Arts, Cultural Relations and Soft Power: Developing an Evidence Base

Interim report

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1.0 Introduction

University of the West of Scotland, in partnership with DHA Communications and the Institute of Cultural Diplomacy (ICD), was commissioned by the British Council to produce a thought piece focused on the use of arts and culture in the achievement of soft power objectives. The research team sought to build on the evidence generated through the recent AHRC Cultural Value Project, other international examples and the British Council's own bank of arts based evaluation and research to address the following guiding research questions:

- Whether and how do the arts contribute to the aims, aspirations and delivery of cultural relations and soft power and what is the arts value and contribution to this agenda?
- What are the conditions for change the arts can create within a soft power agenda?
- How do we develop a creditable evidence base/evidence framework/set of ingredients/ Theory of Change to measure the impact of the arts in the delivery of soft power outcomes?

In this final report, the three research questions are explored by reviewing international best practice around research methods and delivery approaches around the arts and soft power; developing an outline theory of change and logic model which can be piloted and tested through the British Council's work; provide a set of recommendations and a way forward for this work around developing an evidence framework for the arts and soft power to explore 'whether' and 'how' the arts contribute to soft power outcomes.

1.1 Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people for contributing their time and expertise to this project. In particular Ian Thomas and Kate Arthurs from the British Council; for their time and guidance, in discussing various concepts, contexts and debates along the way. We also thank those who gave time to us in the form of interviews ranging from academics, Cultural Institutes, Embassies, FCO, GREAT campaign, British Film Institute and the British Council. Lastly, our thanks go to Professor Geoffrey Crossick who acted as a critical friend for this project.

1.2 Contextual background

In the academic and grey literatures there is often a blurring of the lines between public diplomacy, cultural relations and cultural diplomacy and the role of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB), charities, cultural organisations and governments in advocating for soft power outcomes deriving from arts and cultural activity. This thought piece explores the differences between – and similarities across – public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations (Bound, 2007; Rivera, 2015) and examines the evidence for how each contributes to soft power processes and outcomes. The UK Government's latest White Paper (2016) shows that there is an increased interest in - and attention on - the emerging evidence

base for the value of soft power. Rivera (2015) refers to three reports that have formed the basis of the concept of soft power and its management: the *Wilton Review* (2002), the *Carter Report* (2005), and the *Triennial Review of the British Council* (2014).

The interest in soft power is not restricted to the UK. The extent of a nation's soft power is increasingly subject to measurement with the *Portland Soft Power 30* and *Global Power City Index* reports evidence of this tendency. These initiatives have generated a series of global indicators that draw upon culture, education, science politics, and economy to annually assess the extent to which nations have risen through or fallen down these indexes, but they primarily make use of proxy measures to reach their conclusions. The Monocle Report in 2016 showed that Britain had dropped down that particular soft power table, creating consternation amongst those occupying diplomatic roles. For organisations like the British Council, the 'hard', quantitative proxy measures used to produce these global indexes of soft power sit uncomfortably with their commitment to development of long-term relationships and mutual understanding that can be more difficult to reduce to quantifiable indicators. The output arising from arts and culture can be translated into quantitative measures if required but the AHRC Cultural Value project and related research evidence suggests that there may be greater values in trying to explore a more qualitative appraisal of the role of art and culture in soft power – of the intangible elements of which it is comprised – which may include understanding soft power as a *process* rather than simply an outcome. In this endeavour, there is a need to look to other definitions or indicators of value in order to measure the long term and more intangible impacts and meanings of soft power.

1.3 Methodology

In exploring the principal research questions, the UWS-led research team employed a number of approaches to triangulate the data gathered and to inform the development of a outline theory of change and logic model to enable the British Council to measure the impact of the arts in the delivery of soft power outcomes. There were four distinct research tasks completed:

1. Production of a literature review on the evidence for arts and culture in the achievement of soft power objectives and outcomes.
2. Elite interviews with governmental and non-governmental actors in the sphere of arts, culture and soft power.
3. Production of four international case studies outlining different approaches to the use of arts and culture in soft power objectives and its measurement, informed by British Council in-country staff and other relevant personnel
4. Hosting a workshop with the British Council and other stakeholders to share interim findings and inform the development of an outline theory of change and logic model for the British Council to use to measure the impact of the arts in the delivery of soft power outcomes.

2.0 Literature review: Defining concepts, understanding contexts

This thought piece examines both scholarly and practice-derived literature on arts, culture and soft power and some of its elemental components (public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations). The review that follows explores the various ways that soft power has been understood, starting with the influential work of Joseph Nye, before exploring the extent to which arts and cultural activities have been viewed as a valuable means of addressing soft power outcomes. In order to define the terms of reference appropriately, the review sets out the differences - and similarities in use - between public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations, before concluding with a review of ways in which others have sought to develop a creditable evidence base to measure the impact of the arts in the delivery of soft power outcomes.

2.1 Soft Power: an overview

Power, says Joseph Nye, is "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want" (2008:94) he goes on to note that this can be achieved using three avenues of influence comprising "threats and coercion ("sticks"), inducements and payments ("carrots") and attraction that makes others want what you want" (ibid.). Soft power is concerned with the attractiveness of a nation – the business of inspiring others to want what you have – though often focused on intangible and elusive notions such as "culture, political values and foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and possessed of moral authority)" (Huang & Ding, 2006:23 quoting Nye). The levers through which hard power is exercised are broadly understood by both the institutions that deploy them and non-state actors who, most commonly, face the consequences of that deployment. On the other hand, understandings of soft power, its content and potential value as a diplomatic and social tool, are less tangible. The deployment of soft power can be influenced by institutional suspicion of its efficacy (primarily expressed as an unwillingness to invest in its development – see for example, Wilson, 2008:116-17) and yet, where it is utilised, those who employ soft power must be wary of the potential to raise suspicions of propagandising among their intended audience; the oft cited criticism of soft power initiatives. Others claim that soft power is not really power at all as "any resource, even military force, can be soft when applied, for example, to humanitarian aid" (Gibola, 2008:62 quoting Noya).

