determination and liberation of black and African people at the hands of white power.
12. **Club/Dance**: Music for dancing or parting in a club or party setting.
13. **Inspirational**: Provides hope and/or an alternative worldview to help listeners overcome problems or personal issues
14. **Self Improvement**: Encourages listeners to improve their lives by offering concrete advice and counsel for both self-improvement and improvement of the entire community/word.
15. **Storytelling**: Focuses on telling a story, whether true or fictional, in order to accentuate another voice.

This study assessed eight of Blackman’s songs available on her website that, although diverse, have a common focus on self-improvement and social responsibility.
The eight songs are entitled “Hollywood Dreams,” “Beyond the Bling,” “My Blood,”
“Ha Ha Ha,” “I Love You So,” “Work It Out,” “Ahha,” and “They Don’t Even
Knowfreestyle.”

On their first self-entitled album, AFAR maintains a consistent voice in the
compilation that is lyricism and entertainment. The ten songs on this album are “The
Beginning,” “No Time to Front,” “Moving On,” “Oooh,” “A.f.a.r.,” “Watch Out,”
“Reality,” “Still Standing,” “Atl Anthem,” and “Dream On.” The three major voices that
dominate this album are inspirational, love, and lyricism. The fourteen tracks on AFAR’s
most current album, The Exchange, are “Rockin it,” “Put Ya’ Hands Up,” “The
Definition,” “I’m Clean,” Before I Go,” “Blaze Em’ Up,” “Girl,” “Like That,” “One
Time,” “These Streets,” “What Would You Do?,” “Soweto,” “The Package (She’s a
Murderer),” and “Stand Up/Act Now.” The four major voices that dominate this album
are lyricism, social consciousness, inspirational, and love. Box 5.5 provides a summary
of Blackman’s and AFAR’s voices.
### TABLE 5.4

**TONI BLACKMAN VOICE ANALYSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollywood Dreams</td>
<td>Self-Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Bling</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Blood</td>
<td>Self-Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Ha Ha</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Love You So</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work It Out</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahha</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They Don’t Even Know</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freestyle</td>
<td>Self Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 5.5

**AFAR VOICE ANALYSIS, FIRST ALBUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mic Check</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Time to Front</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving On</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oohh</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.f.a.r.</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch Out</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Standing</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atl Anthem</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream On</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5.6
AFAR VOICE ANALYSIS, SECOND ALBUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rockin It</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put Ya Hands Up</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Definition</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m Clean</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I Go</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaze Em’ Up</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like that</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Time</td>
<td>Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These Streets</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Would You Do?</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soweto</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Package (She’s a Murderer)</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand Up/Act: Now</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Between 2005 and 2007, literally thousands of hip-hop songs and hundreds of albums were released and distributed worldwide. This global expansion of hip-hop has clearly expanded beyond the borders of the United States into hundreds of countries around the world. The extent to which hip-hop music acts as an agent in informal American public diplomacy remains unclear because no study to date has systematically researched this phenomenon. To help fill this research gap, this study examined the top ten rap singles reported by the Billboard Top Ten charts from 2005 to 2007, based on the assumption that these songs were not only popular in the United States but throughout the world during these years.
The Billboard rap singles chart is produced by *Billboard* magazine, a publication that has...

...serve(d) the information needs of the entertainment business since 1894. Today, that means a core focus of the music business, providing charts, data, analysis, profiles, news and trend reporting for aspiring artist, top executives, tour promoters, publishers, radio programmers, lawyers, retailers and others. In the past few years, Billboard has committed to providing information and insight for the new industries that have sought opportunities in music, such as advertising, film, television, digital and mobile.\(^45\)

The data used to compile these charts is collected...

...by Nielsen SoundScan from a universe of merchants that represents more than 90% of the U.S. music retail market. The sample includes not only music stores and the music departments at electronics and department stores, but also direct-to-consumer transactions and Internet sales (both physical albums via Internet and ones bought via digital download). All sales charts use the entire Nielsen SoundScan panel, with the exception of the R&B/Hip-Hop chart, which uses a panel of core stores that specialize in this genre.\(^46\)

Tables 5.8 to 5.10 list the top ten hip-hop songs and their voices from 2005 to 2007.

