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Young Cultural Diplomacy

A Quarterly Journal

"Applied Cultural Diplomacy: Best Practices & Future Strategies"

(June 2014)





“Cultural Diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation or promote national interests; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society.”

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter 1. Cultural Diplomacy in Art	
Hollywood Movies: The Everlasting Epitome of Cultural Diplomacy	4
Cultural Diplomacy trough Cinema: an European approach	6
The Song Happy and its Impact on Cultural Diplomacy	8
Photography as Cultural Diplomacy.....	10
Cultural Diplomacy Kicks Off.....	12
Chapter 2. Cultural Diplomacy in Practice	
The Role of Translators and Interpreters as Cultural Diplomacy Ambassadors.....	14
The Flip Side of Being a Tourist.....	16
Cultural Diplomacy practiced in Families?.....	18
Chapter 3. Cultural Diplomacy in Post-conflict Situation.	
Bosnia and Herzegovina: An educational System Reform for Social Reconciliation..	20
Cultural Heritage as Conflict Resolution.....	22
Untangling Representations of the Past in Post-Socialist Europe	24

Introduction

Applied Cultural Diplomacy: Best Practices & Future Strategies

“Young Cultural Diplomacy” is a program undertaken by the Organization for Youth Education and Development. The intention of the program is to put forward perspectives of youth on cultural diplomacy - the way they view and understand it, while at the same time to explore how cultural diplomacy can be used in order to support the development of youth worldwide.

Young Cultural Diplomacy - June 2014

Art is an essential and profound instrument of diplomacy. It enables expression of identity on a personal, communal and national level, creating an accessible space for artists, performers and participants to peacefully engage and exchange ideas. The enjoyment of art – whether it is visual or aural, written or performed – is a powerful vehicle for creating common ground and cultural understanding.

Despite the irrefutable joy and meaning art brings to our lives – to our existence as human beings – the importance of art and culture in communication is consistently downplayed. It is well recognised that music and film promote social cohesion and increase intercultural awareness, and yet there is very little research and development into understanding this force for good and how to best encourage people towards harmony through art.

It is vital to the future of diplomacy to enhance our understanding of how best to employ Cultural Diplomacy. Cultural heritage and the importance of beautiful works of cultures past and present as instruments for mutual under-

standing cannot be ignored at a time when communication and reconciliation have never been more difficult or more important. To address and increase awareness of this need, this June issue of the Young Cultural Diplomacy quarterly journal focuses on “Applied Cultural Diplomacy: Best Practices & Future Strategies.”

Our first section illustrates the power of many mediums of art to build bridges and strengthen relations between different cultural groups, whether speciifcally created for the purpose of reconciliation or not.

Our second section presents three examples of the use of Cultural Diplomacy in civil society and through them posits methods for successfully using culture to enhance diplomatic endeavors.

Our last section observes the role of Cultural Diplomacy in reconciliation efforts, including efforts to preserve and teach cultural heritage, particularly in post-conflict environments where mutual understanding and peace-building are of the utmost importance.



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Hollywood Movies: The Everlasting Epitome of Cultural Diplomacy

By Amélie Ancelle



“Hollywood’s responsibility is to entertain first and any residual value beyond that is wonderful and nourishing” according to Michael Douglas. Hollywood is one of the most symbolic representations of American culture. Thus, even if its first official responsibility is obviously to entertain the public, Hollywood is also, through its worldwide influence, the first unofficial ambassador of the United States. Hollywood has always been a real model for cultural diplomacy all around the world. Yet, it is worthy, today, to review

the efficiency of Hollywood as a tool for cultural diplomacy.

Only 30% of the Hollywood studios’ annual revenue are from the American market.¹ This means that most of the production is made to meet the expectations of a foreign audience. Thus, American blockbusters have a major influence in the way people abroad perceive the United States. Through Hollywood movies, America presents itself and spreads its conception of life and values.

All these concepts are what the spectators expect from those productions. According to Mike Medavoy,² Hollywood “might return to its origins as the production site of the hopes and dreams of a cosmopolitan immigrant culture”.³ The movies influence the way the people see the USA through an attractive filter which is the storytelling, but also the way they behave. Hollywood presents international American stars whom young people (but not only the young) want to imitate in their daily lives. The access to Hollywood and its ambassadors is the easiest way to access the US – or at least to one aspect of the US.

1. <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130620-is-china-hollywoods-future>
2. Chairman and CEO of Phoenix Pictures
3. <http://publicdiplomacymagazine.com/what-is-hollywoods-diplomatic-role-an-interview-with-film-producer-mike-medavoy/>

Beyond which can seem to some extent superficial, Hollywood represents a real diplomatic weapon for the United States. As President Obama said: “Believe it or not, entertainment is part of our American diplomacy”.