Soft power is not the concern of a single institution, government department or ministry. The same is true of hard power, though hard power's allies are "more numerous, visible and powerful than their soft power counterparts" who comprise a looser, less easily identifiable agglomeration of "scattered pubic intellectuals in various think tanks and universities or the occasional consulting group" (Wilson, 2008:119). Thus, while hard power is firmly anchored in the military-industrial complex alongside established lobbyists and defence contractors with clearly identifiable lines of command, soft power advocates have no such superstructure to draw upon or to frame their ideologies and claims of efficacy. Notably, soft power is consistently identified in both the academic or grey literatures as *either* an initiative (or input) into a cultural or other process *or* an output/ outcome of a set of cultural activities. While the process of seeking to achieve soft power might usefully be broken down into more easily identifiable activities, discovering or *knowing* whether an increase in soft power has been achieved (and whether or not any of that change emerged as a direct result of the

activity undertaken) and evaluating the quality of that impact, is a far more complex and indistinct process. These lacunas and relative weaknesses do much to obstruct the effective deployment of the levers of soft power, placing significant obstacles in the path of advocates of soft power proliferation and providing ample opportunity for its opponents to challenge is efficacy (or genuine existence). These tensions are among the reasons Wilson (2008:117) notes that institutions of state are not always best placed, willing or able to cooperate in ways necessary to build and exploit soft power potential[1]. Indeed, he argues that in the American case, "inter-agency processes are significantly underdeveloped and, institutional rigidity is a bar to progress in the area".

The variation in approach to – and the value associated with – soft power has long been apparent in the varying state-led attitudes to its exercise that can be identified in the literature. For example, widely differing approaches to the exercise of soft power are evident in Europe when compared to the USA. In the USA, interest and investment in the generation, maintenance and exploitation of soft power opportunities has waned, particularly since the end of the Cold War (i.e. Gould-Davis, 2003; Grincheva, 2010; Brown, 2006; Schneider, 2009). Where the U.S. government decreased funding to the United States Information Agency (USIA) prior to absorbing its activities into the State Department in the late 1990s (Schneider, 2006), European countries – particularly France, Italy, Germany and the UK - have striven more consistently to invest in and build upon the efforts of their equivalent cultural agencies (the Alliance Française, Dante Alighieri, Goethe Institute and British Council see Paschalidis, 2009 for discussion)[2]. For these nations among others, the principal characteristics of soft power have comprised attempts to gain recognition for their cultural (i.e. particularly language and literature in France), educational (i.e. creative and scientific innovations and achievements in the UK) sporting and other achievements. Notably, the case studies and discussion that follow this review demonstrate ways in which soft power has been both utilised as a strategy (i.e. an approach to secure goals) and pursued as a desirable phenomenon (the outcome of an activity). Sporting achievement in particular – later examples include the Beijing Olympics – demonstrate strategic use of soft power which, arguably, gives rise to more tangible, measurable outputs.

The USA has continued to struggle with recognition of the need to rebuild its eroded soft power capacity, particularly in the post-9/11 era (see Schneider, 2006 & 2009:264; Wilson, 2008; Nye, 2004 & 2004) and to identify the manner in which this task might be approached. Crucially, as Nye points out, in the US case, "soft power had become so identified with fighting the Cold War that few Americans noticed that, with the advent of the information revolution, soft power was becoming more important, not less" (Nye 2005:2). Yet, in spite of these issues, the USA often tops international assessments of soft power influence (see

[1] Or, as his wider argument states, to develop 'smart power' which he defines as 'the capacity of an actor to combine elements of hard power and soft power in ways that are mutually reinforcing such that the actor's purposes are advanced effectively and efficiently' (2008:115).

[2] It is interesting to note that the founding missions of Dante Alighieri (1889) and one of the Goethe Institute's forerunners Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums im Auslande (1881) were not concerned with cultural conquest. Rather, these organisations were initially conceived as 'manifestations and instruments of … expansive imaginary community … the cultural nation (*Kulturnation*): a collectivity whose outreach extended beyond the borders of the political nation (*Staatsnation*)' rather than tools of colonisation (Paschalidis, 2009:278).

Monocle Report, 2015). It is worth nothing that the USA's status in such soft power ratings foregrounds the issue of tangibility and appropriate measures once more. On the one hand, scholarly literature is largely in agreement that successive administrations have done relatively little to develop and exploit the country's soft power potential, the *Soft Power 30* (McClory, 2015) report for example rates the US highly -3rd behind UK and Germany - in its index. Yet, as the authors of the report (2015: 26-7) note "there are many elements of soft power where the US is unrivalled. America attracts more international students than any other nation, American culture is globally ubiquitous, and the US sets the pace in in tech and digital. *If The Soft Power 30 rankings were calculated on objective metrics alone*, the US would have just beat the UK to the top spot. However, the US finished sixteenth across an average of the polling categories. In many ways the American government and perceptions of US foreign policy tend to be a net detractor for American soft power" (italics added). This serves to demonstrate that inclusion or exclusion of indicators significantly affects attempts to measure soft power.

For a significant time period, the USA has under-invested in soft power initiatives (i.e. Wilson, 2008; Cull, 2013) and yet cultural products such as Hollywood movies and Coca Cola are omnipresent. Though, as Joffe points out "there may be little or no relationship between America's ubiquity and its actual influence. Hundreds of millions of people around the world wear, listen, eat, drink, watch and dance American, but they do not identify these accoutrements of their daily lives with America" (2006). Moreover, in spite of their ubiquity, American movies – primary examples of US popular culture exports – are not always wholly welcome in other contexts. Films depicting sex and violence are not well received in majority Muslim countries (Nye, 2008:95) and the USA's northerly neighbour too has "long been concerned with protecting itself against the enormous degree of penetration of its society by American culture… [these concerns have been] manifested in protectionist measures (e.g. tariff barriers on cultural products… quotas regarding Canadian content on radio and television broadcasters)" (Bélanger, 1999:681). While the USA has paid less attention to soft power, its potential and contemporary relevance, other countries have sought to utilise soft power levers to assist in their own attempts to enhance image on the international stage.