---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTISTS</th>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lil Jon and The East Side Boyz Featuring Usher &amp; Ludacris</td>
<td>Lovers and Friends</td>
<td>Love, Sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Snoop Dogg Featuring Pharell</td>
<td>Drop It Like Its Hot</td>
<td>Dance, Bling, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Game Featuring 50 Cent</td>
<td>How We Do</td>
<td>Hardcore, Bling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 50 Cent Featuring Olivia</td>
<td>Candy Shop</td>
<td>Hardcore, Sexual, Pimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 50 Cent</td>
<td>Disco Inferno</td>
<td>Club, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kanye West Featuring Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>Gold Digger</td>
<td>Club, Lyricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 50 Cent</td>
<td>Just A Lil Bit</td>
<td>Club, Sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bow Wow Featuring Ciara</td>
<td>Like You</td>
<td>Hardcore, Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Game Featuring 50 Cent</td>
<td>Hate It or Love It</td>
<td>Inspirational, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Billboard Charts 2005
TABLE 5.8

2006 BILLBOARD TOP RAP SINGLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTISTS</th>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yung Joc</td>
<td>Its Goin Down</td>
<td>Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lil Jon Featuring E-40 and Sean Paul of the Youngbloodz</td>
<td>Snap Your Finger</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dem Franchise Boyz Featuring Lil Peanut and Charlay</td>
<td>Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nelly Featuring Paul Wall and Alli Gipp</td>
<td>Grillz</td>
<td>Bling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. T. I.</td>
<td>What You Know</td>
<td>Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chingy Featuring Tyrese</td>
<td>Pulling Me Back</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Field Mob Featuring Ciara</td>
<td>So What</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sean Paul</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Young Dro Featuring T. I.</td>
<td>Shoulder Lean</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Chamillionaire Featuring Krazyie Bone</td>
<td>Ridin Dirty</td>
<td>Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Billboard Chart 2006
TABLE 5.9
2007 BILLBOARD TOP RAP SINGLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTISTS</th>
<th>SONG TITLE</th>
<th>VOICE(S)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fabolus Featuring Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Make Me Better</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plies Featuring T-Pain</td>
<td>Shawty</td>
<td>Love, Sexual, Pimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mims</td>
<td>This is Why I’m Hot</td>
<td>Lyricism, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Shop Boyz</td>
<td>Party Like a Rockstar</td>
<td>Club, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unk</td>
<td>Walk It Out</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Soulja Boy</td>
<td>Crank That</td>
<td>Dance, Hardcore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jim Jones</td>
<td>We Fly High</td>
<td>Bling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ludacris Featuring Mary J. Biige</td>
<td>Runaway Love</td>
<td>Storytelling, Social Justice, Sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. R. Kelly/Bow Wow (Featuring T. I. and T-Pain)</td>
<td>I’m A Flirt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bow Wow Featuring Chris Brown and Johnta Austin</td>
<td>Shortie Like Mine</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Conclusion

Jazz and hip-hop diplomacy originated from the same commitment to the promotion of American culture and entertainment among foreign audiences. Both jazz and hip-hop artists have and continue to represent their country in the hope of extending appreciation of their music and American culture throughout the world. As African Americans, these artists have faced the challenge of representing a country that has often discriminated against them, whether overtly or covertly. Overall, the positive impact of
both jazz and hip-hop diplomacy has exceeded the expectations of government officials who had initially expressed skepticism regarding the appointment of jazz and hip-hop artists as cultural ambassadors.
CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSION

As this research has shown, the utilization of hip-hop music in contemporary American public diplomacy can be understood by engaging in three types of analysis: public diplomacy policy analysis, public diplomacy agency and program analysis, and voice analysis of the lyrics of hip-hop artists engaged in both formal and informal public diplomacy. Each methodological inquiry produced interesting results and insights into a new form of 21st-century public diplomacy in the post-9/11 world.

Through conducting these forms of analysis, this study has opened the door to various other research opportunities concerning hip-hop and political science. As such, the following sections discuss the various findings through each methodological lens and relate them to the overall theoretical framework and hypothesis set forth at the beginning of the study. This discussion proceeds to a brief discussion of race and diplomacy and the implications of this study regarding these topics.

Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century

The events of September 11, 2001 demonstrated the need for a renewal of public diplomacy efforts in the 21st century. As this study has revealed, the practice of public diplomacy had been declining as the Cold War drew to a close. International
broadcasting budgets and staff were cut throughout the 1980 and 1990s, culminating with the incorporation of the USIA into the State Department in 1999. After decades of neglect, the United States was unprepared to wage a full-scale information war after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Tasked with rapidly renewing its public diplomacy efforts in the Middle East but with little time to adequately study its target audience, the State Department turned to previous models of public diplomacy. Based on the perceived but largely unexamined Cold War successes using cultural diplomacy, the new programs rely heavily on the seductive aspects of popular culture, such as music and movies.