The President accords more importance to the cultural power than his predecessor, and eagerly believes that soft power can help America in its diplomatic relations. In this perspective, Mike Medavoy has proposed that Hollywood establishes its own Council on Cultural Relations “in order to harness soft power more effectively”.⁴

This harness of soft power can be observed in the very way of making movies. Indeed, according to the international context, changes in the movie making can be seen. As the image of the United States is not at its best during the time of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Hollywood is to “cartoon like comic book heroes” which everyone likes. In parallel, Hollywood has to face new expectations from his public. As Mike Medavoy points it out, “more people in more and more countries want to

see their own lives onscreen.”⁵ For instance, to reach the Chinese market, extra scenes with Chinese characters are added. Likely, in the movie Red Dawn, the villains were Chinese, which provoked a scandal in China; to avoid a diplomatic incident, they were digitally removed in post-production and replaced by North Koreans. No stereotypes can be used anymore; no country can be offended, because each country in which Hollywood movies are screened is as much a potential economic market as a potential geopolitical ally.

The border between cultural diplomacy and cultural imperialism is often thin and threatened. The will of spreading one’s own culture can’t ignore that other cultures exist. According to Caleeb Pinkett,⁶ “[We] have to start taking in other cultures and things that they value and how they view the world and incorporate that into [our] storytelling.” If Hollywood does not adapt and take into account the desire of other countries, Hollywood cultural diplomacy could be perceived as a cultural imperialism and face rebellion and rejection.

4. Id.

5. Id.

6. Actor.



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Cultural Diplomacy through Cinema: an European approach

By Juan José Fernández Romero



Cultural Diplomacy is very well known to be a tool of soft power based on the exchange of aspects of cultures, identities, or arts¹ that might be utilized through cinema: we have seen that mostly during the current century because now every kind of filmmaker is able to show his personal work to the rest of the world, and by doing this, to show a piece of his culture and own understanding of life as well.

1. Constantinescu, Emil . Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, “What is Cultural Diplomacy? What is Soft Power?.” Accessed July 3, 2014. http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_culturaldiplomacy.

Many of these authors, moving off the commerce and the mass productions, are becoming Cultural Ambassadors of their countries abroad, representing them not only in film festivals, but in the collective mind. We can easily come up with many examples only from the European sphere: we have Aki Kaurismäki in Finland, Pedro Almodóvar in Spain, Krzysztof Kieslowski in Poland or Thomas Vinterberg in Denmark, just to mention a few living examples.

After this very brief introduction, and getting closer to cinema itself, I distinguish two approaches in the use of Cultural Diplomacy in recent European movies: the use of it in main story, or in the production of the movie.

Following the first approach one of the most notable examples is the French production “Bienvenue chez les Ch’tis”². In this movie, the highest grossing film in the history of France³, a postal officer is pushed, against his will, to accept a post in Bergues, a little village in the North of France, a place full of every kind of unpleasant stereotypes.

2. “Bienvenue chez les Ch’tis”, film, directed by Dany Boon, France, 2008.

3. Allocine, “Les chiffres du Box Office, semaine par semaine, pour le film “Bienvenue chez les Ch’tis”.” Accessed July 3, 2014. <http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-126535/box-office/>.

However, as soon as he arrives there, an integration process begins: through the exchange of cultural ideas he ends up in a total understanding with the local people which is the first step to a whole new idyllic life.

As an example of the second approach “Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes” (Werner Herzog, 1972)⁴ is the significant. This movie tells the journey of a Spanish expedition looking for El Dorado through the Amazon led by the conqueror Aguirre. The particularity of the production is that it was completely shot in the Peru, casting local tribes as extras of the movie and solely native Peruvians running all the local aspects of production. It is a great example of

4. “Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes”, film, directed by Werner Herzog, West Germany, 1972.

cultural exchange and common understanding for the achievement of a bigger goal: doing the movie giving it greater realism⁵. Having local population as extras for the movies, and moving the whole shooting set to another country is a phenomenon that is becoming more and more common worldwide, both in mass or independent productions. Furthermore, it is a great way of improving cultural exchange.

Concluding, the power of cinema as a cultural diplomacy tool in Europe is constantly increasing and the greatest achievements on this field are still to come.

5. “Mein liebster Feind”, film, directed by Werner Herzog, Germany, 1999.



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The Song Happy and its Impact on Cultural Diplomacy

By Marisa Twahirwa



The successful application of cultural diplomacy through music is already known, at least since the release of the charity-song “We are the world” by, among others, Michael Jackson in 1985¹. The song was sponsored by Hands Across America, which is a non-profit NGO whose mission is to help children escape from poverty and to facilitate their access to education¹.