In recent times, the People's Republic of China has arguably demonstrated a far greater awareness of the strategic potential of soft power (Wilson, 2008:111), working to set up Confucius Institutes as a component in *China's Peaceful Rise*[3] intended to promote Chinese culture internationally in an attempt to surmount "hostility towards communism and negative images of the nation and its people" (Lo & Pan, 2014:4). The Confucius Institute project has gathered an impressive momentum; since 2004 more than 400 Confucius Institutes (and 600 smaller Confucius Classrooms) have been set up in 120 countries and regions (Lo & Pan, 2014:2 - figures to the end of 2013). The Institutes are focussed on providing an understanding of China that is primarily based on language learning as the route towards greater comprehensibility and accessibility and although their presence has helped to present a view of China that is fuller than any notion that might be gained than when shopping on the High Street, it has not been unproblematic; questions about the

[3]Later rebranded China's Peaceful Development 'in order to further soften the nation's international profile' (Lo & Pan, 2014:4).

financial and curricular independence of the Institutes and the Chinese government's long term aims have been raised (see for example Hartig, 2012; Paradise, 2009; Lo & Pan 2014). As the broader attractiveness of a country's political ideals, social and economic values are an important constituent of soft power, the Confucius Institute project alone cannot calm concerns about China's human rights record.

Considering how the arts contribute to soft power there is some early developing evidence from the literature review of the arts engaging with large scale global audiences and then influencing people on an emotional level, however, there is the real challenge of measuring this over the long term as highlighted in the Art of Attraction (2014) from the British Academy. It is the nature of cultural connections that they are incremental and the nature of artistic responses that they are indirect hence some of the issues around evaluation. The Churchill Global Leadership Programme (2015) explored the issue of the arts and soft power suggesting that there is some evidence that the arts can support the development of empathy with then a further possible connection is then made to influence and changing people's perceptions of themselves and of each other may follow this initial connection. The AHRC Cultural Value Programme (2016:54) considers the role of the arts in developing the 'reflective individual', facilitating greater understanding of themselves and their lives, increasing empathy with respect to others, and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures, The Art of Attraction also explores the role of culture in creating the multicultural society of the UK. Bazalgette (2017), former Chair of Arts Council England, has explored the issue of empathy. Bazalgette (2017:262) considers empathy as the power of understanding others and the growing evidence of the role the arts plays with developing empathy such as around race, religion and conflict resolution. The arts have been much deployed in post conflict transformation such as in Northern Ireland and the British Council's Create Syria Project, with apparent short term benefits, even if the long term impact remains untested. It is an example of how the arts can enlarge people's experiences and enable them to think about other peoples, in a setting potentially more neutral and more engaged than would by produced by conventional political dialogue. The British Council's Golden Thread programme, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, explored the impact of the arts on individual resilience and wellbeing in targeted ODA countries. The evaluation of the Golden Thread programme (2016) highlighted some impacts on individual self-efficacy, self-awareness and self-expression.

DEMOS in their report looking at Cultural Diplomacy (2007) also suggest that culture is a major determinant of how people perceive each other and negotiate their differences that cultures are meeting, mingling and morphing. The DEMOS report also highlights that through arts and culture that we find points of commonality and difference, and the means to understand one another. Exhibitions, performances and other cultural forms enable us to engage with others' heritage and living culture. one of the most important contributions that culture can make to a country's public diplomacy is its ability to showcase a diversity of views, perspectives and opinions, breaking down persistent national stereotypes and challenging the perception that a country's political leaders and their policies are identical with the views of their citizens. Arts and culture provides meeting points for exposition and explanation, for dialogue and debate, arts and culture provide the operating context for politics.

The evaluation of the British Council's Shakespeare Lives programme in Russia, China and the Horn of Africa (2017:5) suggests the arts might create a connecting ground and unique and secure spaces, opportunities and forums for the reciprocal interchange of culture, or exploration of ideas and themes through cultural practice. According to the evaluation, Shakespeare was often seen as a means through which to encourage engagement with UK contemporary culture, from collaborations with UK companies, to learning about UK history and tourism opportunities in the country. The evaluation also highlights important cultural differences in the reception of the Shakespeare Lives Programme, particularly between Russia and China and recommends further research.

The Art of Attraction report also raises the issue that those on the receiving end of soft power do not always respond in the way that politicians might expect them to, flagging up the unintended consequences of this tool of foreign policy. This is a gap in the literature that has been highlighted by Clarke (2014), that the process of reception of arts programmes within a soft power environment needs to be better understood and attended to, and that critical theory and cultural studies may be useful to this end. The Brookings Institute Report (2008) on the role of arts and culture in reconfiguring relationships between the US and then Muslim world explored how the arts allows contacts between peoples rather than between governments.

British Council's Trust Pays Report (2013) attempts through attitudinal surveys that participating in cultural relations activities has a positive effect on trust in the UK and with it increased in doing business with, visiting or being a student in the UK. This evidence however, is purely attitudinal and only one of the 17 types of activity is about art and culture. There have also been further attempts to link trust and economic impacts such as the work undertaken by Copenhagen Economics (2012) and a recent study undertaken by Andrew Rose (2015) tentatively concludes the effect of Soft Power on a series of countries exports estimating that a 1% net increase in soft power raises exports by around 0.8%, holding other things constant.

Deployment of soft power assets requires serious and sustained research to understand how audiences perceive a state. However, metrics used to quantify and demonstrate changes in perception are often problematic. Use of in-bound tourism metrics, for example, cannot directly attribute tourism to attraction of soft power assets. Soft power concerns development of relationships and the term 'audience' connotes a sense of telling rather than engaging in open dialogue and hearing the voices of the 'other'.

The preceding discussion has sought to give a broad overview of soft power – by contrasting it with hard power and by way of a brief exploration of the differing attitudes towards the deployment of soft power evident in some contemporary policy and praxis. The following discussions explore some of the levers of soft power in greater detail, seeking to draw out issues with which those concerned with its effective exercise must contend. Through an examination of scholarly and grey literature and allusion to case studies which usefully illustrate the challenges and benefits of soft power engagement, the contextual challenges that contemporary politicians and practitioners must meet will be elucidated.