Whereas Cold War public diplomacy used a tiered approach in which programs often complemented one another (i.e., the VOA and RFE were complementary broadcast vehicles), contemporary public diplomacy approaches place a greater emphasis on the transmission of popular culture, which some argue occurs at the expense of responsible news and informational broadcasting. In an evaluation of public diplomacy policy, the GAO justified its use of new public diplomacy approaches:

Traditionally, U.S. public diplomacy is focused on foreign elites—current and future overseas opinion leaders, agenda setters, and decision makers. However, the dramatic growth in global mass communication and other trends have forced a rethinking of this approach, and (the State Department) has begun to consider alternative techniques for communicating with broader foreign audiences.¹

Several news-oriented international broadcasting organizations, such as RFE, have become pop music stations.² While the mode of broadcasting used during the Cold War focused on reaching the educated and powerful, the asymmetrical conflict in the Middle


² Ibid.
East calls for new mode of broadcasting. In hopes of capturing the youth market, stations now play a mix of Western and Arabic music interspersed with brief news segments.

In 2003, the State Department launched a number of public diplomacy programs in the Middle East. These included the publication of *Hi International*, a glossy, youth-oriented magazine that spotlights American movie stars and recording artists and the establishment of the Al-Hurra satellite television network, which features news and cultural programming, as an alternative to Al-Jazeera. The State Department also hired Charlotte Beers, a prominent advertising executive, to rebrand the United States in the Middle East through the development of the Shared Values Initiative, a series of television commercials intended to improve the image of the United States in the Middle East and Muslim world. However, the Shared Values Initiative was quickly terminated due to the virulently negative reaction to it in its target markets.

In addition, the CIA, the Department of Defense, and other U.S. agencies organizations have been engaged in covert manipulation of local presses in Iraq and Afghanistan. These contemporary programs all share a savvy understanding of the ability of mass media, specifically the products of popular culture, to manipulate public opinion. American public diplomacy clearly has shifted and evolved to become more conscious and inclusive of current media, which has opened the door for the use of hip-hop music as a vehicle of cultural transmission.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 302.
From the early 20th century to the present, various government agencies have promoted or advanced public diplomacy. Early efforts that concentrated on American citizens at home eventually led to engagement with foreign audiences abroad. Regardless of their reach and target audience, these campaigns were strongly criticized, leading to congressional oversight and legislation that abolished vehicles for the dissemination of propaganda disseminated domestically and critical oversight of propaganda disseminated abroad. Despite these efforts, citizens of other nations, and to some extent American citizens, continue to view American public diplomacy efforts as forms of propaganda. From the actions of the OPD to those of the USAID, many efforts by which the United States supposedly attempted to engage foreign audiences resulted in the interference of their nations’ sovereignty.

In reports produced after September 11, 2001, the NGOs involved in advising, assessing, and making recommendations for American public diplomacy have expressed broad consensus that the manner in which the U.S. government is designing, implementing, and evaluating public diplomacy policy programs is at best dysfunctional. This conclusion stems from the U.S. government’s abandonment of the USIA in 1999 and integration of public diplomacy office into the State Department. Moreover, many have reached the conclusion that the government needs to create an independent yet integrated agency devoted to public diplomacy that projects a clear message abroad and engages in dialog rather than monolog.

Assessments of public diplomacy have also pointed out the utility of utilizing cultural diplomacy to win the hearts and minds of foreign audiences, a Cold War form of diplomacy that remains relevant for the current War on Terror. Although analysts have
made no explicit recommendations in regards to employing hip-hop artists in public diplomacy campaigns, they have suggested that the State Department consider greater dissemination of popular culture as a means of capturing the imagination of Arab youth.

**Hip-Hop and American Public Diplomacy**

Although the use of jazz and hip-hop music as components of American public diplomacy was initially tentative, it has become more established through the formation of cooperative agreements with foundations such as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. During the Cold War, jazz artists served as appointed cultural ambassadors to promote the ideal of a racially integrated United States, despite the reality of a racially divided nation. Likewise, American innovation was championed by the dissemination of jazz music as an American invention and product of a "free" nation. Although foreign audiences were captivated by the various artists that toured on behalf of their country, both they and the artists remained critical of the injustices that were ensuing in the United States.