1. Hands Across America, HANDS ACROSS AMERICA, accessed July 1, 2014, http://www.handsacrosstheamericas.org/about_us.html.

“We are the world” inspired the foundation, USAforAfrica association, to raise money for programs concerning food, the environment, security, clean water, malaria, and AIDS.² Proceeds from the song were given to the foundation to support their projects. “We are the world” had a huge impact on people all around the world. It is the most significant charitable song and has helped to raise 60 million dollars to date. Through the song, many people began to see the world as one world, where everyone is the equal and people help each other. The song developed a new sense of social responsibility and intercultural unity.²

2010, twenty-five years after the fundraising success of this song and after Michael Jackson’s death in 2009, the charity-single was used again to raise money for people in need. This time, the proceeds were used to help people in Haiti after the tsunami in 2010. The song was renamed “We are the World – 25 for Haiti” and Pharrel Williams, among many other rappers, singers and songwriters, took part in it. Again, the song proved a great success and raised a lot of money from people

2. CBC News, “Canadian Olympic athletes get ‘Happy’”, in CBC/Radio Canada, 23rd June, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/canadian-olympic-athletes-get-happy-1.2684576>.

around the world to support the help in Haiti.² In contrast, “Happy” by Pharrell Williams is a song which was not created for fundraising purposes or for any other charitable reason. Even Pharrell William himself wasn’t aware of the impact the song would have on people worldwide, thanks to social media and especially to YouTube. The song has become a historic chart success and was nominated for the Oscar as “the best song”. Additionally Pharrell made a website called 24 Hours of Happiness, showing videos of people dancing to “Happy” in cities around the world.³

The song connected not only with people in different age groups but also with people from different cultures all over the world. Many people have said that the song makes them happy and that they just feel good when they listen to it. The lyrics and the sound connected to many different cultures; “Happy” was covered at least 800 times in 94 countries. Two people from western France started to collect the different versions on a website to represent happiness around the world. The song has had a great impact on cultural diplomacy and intercultural exchange through the many videos showing individuals from so many different countries presenting their own special versions of “Happy”. As a result, the song became the theme tune for the “International Day of Happiness” on the 20th of March, a celebration

3. J.Phelan, “There are more than 800 versions of Pharrell Williams’ ‘Happy’ from 94 different countries” in GlobalPost, accessed July, 2014, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/culture-lifestyle/entertainment/140326/watch-pharrell-williams-happy-videos-from-around-world-800>.

sponsored by the UN.³

People of all occupations, ages and cultural backgrounds started dancing and recorded themselves. Whether in their workplaces or their universities, their free-time or even during weddings, people just started to dance to the rhythm or created a performance for the song. In a Mexican video, cultural diplomacy was a very present element, as the dancers run through with flags from different countries such as Brazil or Germany.³ In addition, a Cambodian arts group for disabled people made a video to the song, showing them in their workplace and with other people in the community.³

These are just a few examples of many videos from around the world, representing cultural diplomacy, international unity, and intercultural exchange. Even though the song “Happy” is from the U.S., people from countries around the world, regardless of their political differences or tensions, started listening to the song, and created videos; they showed that all countries can communicate over the sound of music and that the feeling of happiness is the same, no matter where you are from, how old you are and what you do.⁴

4. W. Norris, “Michael Jackson’s Impact 28 years later - The Borgen Project”, in The Borgen Project RSS2, accessed July 1, 2014, <http://borgenproject.org/we-are-the-world-michael-jacksons-impact-28-years-later/>.



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Photography as Cultural Diplomacy

By Claudia Orlando



“Art is the key to the understanding of our own culture and that of our neighbors” (UNESCO Report, p.6).

As this UNESCO statement expresses, art is exactly what leads us to understand different cultures and in particular this article will explore in what ways the artistic medium of photography is an instrument for promoting Cultural Diplomacy.

The first thing this article will highlight is that it is impossible to think of photography as a means for promoting Cultural Diplomacy if we think about a photograph as an inanimate object. Photography has the power of transmitting emotions through a simple piece of paper and thus, even if it is just a simple

piece of paper, its potential exceeds its physical limitations.

Photography, like every form of art, represents a precise perspective: it is not simply a picture in itself, but represents the way the photographer sees the world from his/her perspective. In doing so, obviously the results of photography are not objective anymore and can be interpreted differently by each observer.

If “culture is what we see,” then it naturally follows that photographs are a great means of promoting the understanding of otherness. Indeed, they can be the most effective means for showing what a culture “really looks like.” A dialogue implies different opinions to be contested and discussed, whereas a photo shows a reality, a definite moment which cannot be contested. It is both an inanimate object, a simple piece of paper, and an animate one that provokes people to think, reflect and understand in a single moment. Images represent culture. When we discuss cultures or when we hear words, we adopt the same mental process and try to reproduce a mental image of what we are thinking of. Therefore, verbal communication does not really differ from non-verbal, concerning the way our minds internalize the world.