2.2 Public (and digital) diplomacy

The Confucius Institute project is an element of China's soft power activities that naturally contributes to its public diplomacy activities. Schneider loosely defines public diplomacy as "all a nation does to present itself to the world" (2009:261). Usefully, Cull (2008) identifies 5 loci in his taxonomy of public diplomacy. These are listening (collection and collation of opinion data), advocacy (management of the international environment though communication promoting an policy/idea), cultural diplomacy (management of the international environment via promotion of cultural achievements overseas), exchange diplomacy (the attempt to manage the international setting by sending citizens abroad and – concomitantly – accepting overseas citizens for a period of study and/or acculturation) and, finally, international broadcasting (management of the international context through the media of radio, television and the Internet). It is clear from Cull's taxonomy that arts and culture can play an important role within public diplomacy but there are other constituent parts to the latter than do not involve a cultural dimension, per se.

A significant divergence is evident in the approaches that different states have taken in the arena of public diplomacy. Where Alliance Française – founded in 1883 – has consistently sought to ensure "the projection of French culture abroad became a significant component of French cultural diplomacy" (Nye citing Pells 2008:96), other countries have at times exploited the apparatus of state to impose an unwanted, propaganda-led viewpoint on their target audience (i.e. Nazi Germany – see for example Nye 2008:97) or, in the case of the Cold War era USA and USSR, project a self-image that was not entirely consistent with domestic reality. While there were evidently gains to be made from sending African-American jazz musicians to tour in the Soviet Union, the irony of their exclusion from many areas of regular life in their home country was not lost on the performers who travelled east to represent their country (see Grincheva, 2010; Brown, 2006; Gould-Davis, 2003). Further, as the contemporary Chinese situation demonstrates to a degree, successful public diplomacy is dependent upon more than the mere desire to project a certain image. To be credible, and accepted in a local context overseas, the image being projected must be consistent with the views that the target audience holds of the promulgators of the diplomacy. In the modern era, this is an extremely challenging proposition as the institutions of state are no longer in control of the means of mass, global communication (see Gibola, 2008; Cull, 2013). Indeed, acknowledgement of such begins to take us towards an exploration of the difference between the deliverer and the receiver and raising the issue of how we know (and measure) the impact that a message has on its recipient.

Never a straightforward task, the challenge of promulgating an efficacious public diplomacy agenda is further complicated in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 era by the revolution in communication technologies that has done so much to define our recent history and shape today's society, giving rise, as Gibola notes (2008:56) to "two major innovations: the Internet and global news networks… capable of broadcasting, often live, almost every significant development in world events to almost every place on the globe". These innovations have done much to loosen the control that governments have over the communication of world affairs and their own role in ongoing events. NGOs, communities, private enterprises and

individuals are all afforded ample opportunity to both consume and create "content" (ibid.).[4] Against this backdrop, it is clear that the projection of a positive national brand or image is now – arguably – more important than any of the fundamental elements that have traditionally been associated with national success and international reputation (for example: territorial gains or raw material resources). However, the dilution of institutional control over the levers of public diplomacy that the communications revolution has brought about means that the task of "influencing foreign government by influencing [their] citizens" (Gibola, 2008:57) is now more challenging than ever before as significant advancements in information technologies and social media networks have led to increased access to the levers of public diplomacy for individual citizens and civic groups.

Several authors note that official responses to the challenges and changes that the information revolution has brought to the practice of public diplomacy have varied significantly (i.e. Cull, 2013; 2008; Grincheva, 2013; Nye, 2008). Cull (2013) examines the contrasting approaches that the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama took to public diplomacy in the information age. Cull (2013:125) argues that this new diplomacy – diplomacy 2.0 or e-diplomacy – has yet to be precisely defined, nonetheless it is agreed that the definition does "include an emphasis on greater exchange, dialogue, and mutuality". Noting that the late Bush administration had begun to come to terms with the fact that the State Department was no longer in control of the messages it relayed to the world.[5] Rather, the government could "merely offer the message to the world and be open to subsequent discussions, which it would not own either" (Cull, 2013:131). This evolutionary step in an administration's approach to public diplomacy explicitly recognises the shift in the balance of power between the originator of the message and its intended audience. It is interesting to note, that although Barack Obama made extensive use of social media in his presidential campaign and – as Secretary of State – Hillary Clinton demonstrated great awareness of the power of digital and social media,[6] the administration's approach to public diplomacy was nonetheless characterised by "the ascendancy of the advocacy approach to public diplomacy over those relational aspects of listening and exchange" (ibid. 134) that had begun to gain traction during the latter stages George W. Bush's presidency.

Thus, governments are now in a position whereby they must surrender the notion that they are the most credible source available to their citizens and seek instead to empower "someone within the target network and similar to the audience" (Cull, 2013:136) they wish to reach to speak on their behalf. In so doing, governments become actors in an ongoing citizen diplomacy – whereby ordinary people are possessed of the power to influence the image of their country being projected on the international [stage] (Grincheva, 2013:23). Diplomacy 2.0 advances the exchange element of public diplomacy to the vanguard of such

[4] Iosofides & Wheeler (2016) argue that NGOs are still at a disadvantage in this area in spite of the opportunities that information technologies provide, this derives from their lack of financial clout (168-9).
[5] Spending on diplomacy still lagged far behind military spending (in 2003 $0.07 was spent on diplomacy for every $1 of military expenditure. Public diplomacy was allocated a quarter of a penny from that budget). Undersecretary Charlotte Beers failed Shared Values Initiative – intended to rebuild U.S relations in the Arab world in the wake of 9/11 – failed, scuppered by the enormity of the task at hand and the continued use of military force in the region undermining the slick and innovatively delivered campaign (Cull, 2013:133-5).
[6] Also see Iosifidis & Wheeler (2016:156-63)

activity and interactions (Cull, 2013:136), as it is only through such transformations that governments and associated institutions can hope to remain relevant to their audience and retain their attention in an era in which attention, rather than information, has become a scarce commodity (Nye, 2008:99).