As hip-hop music became more attractive to younger audiences throughout the world, jazz diplomacy evolved into hip-hop diplomacy. Because hip-hop diplomacy was not formally recognized until early 2007, the origins of and commitment to hip-hop diplomacy are not as transparent as are those of jazz diplomacy. However, it is clear that the hip-hop artists involved in the Rhythm Road program have helped it become an instant success that has received much acclaim from embassies and foreign media. As the employment of hip-hop artists in American public diplomacy efforts appears to be an
effective method of engaging foreign audiences, especially youth, it should continue to play a pivotal role.

The dominant voices in formal hip-hop public diplomacy are quite constructive, positive, and encouraging to foreign audiences. In contrast, the dominant voices in the Billboard top ten hip-hop songs are misogynistic, violent, and disparaging to certain listeners. This difference in the dominant voices in formal and informal hip-hop public diplomacy may exist because the hip-hop artists involved in the Rhythm Road tour may have been required to abide by certain standards to serve as cultural ambassadors. Moreover, the top ten songs are more commercially based and reflect the values of both the recording companies and the artists. Overall, what is known and practiced as hip-hop diplomacy is playing a significant role in American public diplomacy today.

**Cultural Exchange vs. Cultural Imperialism: Hypothesis Revisited**

Regarding whether hip-hop reflects or champions American cultural imperialism, the response is neither yes nor no but both yes and no. From an informal perspective, the answer is negative for three reasons: the stated objectives of the Rhythm Road program, the types of artists that are chosen to serve as cultural diplomats, and the prior existence of hip-hop communities throughout the world. The eight program goals and objectives of the Rhythm Road program reflect a commitment to cultural exchange rather than cultural domination. As confirmed by the artists themselves, the Rhythm Road artists are strongly encouraged to speak, teach, learn, and perform with local artists in small group settings and workshops. Unlike the Jazz Ambassadors program during the Cold War, in
which the artists were expected to play to and engage with foreign elites, contemporary musical public diplomacy encourages systematic engagement with local populations.

The second reason why formal hip-hop diplomacy does not reflect Petras' conception of cultural imperialism concerns the artists involved in the tours. The current process by which hip-hop artists are selected to serve as cultural diplomats for the State Department strongly decreases the possibility that its partner (Lincoln Center) will recommend artists who are controversial or mainstream. The current roster of hip-hop artists involved with the Rhythm Road tour has strong backgrounds in education, music, activism, and community organizing. Assessment of their music through voice analysis provides no evidence that they are seeking to "dissociate people from their cultural roots and traditions of solidarity, replacing them with media created needs, which change with every publicity campaign...[or] alienate people from traditional class and community bonds, atomizing and separating individuals from each other," practices that Petras described as components of cultural imperialism.6

The final reason why formal hip-hop diplomacy does not support an agenda of cultural imperialism is the formation of hip-hop communities throughout the world, a process that began in the early 1980s, the same time that hip-hop itself became established. Hip-hop communities emerged as youth around the globe began to embrace, emulate, and then assimilate American hip-hop music and expression into their own situation and environment, demonstrated by the fact that hip-hop music is now produced in at least twenty different languages throughout the world.7

The most interesting aspect of this phenomenon is that most global hip-hop communities do not reflect the commercialized, mainstream nature of American hip-hop music. For example, Palestinian youth have utilized hip-hop music as means to articulate their frustration with Israel and the need for a Palestinian state. Likewise, so much hip-hop music produced in Cuba is supportive of the state that the Cuban government has even created an official Cuban Rap Agency to both support and control homegrown hip-hop on the island.

On the other hand, when considering informal hip-hop diplomacy from an economic and political perspective, it is feasible to argue that it does reflect what Petras describes as American cultural imperialism. The top ten hip-hop songs from 2005 to 2007 were all produced by American artists, and none of the top one hundred R&B and rap albums released during those years was produced by foreign hip-hop artists. The disproportionate representation of Americans in album sales and playlists around the world supports Petras’ argument of an American hegemonic economic presence in regards to American hip-hop music and its relationship to the world.