Starting from Sewell’s definition of culture, which is to say ‘a dialectic of system and practice,’ it’s possible to understand that images are performed as a cultural practice,

since they are a product of a culture. “This becomes clearer by simply looking at images, which always convey a message that needs to be decoded within a given system of signs.”

Once it is contextualized in the system to which it belongs, a photograph is a powerful means of expression and therefore of diplomacy. If diplomacy is meant as the practice of exchanging ideas, values and moral and cultural codes, implying the intrinsic value which every culture has. This is exactly why a photograph can be a tool for the spread of Cultural Diplomacy, because it is a constant reminder of how all cultures are different but they share common characteristics. Pictures from different cultures help people to grasp a specific moment or representation of them, fixing them in memory and favoring intercultural and non-verbal dialogue.

In light of previous observations, how then to decide which kind of pictures should be studied in order to understand cultures? The possible answer is all images, as they all catch a defined moment, a defined instant: they are a fragment of a whole, of a culture. This implies a contradiction with what was stated above, which is to say recognizing that photographs can also manipulate the public opinion. An example of this is the photographic exhibition After September 11: Images from Ground Zero, organized in more than 60 countries. The 27 pictures, taken by the only photographer with unlimited access to Ground Zero, Joel Meyerowitz, caused a controversial debate

about the role of photography in the field of Cultural Diplomacy. To what extent is the exhibition “a remembrance and a reminder,” as the US Secretary of State Colin Powell stated at the launch of the exhibition?

Many critics argue that the exhibition recalls Cold War propaganda, during which culture entered more strongly in the field of politics. After the end of the Second World War, cultural programming became a fundamental feature of politics both in United States and in the rest of the world. The Soviet Union and the US fought on a ideological level against each other. In 1953 the United States Information Agency was set up to ‘tell America’s story to the world’ and from that moment on cultural features acquired a propagandistic nature which nowadays many try to avoid.

To conclude, in the context of Cultural Diplomacy photographs representing a well-defined culture should not glorify it and downplay others, but promote a ‘mutual understanding’, emphasizing the importance of knowing the other’s culture and also better understanding one’s own culture.

“Photography is the most nostalgic of arts. Implicit in the act of photographing is a recognition of the passage of time, of transience and the inevitability of change. [...] The forcefulness of their messages makes them unlike any other genre of image, the power of their desire to communicate impelling them towards representations that touch us more deeply and more directly.” (Brothers, 1997)

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Cultural Diplomacy Kicks Off

By Lucrezia Raggio



In the lead up to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, Nelson Mandela highlighted the importance of sport diplomacy, saying, “Sport has the power to inspire and unite people.”¹ This quotation leads us to reflect upon the role that sport, but above all football, plays in the field of cultural diplomacy. Football can be seen as a means to build cultural bridges

1. Jeré Longman, “Mandela Embraced the Power of Sports for Resistance and Unity,” The New York Times, December 5, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/06/sports/nelson-mandela-resistance-and-healing-through-sports.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

across different nations. Cultural and geopolitical boundaries cannot resist a football match.

Examples of football as an agent of cultural diplomacy can be found in both the past and present. Football was used as a means of fostering political détente during the Cold War. In 1955 West Germany’s world football champions visited Moscow to promote the establishment of diplomatic relations between the West and the East.² That same year, West Germany played against Russia.³ This match was the starting point for conversation between West Germany and East Germany. One thousand five hundred people from West and East Germany were granted visas to be able to go to the Soviet Union to see the game⁴; eighty thousand people were present. This number speaks for itself. The team that had the highest attendance during the Champions League 2013/2014 season, F.C. Barcelona, had an average attendance lower than the attendance at the 1955 match between West Germany and the Soviet Union.⁵

2. Robert Edelman, Christian Ostermann, and Christopher Young, “A Global History of Sport in the Cold War,” Società Italiana di Storia dello Sport, June 21, 2013, <http://storiassport-siss.it/attivita/testi/66-the-global-history-of-sport-in-the-cold-war>.

3. Daniel Clifton, “Soviet Stresses Germans’ Amity,” The New York Times, 1955.

4. “80,000 See Russia Top West German Eleven, 3-2,” The New York Times, 1955.

5. “Champions League 13/14,” Worldfootball.net, 2014.

The tensions between the East and West fell away for one day in order to make space for a cultural bridge connecting these two geopolitically separated realities.