2.3 Cultural diplomacy

Though the concepts of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations are distinct in much of the scholarly literature, it is clear that the distinction fades in much of the available grey literature (which is usually derived from the practical experience of project delivery). Further, it is clear that increased competition for funding and stricter requirements associated with these awards may serve to blur these delineations still further in the future. Nonetheless, it is for the moment useful to acknowledge – and explore – the distinctions that have been made between these interlinked areas while recognising that for many engaged in cultural diplomacy and cultural relations (as practitioner, policy or participant stakeholder) the terms may be interchangeable or becoming less easy to distinguish one from the other.

Cull (2008) has already identified cultural diplomacy as a subset of public diplomacy. It is however, possible – and necessary – to further demarcate the scope of the field. Cultural diplomacy - which in scholarly discourse often relates to the high arts rather than popular culture and associated cultural products (Grincheva, 2010:171) – is [according to Schneider, quoting Cummings] "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding" and as such it is a critical component of public diplomacy (2009:261). However, cultural diplomacy differs from public diplomacy in that "it is less closely aligned with policy (or promoting the acceptance of policies) (Schneider, 2009:261). Once again, the realms of education and cultural concepts were of great concern both during WWII and the Cold War when, for example, "the world tours of the Russian Bolshoi Ballet were high-octane affairs, and the opportunity for defection to the West by a member of the company often drew more attention that the pieces they were performing" (DeVereaux & Griffin, 2006:1). As Gould-Davis points out there is an element of risk attached to the practice of cultural diplomacy that is predicated on one's access to another society on the understanding that in return corresponding access to one's own society is to be granted. As such, "each side will agree to cooperate only if it believes that the benefits (greater opportunity for influence) exceed the costs (greater vulnerability to influence)" (2003:203). Changing attitudes towards cultural diplomacy as a legitimate international relations tool is clearly identifiable. Many authors have noted the relative decline of investment in cultural diplomacy since the end of the Cold War (for example, Brown, 2006; Grincheva, 2010; Gould-Davis, 2003; Szántó, 2003; Schneider, 2006; 2009) while also noting that the combined use of hard and soft power (Nye, 2004:1) and specifically the "arts [as] the only 'safe' way to communicate a set of different values and beliefs" (Grincheva, 2010:174) were crucial to preventing any escalation of hostilities in the pre-1989 era.

Much of the analysis of U.S. activity in this and related areas of international relations decries the lack of institutional – and relative lack of philanthropic (see Szántó, 2003) – interest and investment in the cultural events and exchanges which denote activity in this area. As Schneider (2009:261) notes in the U.S. case, the absence of "coherent, public-private, inter-

agency strategy for cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy [is] symptomatic of a general marginalisation of arts, culture and media by policymakers and the philanthropic community, limits the potential of existing programmes." The lack of American investment in the field (particularly when compared to funding for hard power levers of influence i.e. see Cull, 2013) can, it has been argued be linked to societal attitudes to high art as a whole. In the USA, "historically […] society developed by accumulating and integrating a variety of arts and cultures, [and thus,] arts in the United States don't blend into a national identity of people" (Grincheva, 2010:178). Therefore, while American administrations have previously sponsored hugely successful exercises in cultural diplomacy (see, for example, Cull's (2008:39-40) discussion of the Family Man exhibition which toured across Europe and Latin America from 1955-1963 to huge acclaim), the interest in continuing to undertake such work has waned. Not least, Grincheva suggests (2010:173) as arts exchanges require significant human resource, financial and time commitment yet measuring the impact of such investments can be challenging (ibid. Also see Szántó, 2003 for discussion).

Cultural diplomacy is also subject to flux and change deriving from the shift in environment created by ongoing technological and communication change. Just as public diplomacy and cultural relations practitioners have had to develop new ways of communicating messages to target audiences, the new digital tools at our disposal can be utilised by both institutional and non-state actors, "who will control their use and further development is still a challenging and unresolved dilemma for 21st century humanity" (Grincheva, 2013:26). Further, it is worth revisiting the demarcation of cultural diplomacy as a realm of high arts and associated cultural products. Rivera's (2015) review of the changing agenda pursued by the British Council at the behest of the government is hugely relevant here as his findings demonstrate that the evolving context within which the Council is operating directly impacts upon the types of activity and interactions that fall under the cultural diplomacy remit.

Cultural diplomacy is inseparable from the national interest and, therefore, is more likely to involve governmental actors within its pursuit, alongside other agencies and institutions concerned with using culture as a means of developing and sustaining relationships. Though some commentators suggest that cultural diplomacy is more directly state-influenced than say its cultural relations counterpart, Ang et al (2015:366) suggest that "there can be such a thing as a cultural diplomacy that operates "beyond the national interest'', especially when such diplomacy efforts can be used to appreciate commonalities and understand differences despite political difficulties. This is important because others suggest that when the national interest is less obviously being promoted this is the realm of cultural relations.

2.4 Cultural relations

> *The creative arts and media have unlimited potential to penetrate political barriers and build connections, even under adverse circumstances* (Schneider, 2009:262)

Both public and cultural diplomacy activity foreground advocacy and national interest elements, whereby the outputs and outcomes of the exercise should denote measurable benefits to advancing the foreign policy agenda of the state undertaking the diplomacy. Cultural relations are, in contrast, predicated on longer-term engagement, characterised by exchanges of ideas rather than unilateral inputs from one side. Notably, it is not an

expectation of cultural relations that all of the views expressed in the dialogue should be positive - rather it is acknowledged that the negative can also be a useful and insightful tool. Cultural relations emphasises the importance of people-to-people transnational relationships in which the conspicuous absence of government should be a key characteristic (Rivera, 2015:11). Indeed, the credibility and integrity of cultural relations interactions are to a large extent determined by the "absence of' governmental presence" (ibid.). Cummings (2003) supports these definitions, identifying cultural relations with "the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding".