In regards to shaping popular consciousness, the lyrics of the top ten Billboard hip-hop songs from 2005 to 2007 reflect a cultural imperialism agenda. An examination of the dominant voices in the songs demonstrates the artists’ emphasis on hyperconsumersism, violence, materialism, and misogyny. Several scholars, including

9 *Hip Hop Culture*, 97.

famed sociologist Theodore Adorno, suggest that popular music in any form acts as an agent in cultural imperialism:

Music in a commodity form performs an ideological function; passively consumed, it cannot procure authentic cultural pleasure, but rather is exploited to produce fetishistic attachment to songs and the “starts” who sing them. Pop culture is an instrument of the dominant capitalist class, manipulated for its interest, and exploited to neutralize all oppositions to the existing social order....[Thus popular music] is a mass-culture distraction that serves as an opiate that pacifies the world’s youth.¹¹

Based on this argument, the youth throughout the world who consume these popular songs may be victims of cultural imperialism.

Thus, formal hip-hop diplomacy can be considered a form of cultural exchange while informal hip-hop diplomacy a form of cultural imperialism. The guiding idea of this study was that the U.S. government has been actively promoting and sustaining an agenda of cultural diplomacy by using hip-hop music in its public diplomacy efforts. After careful examination, one can reasonably conclude that the artists involved in the Rhythm Road program are professional musicians with strong educational backgrounds who are dedicated to community service and have a genuine interest in promoting positive songs to their listeners. This researcher reached this conclusion after interviewing both the artist and group involved in the Rhythm Road program and carefully analyzing the voices that dominate their music.

In contrast, after assessing the top ten hip-hop songs from 2005 to 2007 and identifying their consistently negative voices, the researcher concludes that informal hip-hop diplomacy is more likely to promote Petras’ notion of a cultural imperialist agenda. It appears that the U.S. government provides a more positive and inspiring form of hip-

hop music to foreign audiences through its selection of hip-hop ambassadors while music produced by the private sector presents a more negative and degrading perception of hip-hop music. Despite this conclusion, the researcher acknowledges that not all types of informal hip-hop public diplomacy are negative. Moreover, the researcher stresses that his conclusions are based on a comparison of the top ten hip-hop songs from 2005 to 2007 and the songs performed by the hip-hop ambassadors during those same years, the latter of which project a better image to the world than the former.

Another interesting facet to this study is the American government’s explicit commitment towards value transmission and the role of hip-hop music in this commitment. In 2002, President George W. Bush identified the enemies of the United States as part of an “axis of evil” whose danger could be decreased not only through military means but also by changing the mindsets of their citizens by persuading them to embrace American values:

We have a great opportunity during this time of war to lead the world toward the values that will bring lasting peace....The United States will take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war of terror....In every region, free markets and free trade and free societies are proving their power to lift lives. Together with friends and allies...we will demonstrate that the forces of terror cannot stop the momentum of freedom....We have known freedom’s price. We have shown freedom’s power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom’s victory.\textsuperscript{12}

Several scholars dubbed this commitment by the Bush Administration as information warfare based on three major tactics: public affairs, psychological operations, and public diplomacy. The public affairs tactic was designed to aggressively transmit

American perspectives and information on governmental and military activities to both domestic and international audiences. The psychological operations were “planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.” Finally, public diplomacy focused on the need to clarify U.S. positions and values through soft power methods. When all three methods were used simultaneously, they increased the possibility of fulfilling a systematic agenda of cultural imperialism. Adding to this explicit behavior and rhetoric was the Freedom Promotion Act, the reasoning behind which was explained thus:

In countries of predominantly Muslim population, opinions of the United States and American Foreign policy among the general public and select audiences are significantly distorted by highly negative and hostile beliefs and images….These negative opinions and images are highly prejudicial to the interest of the United States and to its foreign policy….As part of a broad and long-term effort to enhance a positive image of the United States in the Muslim world, a key element should be the establishment of programs to promote a greater familiarity with American society and values among the general public and select audiences in countries of predominantly Muslim population.