The current FIFA World Cup in Brazil is a representation of the nexus between sport and cultural diplomacy at its finest: cross-cultural relations are taking place on the pitch and among the spectators on the bleachers. One exemplary case of this process in practice is the story of Steven Beitashour.⁶ Beitashour is an American soccer top player born and raised in the United States. However his parents are both from Iran. In Brazil, he is the only American player representing Iran on the pitch. This story must be read bearing in mind the ongoing political estrangement between Iran and the United States. Beitashour is an important actor on the pitch of soccer diplomacy in Brazil. As Kimiya Shokoohi pointed out in an article for the USC Centre on Public Diplomacy, “[Beitashours] is an Iranian-American...backed by globalization, he is a picture of the multi-dimensional loyalist...He is at once an outsider and an insider, politically neutral and culturally empathetic.”⁷ Despite the fact the United States and Iran do not have diplomatic relations, the two countries have found common ground on the Brazilian pitch. As Coach Dan Gaspar said: “There seems to be a lot more optimism for diplomacy.”⁸

6. Jeré Longman, “Born in the U.S., Playing for Iran,” The New York Times, March 22, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/23/sports/soccer/steven-beitashour-will-represent-his-parents-homeland-at-the-2014-world-cup.html?_r=0.

7. Kimiya Shokoohi, “Soccer Diplomacy at the FIFA World Cup: Cross-cultural Relations Redefined on the Pitch,” University of Southern California, June 24, 2014, <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/soccer-diplomacy-fifa-world-cup-cross-cultural-relations-redefined-pitch>.

These two case studies showing football as an agent of cultural diplomacy demonstrate how football can be considered as a means to foster cross-cultural interactions, further co-operation, and strengthen relationships. Football can be seen as an instrument to foster political détente in the context of geopolitical and diplomatic tensions. It is in this respect that football fully underpins the realm of cultural diplomacy. Football diplomacy not only involves the high sphere of politics but also the masses. As such, football can help cultural diplomacy to reach a wider audience than traditional forms of diplomacy might. Consequently, football, as a form of soft power, can be an invaluable supplement to hard power. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict might not have reached a diplomatic resolution. However, this does not prevent initiatives like “Football for Peace in Palestine and Israel”, promoted by FIFA, to take place and to try to demonstrate how football can bridge divides where politics has not yet been able to.⁹ Cultural diplomacy offers incentives to policy-makers and government leaders to reflect upon the fact that geopolitical conflicts can be resolved even in non-traditional ways. On the football pitch there is no distinction between an Israeli and Palestinian kid - why should the Gaza-Israel Barrier divide them?

8. Longman, Op. Cit.

9. “Football for Hope: Football for Peace in Palestine and Israel,” FIFA video, 4:58, <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/socialresponsibility/footballforhope/video/video=2014059/>.



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The Role of Translators and Interpreters as Cultural Diplomacy Ambassadors

By Erica di Tano



all Europe. With the birth of written literature, translators were responsible for creating access for other peoples to foreign culture products, overcoming the obstacle of the language and giving birth to a real travelling literature. Let us consider how Romans and Greeks were able to share their philosophical and literal concepts and ideas.

In some cases a work of translation proved itself to be a real turning point for the society. When Martin Luther translated the Bible to German, he decided to use a language style accessible not only to the higher classes of society, but to every part of the population. Thanks to this important choice, farmers, for example, could have access to religious texts, previously requiring knowledge of Latin.

With the growing need for international communication, more and more translators and interpreters were developing a discipline that then became known as translation studies. Translators and interpreters were not mere messengers, but real intellectuals, critics and indeed cultural ambassadors, despite their invisibility.

Nowadays, more than ever, such figures are essential to our society. If we just think about the European Union, we can imagine the enormous quantity of translated papers behind such an important institution. The three core languages of the EU are, e.g. English, French and German and additionally, according to the EU languages policy, all the documents should be translated to and from the

other 21 official languages, representing the remaining nations. This makes the EU one of the biggest translation services in the world, with almost 6000 employees between linguists, interpreters and support staff.

As mentioned, translators and interpreters are still hidden: many companies prefer to look to machines instead of professionals. Technology is of course an essential support, that is the case of the CAT tools (Computer Assisted Translation), but it can never replace the efforts of a human being, dealing with for example problematic word games and especially working as a diplomat. Translators and interpreters have been defined for instance as gatekeepers, who have the power to connect two parts and to build cultural bridges.

This explains why in a dictatorial regime it is normally forbidden to import, for instance, literary works from other nations. During Fascism Italian intellectuals like Cesare Pavese and Elio Vittorini wanted to bring North American literature to Italy, which obviously meant new ideas and values available for the population. In the wide cultural void created by dictatorship, these translation works were of crucial importance and could be real tools of freedom.