Rivera (2015: 11) defines cultural relations as "the mutual exchange of culture between peoples to develop long term relationships, trust, and understanding for the purpose of generating genuine good will and influence abroad". His careful review of the features that distinguish cultural diplomacy and cultural relations further emphasises lengthier timeframes and "honesty, mutuality and trust[7]" (ibid:13) as key differentiating characteristics. Rivera (2015) observes that the British Council has always described its cross cultural relationship building work as cultural relations but, whereas it has traditionally operated at arm's length from the government (thus affording considerable freedom of action and enabling honesty-based trust relationships to be generated over time) recent changes in the relationship between – and the oversight of – the Council's freedom of action and the extent of the government's involvement in directing these have blurred the lines of distinction between cultural relations and cultural diplomacy. The change in emphasis has resulted from government requests that the Council should "more directly and explicitly support the UK national interest" (ibid. 14). This, along with the desire to demonstrate value for money in austere times, has meant that "the government's understanding and [working] definition of public and cultural diplomacy has evolved… to encompass the British Council's work in cultural relations' (ibid. 20).[8]

The British Government is not alone in merging the realms of cultural relations and cultural diplomacy in this way. In their multi-country comparison of international cultural relations Wyszomirski *et al*. (2003) demonstrate that the terms cultural diplomacy and cultural relations are utilised more or less interchangeably across the nine[9] governments included in

[7] Trust is, of course, challenging to define both as an idea and an objective thus, its inclusion here adds further to the layers of complexity and areas of potential for disagreement for those seeking to clarify the function, contents and 'measurability' of soft power and its components. Rivera does not problematise trust in his assessment of contemporary cultural relation and the changing role of the UK government in the work of the British Council. While it is beyond the purview of this piece to offer a full analysis of 'trust,' that the concept is mutable and may be perceived differently by – for example - the promulgator of an idea and members of the intended audience for that idea, must be borne in mind.

[8] The ongoing GREAT Campaign clearly demonstrates this intention. Cabinet Office involvement in the leadership of the project alongside and a discernible focus on value for money (see National Audit Office 2015:7, 10&26) evidence this. The campaign is designed to bring about a 'consistent approach to promoting the UK overseas' through coordination of approach taken by various 'tourism, trade and investment and educational organisations' (ibid: 14) whereby trade, investment and the generation of economic growth are key project objectives (ibid: 23 & 32).

[9] Comprising Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Japan, Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

their review. Australia, Canada, Singapore and the UK term their cultural diplomacy activity as international cultural relations, where Austria and the Netherlands term their work as international cultural policy (Wyszomirski *et al*. 2003).

While the foci and structures of the activities undertaken under these banners vary from country to country, the authors identify a repertory of programme tools, which are – in various combinations – common to all the governments reviewed in the comparison, these are:

- The exchange of individuals for educational and cultural purposes
- Sending exhibitions and performances abroad
- Sponsoring seminars and conferences both in-country and abroad that include international participants
- Support for language studies programs and institutions
- Support for infrastructure in the form of cultural institutes/centers/forum abroad
- Resources in the form of staff and personnel (both at home and abroad)
- Support for country studies programs (e.g. American studies, Australian studies, etc.)
- International cooperation on cultural programs and projects
- Activities that are related to trade in cultural products and services (Wyszomirski *et al*. 2003:12)

Rivera's own findings demonstrate that even where the difference between the two arenas is acknowledged, changes in government policy and priorities can result in significant change. There is an argument that blurring the distinction between cultural relations and cultural diplomacy may risk significantly compromising the trust, honesty and mutuality that characterises cultural relations as Rivera notes (2015:35) that these are vital factors for "generating amity and influence". Further, it is important to ask whether "supporting the national interest [has] to correlate with alignment with Government? Could the national interest actually be best served by Government stepping back from cultural relations?" (Rivera, 2015:35). Another important factor, relating to an earlier discussion is the extent to which communication technologies shift the balance so that whereby "[t]he once dominant bilateral mode of cultural relations, characterised by asymmetric, uni-directional flows has consequently given way to a multi-lateral model based on mutuality and partnership" (Paschalidis 2009:284). As the technological landscape in which all variety of diplomatic and cultural relations take place continues to evolve and change, and NSAs are increasingly able to undertake potentially significant relational activities in cultural spheres beyond the oversight of their governments, the potential cost/benefit of surrendering[10] trust, mutuality and honesty into the hands of citizens must be carefully weighed.

In summary, though there may be good reasons for various interest groups to use the terms public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations interchangeably, there are also

[10] Though, it is of course possible to argue that citizens are seizing control of these realms of activity for themselves. Further, it is far from clear that citizens recognise their increased activity in these areas as being of (potential) significance.

some important philosophical and practical reasons why their distinctiveness should be maintained. First, to align the activities of cultural relations only with public or cultural diplomacy objectives could reduce its ambition, funding arrangements and success measures to those connected to the national interest of governmental organisations. Second, overly instrumentalised government interventions could impact negatively on the development of trust, honesty and mutual understanding through arts and cultural activity – at the heart of the practice of cultural relations. Finally, in a period where governmental control over the communication of world affairs and reputation is impacted by the affordances of new communication platforms, it is even more important for non-state actors and people-to-people contacts mediated online. Cultural relations activities can be digitally mediated to enable them to be promoted to a wider range of publics than was the case previously.

2.5 The problem of 'knowing': Evaluating arts, culture and soft power

Many authors recognise the challenges of measuring the impact of soft power enterprises (i.e. Grincheva, 2010; Schneider, 2009) and this issue is particularly apparent when contrasted with the apparent ease with which the tangible resources of hard, military and economic strength can be accounted for (Huang & Ding, 2006:24).