The use of these tactics contributed to increasingly negative attitudes and perceptions toward the United States and added creditability to the argument that the United States was engaged in cultural imperialism. Former U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke

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confirmed this argument when he wrote, "Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or—if you really want to be blunt—propaganda."16

Examining the role of hip-hop music in value transmission leads to additional questions: Does hip-hop music promote the same agenda regarding value transmission as the government? Will hip-hop music share the same perceptual fate as the United States in terms of its image? Has there been a backlash or revolt against hip-hop music in the larger world because of its perceived cultural hegemony? Much like the issue of cultural imperialism in American public diplomacy, the issue of value transmission cannot be addressed by a simple response. A perfect example of the complexity of public reaction to hip-hop music was provided by panelists examining Senegalese hip-hop music in a symposium entitled “African Underground: Youth and Hip Hop in African Politics”:

American hip-hop has been criticized for its aggressive lyrics, misogynist expression, and anti-authoritarian stance. While the Islamic influence on Senegalese hip-hop to some extent counters the more negative elements of American rap, African hip-hop artists have to strive harder to maintain their integrity, unique identity, and purpose as the effects of globalization increase. Rather than discarding their own style as a result of increased exposure to other artists, rappers in Senegal are carefully selecting, editing, and determining which characteristics, approaches, and styles are most appropriate for them in their unique cultural context. For example, Sommers noted, many African artists relate to Tupac’s pride and fearlessness, but reject the violence and sexuality expressed in his lyrics.17

As the factors behind the rejection and embrace of hip-hop music are complex, no blanket generalization can be made about its role in globalization as a positive or negative

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force. Further research in this area is needed to provide greater insight into how value transmission affects political behavior.

In final analysis, the researcher concludes that although the U.S. government does in fact practice and promote cultural imperialism, hip-hop music plays no significant role in this process. Despite the assumptions grounded in historical and contemporary data described at the beginning of this research process, closer examination and interviews with the artists involved in the Rhythm Road program revealed that formal hip-hop diplomacy was more progressive than the researcher had expected. Rather than a formal means of serving an agenda of cultural imperialism, hip-hop music transmission can best be understood as a authentic cultural exchange process in which the artists and their foreign audiences learn and teach one another about hip-hop based on their own experiences.

Race and Diplomacy

An undercurrent of this research was the role of race in public diplomacy. As both jazz and hip-hop music are genres born out of the experience of African Americans in the United States, their use as forms of public diplomacy contrasts with traditional forms of diplomacy, a profession that has been dominated by white males. Moreover, until relatively recently few concerted efforts were made to acknowledge race as a criterion in recruiting diplomats or as a foreign policy concern because the State Department viewed race as a domestic issue. Michael L. Krenn discusses this issue:

For U.S. foreign policy officials, race was, first and foremost, basically a domestic matter. They felt uncomfortable dealing with it at home, and, since the United States's record on the issue was not a particularly exemplary one, they felt even more uneasy dealing with it in the international arena. For most of them, the
primary enemy in the world was communism, not racism. Arguments that the Department and Foreign Service needed to be more representative of the American population at large generally fell on deaf ears. Such action, it was argued, would dilute the “professionalism” of these elite institutions.18

Other scholars, such as Michael Hunt, go further and suggest that American diplomacy is inherently racist and the issue of race will undoubtedly be ignored because the State Department believes that it has no role in its mission.19 Hip-hop diplomacy is a modest attempt to include African Americans in diplomatic efforts during the War on Terror.

An addendum to this discussion of race and diplomacy is consideration of the appointment of Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, both of whom are African American, as senior diplomats in the State Department, an institution that conveniently ignored the issue of race for years. Their appointment was a strange irony when considered alongside the climate of xenophobia towards Muslims and Arabs as well as the demonization of so-called terror camps in Africa that occurred under their tenure. The role of race and diplomacy will continue to be issue that the State Department must address in the years to come.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study yielded findings that should lead to further inquiry to gain greater understanding of hip-hop music within the discipline of political science. One area of inquiry could be the values transmitted by hip-hop lyrics to foreign audiences. A study investigating this topic could research the impact of American hip-hop music on the

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political worldview of youth in other countries. Another area of inquiry could be the role of hip-hop music in political movements in developing countries. A third area of inquiry could be the manner by which other nations are using hip-hop in their public diplomacy strategies, as does Cuba.

As hip-hop music and culture becomes a dominant presence in the lives of youth across the globe, it will become increasingly necessary to study its impact on the political world. It will be particularly interesting to observe how hip-hop diplomacy flourishes under newly elected President Barak Obama, whose presidential campaign had been supported by many mainstream hip-hop artists, and whether the Obama Administration’s commitment to smart power under the auspices of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton returns diplomacy to the forefront when engaging with hostile nations. As both the United States and hip-hop continue to strive to corner new markets to maintain their hegemony, their destinies are intertwined. Because of its strong aspirations, it is almost certain that hip-hop will continue to play a significant role in American public diplomacy in the 21st century.
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