In conclusion, what would the world be without such figures? The answer is that it would be impossible to think about cultural diplomacy.

1. European Commission, Languages, <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>.

2. Cecilia Wadensjö, *Interpreting as Interaction*. Longman, 1998.

3. Cristopher Rundle and Kate Sturge, *Translation under Fascism*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

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The Flip Side of Being a Tourist - The Importance of donning our Respect Jackets

By Diana Liang

Hear the familiar rush of an airplane speeding to the ground and feel the comforting bump that tells you the plane’s wheels have finally touched ground again. After the flight attendants disarm the doors, you make your way down the jet bridge to yourself breathing the fresh air of a new city, place, town. Here it is, your land of relaxation, exploration, and time for yourself. Except as you put on your sunglasses, you forget the fine print: whether you’re headed for sun, sea, and sangria, or you’re determined to immerse yourself in art, culture, and learning about different people and places, you have become an ambassador for wherever you or your passport call home.

In 2012, close to three billion people flew on 37.5 million flights, according to the IATA.¹ With greater ease of access and affordability through larger airline networks and the rise of budget airlines, more and more people are traveling across countries and continents, seeing new places and interacting with unfamiliar cultures. In addition, the Boston Consulting Group reports that the people our generation, the Millennials, are more interested than older generations in traveling abroad as much as possible by a 23-percent-point margin.² Travel, as the tangible exchange of people, cultures,

and ideas, is a prime example of cultural diplomacy and one of the most potent forces for international understanding and cooperation today.

Cultural diplomacy is a powerful tool that can be used to overcome the idea that difference automatically necessitates a barrier and to promote greater international and cultural sensitivity, understanding, and cooperation. The exchange of people has oft been lauded for its ability to establish bridges between countries, cultures, and peoples.

It is important to remember that it is not only our badge-wearing diplomats, but every single one of us who becomes an ambassador when abroad. In the same way that we learn from the handful of people we meet on our travels and understand them as representatives of a part of their countries, we too become their representatives of our homes.

Some have begun to take note. In 2013, the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) published a guide of dos and don’ts for Chinese tourists. Some of its points seem laughable - “Do not spit phlegm and gum, throw litter, or urinate and defecate wherever you please, and do not pick your nose and teeth,

blow your nose, cough, or commit any other rude behaviors in front of others.”³ However, The Economist has noted that Chinese tourists have been reviled abroad for their poor behavior. Ludicrous as the CNTA guide may seem, and although there are other tensions with the mainland at play, Hong Kongers are not laughing.

Hong Kong has long been a favorite travel destination for mainland Chinese tourists. Although there are a host of other reasons for tension between mainland Chinese and Hong Kongers, public ire against mainland tourists in Hong Kong has increased over the last two years. Milder critiques include complaints over queue-cutting or talking loudly on public transportation. However, incidents that have caused outrage include acts of public urination and defecation, behaviors the CNTA guide has now taken to warning against. These incidents have been dubbed the “potty wars”⁴ and the explosions of netizen responses have resulted in raging name calling and a perpetuation of the prejudice and stereotypes each side holds for the other.

Far from the assumption of casual learning and immersing oneself in another culture, sliding by with having learnt a greeting in the local language, or claiming tourist ignorance for any faux pas committed, these cultural differences have become easy grounds for excusing the degradation of relations between mainland

Chinese and Hong Kongers. This is precisely the opposite of the constructive dialogue cultural diplomacy aims to achieve.

Cultural diplomacy - in this case, the tangible exchange and interaction of different peoples and cultures - is not the easy panacea it is often imagined to be. Exchanges such as tourism can and do lead to improved understanding and cooperation between groups. However, for that to happen, we must put far more care into how we act. The simple exchange of people does not in itself bridge over cultural differences, as the ideal image of cultural diplomacy might suggest. Respect remains key. It is one thing for cultural exchange to be explaining food customs, sharing celebrations, and discussing life philosophies. It is entirely another for cultural exchange to mean people constantly rubbing each other the wrong way.

It may seem an unfairly heavy burden for a humble tourist to bear. We are hardly a representative sample of the citizens of our countries. But as the number of travelers keeps increasing each year, we become more and more important to the development of constructive interpersonal and international understanding and cooperation. It is important that such explosions of tensions do not become the legacy of travelling and of cultural diplomacy. So even if feeling prickly and jet-lagged, let’s at least not bear our spikes and put on our respect hats. We should be asking more from ourselves.

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“Cultural Diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation or promote national interests; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society.”