> *Attempts to evaluate cultural diplomacy can seem like a forester running out every morning to see how far his trees have grown overnight* (Cull, 2008:44)

It is clear that there are significant complexities involved in assessing the role of arts and culture in the achievement of soft power. Part of the problem is that the planned outcomes associated with arts and cultural interventions are, at times, politically motivated or influenced by economic considerations (e.g. value for money or ROI). The problem of measurement is exacerbated when evaluating a complex, multifaceted and multi-layered set of cultural relations or cultural diplomacy efforts, internationally; for example, programmes such as those led by the British Council but funded or supported by a plethora of governmental and non-governmental agencies. This is not a new problem but with increasing pressure to demonstrate value for money from public investment, the arts and cultural sectors are being expected to demonstrate their extrinsic or instrumental worth. When competing with other funding priorities there is an argument that the cultural sector needs to align itself more closely with the language of policy makers if it is to sustain itself in the face of tightening of the public finances and, to compete for a share of scarce resources (Smith, 2012). Evaluating, in meaningful terms, the outputs and outcomes of the exercise of soft power and its components is a difficult task. As Rivera (2015:13) points out "governments, for a number of political and structural reasons, are far more concerned with achieving short- to medium-term foreign policy outcomes," not least as they may not be in power for long enough to benefit from the goodwill generated by a programme they themselves initiated. Examining the long-term impact of (say) a three-year funded arts project to create soft power change requires a much more holistic approach; involving an analysis of narratives, and meanings rather than just numbers and indices. The outcomes of the types of diplomatic and social interactions that have been discussed above, however, do not naturally lend themselves to the type of quantitative analysis most likely to satisfy civil servants or funding boards (see Szántó, 2003:23). It is important to avoid falling into a trap of reductionism, where arts and cultural activity is valued only in so far as it can demonstrate

(and quantify) returns on investment. This gives rise to the notion that a change in mindset may be required for those seeking to find effective ways to measure the outputs and impacts of art and cultural initiatives. Nonetheless, it is possible to "argue from the principle that such [cultural activity] makes sense, and then look for ways of counting" (Szántó quoting Arthurs 2003:23). In assessing the value of arts and culture in soft power it is likely that traditional economic and statistical approaches to measurement (those documented in the literature review) need to be married to more nuanced narrative-type analyses to ensure the broader value accrued from investment in cultural activity is understood and gains credibility with policy makers.

Complex cultural strategies and programmes face significant issues around identifying and isolating the object of study, developing meaningful indicators of success and agreeing routes to evaluation (McGillivray & McPherson, 2013). This makes it particularly difficult to establish an evaluative framework that reflects the range of projects, programmes and initiatives involved in cultural relations or diplomacy work. Confidence in the results of research or evaluation can be negatively affected when the object of study changes constantly due to the presence of different agendas and fluid boundaries around what is and is not 'part' of the cultural activity being assessed. These problems relate to the notions of cultural validity and the attribution of value – whether or not the study assesses what was intended - rendering the results meaningful and credible. There is a need to develop cultural evaluation tools to understand the value of arts and culture in soft power that takes heed of cultural, artistic, social and economic criteria. In this way, the diversity of processes and outcomes associated with cultural activity can be accommodated. The cultural evaluation tools developed also need to recognise the problems of attribution, this is especially the case with multi-agency investments.

The problem of measurement is further exacerbated when the issue of time is included. When seeking to develop trust, strengthen partnerships and influence perceptions more than a mere snapshot in time is required. Unfortunately, 'assessments of value tend to focus on immediate or short-term outputs from programmes rather than looking at longer term effects' (Gilmore, 2012: 152). The British Council's own recent efforts to address this issue are denoted by the use of a variety of different approaches to the identification and effective measurement of impact data (see for example, BOP Consulting, 2016; British Council, 2014 & 2015). These have included designing methodologies to "understand and measure change at the individual, organisational and social levels and to aggregate and analyse data from diverse international contexts to demonstrate impact" (British Council, 2015:1.5) and incorporating the Cultural Value Model (CVM) participatory evaluation models into workflow (for example, British Council 2014). Such efforts have drawn attention to the necessity to build detailed plans for evaluation into the workflow at project inception (British Council 2014:4). In addition, such an approach can be challenging in terms of time and resource management something that must also be accounted for in the format and resourcing of a project or programme.

Counting how many hearts and minds have been won over by an exhibition or cultural event and with what tangible impact in the longer term is a far trickier and more elusive assignment (i.e. Schneider, 2009). It is certainly possible to count the numbers of artists who

travel to participate in the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature or the audiences who attend a concert, performance or exhibition. It is also relatively straightforward to ask their opinion of the event (Szántó, 2003:23). But, identifying how (or even whether) the appearance of a key influencer such as Helen Mirren in the GREAT Campaign has affected a country's decision to invest in the UK film industry is less apparent and far less easy to determine. It is perhaps more likely that some sort of subsidy or the attractiveness of the financial deal on offer to an overseas film is the decisive factor in the decision to come and film in the UK. It is much more difficult to assess the longer-term return on influence outcomes from these type of investments. Practitioners recognise their worth intrinsically but it is harder to demonstrate tangible outcomes. There is some evidence of tracking in the people-to-people engagement undertaken by, for example, the British Council and the British Film Institute and work has been done to identify how these contacts have led to longer-term investments from key individuals. Usually however, such inputs have been linked to a specific cultural intervention or engagement.

Cull (2008) and Schneider (2009) both take an extended case study approach to reporting successes (and failures) of cultural and public diplomacy efforts. Huang and Ding (2006:27-28) make the case for examining other proxy measures in order to gain insight into the efficacy of the soft power project that Beijing has undertaken. They point to the increase in numbers of foreign tourists traveling to China, which increased 88 fold over the period 1978-2005, as a positive indicator of the success of Beijing's promotion of Chinese cultural assets overseas. The British Council's own use of CVMs demonstrates that an evaluation methodology designed to allow a variety of stakeholders to identify what is important to them thus accounting for the differing perspectives of funders, producers, managers and users (2015:12). Schneider (2009:265) progresses toward a more tangible and systematic approach to the task of measuring the intangible elements of cultural practice, she identifies the following as 'general characteristics of success':

- Two-way engagement, (collaboration, which can include performance, mentoring, teaching, information exchange or exchange of techniques/ perspectives);
- Contextualization (local meaning, i.e. 'what works in Cairo may not work in Caracas');
- Enjoyment (not to be underestimated as an influential factor, the enjoyment of both participant and audience of a performance event – for example – should be taken into account);
- Flexibility, creativity and adaptability (necessities in a world of diminishing funds)

These characteristics are largely subjective – furthermore it is not immediately clear whether they constitute outputs or outcomes, this is something that must be clear to all stakeholders on a project-by project basis at the outset – but it is nonetheless possible to begin to identify ways in which measures – both qualitative and quantitative - to quantify each of them might be identified so as to usefully contribute to, or augment, a narrative of success.