Young Cultural Diplomacy

“Applied Cultural Diplomacy: Best Practices & Future Strategies”
(June 2014)

Cultural Diplomacy practiced in Families? The precious experience of living with a foreign host family By Melissa Pawelski



Can we practice cultural diplomacy with host families? Can we benefit from living with host families in a foreign country in order to gain greater cultural understanding? Nowadays, more and more young people decide to spend part of their studies in a foreign country. However, some people might judge those young students as being too old to stay with a family.

But what is a stay abroad all about? How can you design your stay to absorb as much of the host culture as possible and form a

bridge between the host culture and your own culture? In the end, it should be in your personal interest to entirely delve into the local culture and not to communicate exclusively within an elitist international community.

Cultural heritage and habits are embodied by families. The family represents a very intimate part of society and its values; this is why the family is our most important precious asset. In the best case, families understand themselves as intermediaries whose task is to make their children curious about and open to the world. Parents are essential mentors for independent children willing to discover and understand the world's diversity. Mostly, at the end of your stay in a host family, you are rewarded with having become part of a whole new family and culture.

Living with a host family is the perfect way for young people to have this sort of experience in order to become part of a new culture and to accept new values. People who have lived in foreign host families throughout school emerge with a wonderful ability to practice warmth, openness, tolerance, interest, and curiosity on a daily basis. But the most important of all, they emerge with the ability to understand others. When you have lived for an extended period of time within

another culture, you are able to show more respect and better understand the other's concerns, worries, but also values and ways of living. At the same time, your host brothers and sisters can benefit from your stay as equally as you do: influenced by a multicultural environment at home, they would probably approach life differently, driven by the curiosity encouraged while living alongside another culture. Even parents and host parents can benefit from this experience, as they would be able to get to know another culture through their children.

Through joining a host family's life, you can also see great personal growth. People who have had such an experience do not even

necessarily need to use the term “cultural diplomacy” in order to describe what they have learned. Their daily casual conversation allows them to communicate easily and naturally with other cultures. Cultural diplomacy has become one of their essential skills.

Living with a foreign host family gives you the very wonderful opportunity of meeting people who are curious about you as well and the culture you can help them discover.

Of course, there's no guarantee of bumping into a friendly and hospitable family who would exactly fit your expectations. But this is a risk you have to take in order to make new friends among the world....



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Bosnia and Herzegovina: An educational System Reform for Social Reconciliation

By Cira Palli



In the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in the aftermath of the fall of the USSR, Bosnia and Herzegovina fell deep into a brutal civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1995.

In December 1995, the Dayton Peace Treaty brought peace to the country creating a Federation of two entities: the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika of Srpska.¹ However, despite the silence of the weapons, the peace treaty did not achieve a real social reconciliation. Two decades after the end of the war, ethnic divisions are still deeply institutionalized in the political system and the relations between the three main ethnic

groups, Croats, Bosniaks and Serbians, lack trust and interaction², even though the societies coexist peacefully, social divisions based on ethnicity are still present. Bosnia and Herzegovina have not managed the transition from negative peace to a sustainable positive peace.

The Dayton Treaty established peace within an enormous politic and economic challenge, so little attention was paid to the education system. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the absence of a shared narrative³ of the past and the ethnic segregation in schools, are contributing to maintain the divisions between the population. With the education curricula and textbooks discordant with the political hopes agreed on in the peace treaty, the youth of the country grow up in a polarized society having limited knowledge and interaction with other ethnic groups.

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Thinking of education as a tool for cultural diplomacy, the reform of the education system has the aim of achieving understanding and recognition of the past with the final purpose of bringing people together over the historical and cultural distinctions. To this end in mid 2002 the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) began a significant effort to reform the Bosnia and Herzegovina's the education system⁴.

In 2003, the first improvements took place with the modernization of the conventional textbook market in the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina with more attractive formats and a new multi-perspectivity into history textbooks. However the textbook analysis carried on by the Georg Eckert Institute in 2008, pointed out the need to improve the quality of content in history textbooks, in particular World War II history, the history of Yugoslavia and especially the absence of content related to the end of Yugoslavia and the following wars. The history textbook analysis conducted by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in

Braunschweig, shows that the 1992-1995 war is dealt in an unbalanced way depending on the ethnic area in which it has been taught.⁵ Teachers express difficulties when dealing with the last several decades of the country's history; teaching about the recent war is one of the most difficult issues that the teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina have to face.

However, establishing an integrated school system and reform the textbooks to homogenize the way that the recent history of the country is told will not work if there is not a change of values among the population. It is significant for the whole process to change the environment where the students will get involved. To this end its important to hire teachers from different ethnic groups so it will be possible to introduce students to different perspectives to empower them to think critically.⁶ In the long term, the education system reform has the final goal to link education, culture and identity to the acquisition of skills for critical thinking and tolerance for others, for differing opinions and for different backgrounds.

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Cultural Heritage as Conflict Resolution

By Tilde Jonsson



To overcome conflict and establish a stable political environment it is crucial to create durable cultural relations based on community, cooperation and trust. This is where applied cultural diplomacy can have a strong impact on the field of conflict resolution in terms of establishing a common culture as a mean to overcome the conflict and prevent the rising of future conflict.¹ One way of implementing

this is by enhancing the role of cultural heritage, which is not only a way to improve the social and economic development, it can also be used to create a common ground for different cultural groups in the aftermath of a conflict.² Cultural heritage can be used to strengthen the role of civil society and improve cooperation with the government.³

In 2012, the organization Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) launched a project in collaboration with Kosovo ministries to restore monuments in Kosovo. Their objective is to increase the role of the cultural heritage and strengthen the role of the municipalities. The project aims to increase awareness about cultural heritage amongst people in Kosovo and make them part in the process of preserving it. The project also expects to increase understanding between the different ethnic groups and decrease the risk of future conflicts arising. The project was motivated by the fact that the country's economy does not prioritize projects regarding cultural heritage.⁴ Cultural Heritage without Borders has therefore launched a four year program to establish local forums in seven districts aiming at bringing forward local plans for the resto-

ration of monuments representative of their cultural heritage.

These kind of projects are often characterized by a lack of dialogue between the government, districts and local inhabitants, which hampers the collaboration. The problem is that both the initiative and the decisions are coming from outside of the local residents.⁵ This particular plan puts the monuments' restoration process in the hands of the municipal residents. Each forum consists of 20 participants from the district board, national ministries, and organizations from civil society. When the plan was completed, all the community's members were invited to a summit where they could raise questions and opinions about the plan and which points should be prioritized. They have together composed plans for cultural places and natural heritage to be prioritized in order to contribute to social and economic development. The plans address urgent needs but on the same time have a long term vision.

UNESCO states that cultural heritage is a powerful instrument for mutual understanding and a fundamental aspect

of reconciliation in terms of peace building. Projects to acknowledge cultural heritage as a valued part of the country and its history requires also strong regional cooperation in order to create shared values between different cultures and communities in order to improve political stability and social and economic development.⁶ Today around 33 percent of the overall objectives of the project proposed out by CHwB in Kosovo have already been implemented. A positive result, aside from the monuments that have been successfully restored, is that cultural heritage has gained a higher position in the local political agenda. By implementing projects like this the European Union, local governments and civil society can work together in order to not only restore the infrastructure but also strengthen the cultural community and promote collaboration nationally and internationally in areas exposed to conflict. In the future, cultural diplomacy can be applied to facilitate the reconciliation in the aftermath of conflicts.

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Untangling Representations of the Past in Post-Socialist Europe: “Memory at War” (2010-2013)

By Richard Smith

‘Memory at War’ (2010 – 2013) was a collaborative project of the Universities of Bergen, Helsinki, Tartu and Groningen, and led by the University of Cambridge which proves Academia to be a crucial diplomatic force.

It seeks to investigate what it terms ‘memory wars’ in Poland, Russia and Ukraine and to “untangle the warring memories in the region”¹ and to break down misconceptions about the past through critical discourse in a region where it has been too often manipulated to serve national, imperial and ideological purposes.² Moreover, the project seeks to address the role of public memory of its influence upon the development of East European nations in the post-socialist space.

Whilst the project’s primary goal concerns promoting academic and cultural dialogue in Poland, Ukraine and Russia, the project, by virtue of its collaborative approach, has also been key in establishing stronger scholarly relations between the respective universities.³

Of particular interest and relevance is the research undertaken by The University of Bergen where researchers looked at the confusing on-line world that Russian and Ukrainian users of social media networks are forced to navigate. This particular project shed much light upon

“a world of digital wars” where users compete to rehabilitate various alternative memories in various online communities, i.e. the roles of both countries during World War II, and where phantom-terms such as fascist or terrorist are used on sites such as Born in the USSR with reference to current affairs and contentious “truths” about the past are invoked in passing without due care or nuance. Of particular note was the study’s focus on online factors and how these are changing the way in which memories are ‘made’ online through access to huge audiences, speed and the pseudonymity of chat fora.⁴

What makes the Bergen Team’s research particularly insightful is its blending of otherwise unrelated disciplines, i.e. Slavic Studies, Memory Studies and New Media Studies to make sense of an overwhelming quantity of text, images and various forms of new media and its series of workshops which have brought various academics together.⁵

The “Memory at War” project offers an example of healthy cultural and scholarly dialogue which is needed to fill the vacuum since the fall of the Soviet Union and which offers an example of possible strategies which could be used in understanding current conflicts between the countries of the former Soviet Union.

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