2.6 Summary

There are no simple answers to challenging questions about how to effectively value arts and cultural activity in the pursuit of soft power. The literature review has made clear the need

for further clarification regarding the most suitable methodologies to assess the processes, outputs and outcomes associated with arts, culture and soft power. And yet, there are some key principles that ought to inform the choice of those methodologies and subsequent accrual of evidence. First, it is vitally important that arts and cultural activities are clearly tied to strategic soft power objectives if this activity is to be effectively evaluated. Relatedly, linking the British Council's cultural relations activities to strategic objectives will also help clarify the extent to which arts and cultural activity is part of a soft power strategy *or* an outcome. This differentiation must be made at the outset of the project or programme as the appropriate evaluation and assessment tools will be determined on this basis. Moreover, if they are to have any real meaning and lasting impact soft power objectives need to be built into programmes or projects along with other cultural objectives from the start. It is not enough to have a soft power benefit (i.e. raising awareness during an event or a campaign) as a coincidental outcome of a project if this momentum is then lost once the event has left town or the campaign has ended. Analysis of influence requires a longer timescale in order to track and evaluate input, people-to-people engagement, output and outcomes effectively. Currently embassies are carrying out effective work in this area but local arts and cultural organisations working internationally are less well equipped to function in this way and these are the groups we need to engage if lasting benefit and change is to be guaranteed. More input is needed from funding bodies such as the British Council if these soft power outcomes are to be tracked and linked to a theory of change over a longer timescale.

3.0 Expert insights

In this section we draw on discussions with a mixture of key informants who were either interviewed on a one-to-one basis (via telephone), participated in the facilitated workshop discussion or provided information that informed the production of our four international case studies (see Appendix 1). Eight key informants were approached to participate in interviews, providing a mix of academic, policy, funding and practitioner perspectives. In discussion with the British Council these participants were asked to offer insights into the role of arts and culture as a vehicle for soft power, specific examples of where this contribution is effective, where there are limitations to the use of arts and culture and, finally, how success could (and should) be measured. In total, six interviews were completed. One interviewee declined to participate and a further interviewee agreed but there was insufficient time to undertake the interview. In the forthcoming sections, the key insights emerging from engagement with expert respondents are summarised and aligned with the themes emerging from the preceding literature review.

3.1 Nomenclature: Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Relations or Public Diplomacy?

Building on the contents of the literature review, there is much debate about the appropriate nomenclature used to describe the arts and cultural activities delivered by the British Council and its strategic partners (e.g. Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the GREAT Campaign). Discussion with interviewees and workshop attendees focused on the relative importance of defining terms and the extent to which both governmental and non-governmental agencies - including Cultural Institutes and arms-length organisations in receipt of government funding (e.g. British Council) – factor in terminological differences in their practices and activities. The general consensus emerging from these discussions was that that the terms are often being used interchangeably to describe the same activity. However, some respondents indicated that cultural diplomacy was a subset of public diplomacy because it is inseparable from the remit of the Government and Foreign Office abroad – albeit the 'cultural' element is only one part of the broader public diplomacy effort. It was also suggested that politics creates a framework through which culture can operate (i.e. cultural diplomacy) whilst culture can also create a framework for politics, through the development of mutual understanding (i.e. cultural relations). It was felt that those institutions tasked with projecting British cultural values internationally (including the British Council and the BBC World Service) could increasingly be seen to be engaged in cultural diplomacy because there is clearer national interest involved. And yet, those working in the field suggested that cultural relations activity is actually the most effective means of negotiating mutually advantageous, long-term relationships. Here, respondents were specifically foregrounding the importance of people-to-people contacts which is at the heart of most definitions of cultural relations work.

Another important insight that aligned with the output of the literature review was that cultural diplomacy is a term most likely to be used internationally whilst cultural relations was more commonly used in the UK. There was broad consensus that cultural relations activity moved into the sphere of cultural diplomacy when funded more directly by governments (consistent with Rivera, 2015). Generally, in such cases there is a public communication message attached to the cultural intervention that creates cultural

diplomacy. Activities with private sector involvement - for example Coca Cola funding a recording studio in Pakistan - are viewed as cultural relations, although they may have soft power benefits in a broader diplomatic context. Furthermore, a dance company working with street children in Ethiopia that may lead to a transformative change in their lives is an example of cultural relations that may well have a soft power by-product as a feature of the process of engagement. Public diplomacy goes beyond an interest in culture whereas cultural diplomacy and cultural relations may involve a mixture of both state and non-state actors.

Most respondents were keen to emphasise that arts and cultural activity funded and promoted by a cultural ministry on a formal basis was an example of cultural diplomacy. In contrast, cultural relations are fundamentally about people-to-people engagement, which may or may not involve businesses and the private sector. Interviewees and workshop participants agreed that the realm of cultural relations is not 'directly' influenced by government though funding arrangements can threaten the relative independence of the activities of some cultural organisations. As one interviewee pointed out, difficulties are encountered when an agency funded by government engages in cultural relations work. In such cases, the source of funding (and relative reliance upon it) can influence the approach taken to the work at hand. For example, activity that started out as cultural relations may be required to demonstrate a cultural diplomacy outcome due to the reliance on state funding and the perceived pressure to further the state's ambitions. There is complexity to funding arrangements that can exert pressure to achieve certain pre-defined outcomes. For example, in the UK context, some funds coming directly from government, such as the empowerment fund, are managed as programmes and there is an expectation to demonstrate soft power outcomes as a result of the origin and purpose of support. Others pointed out that those employed in the arts and cultural area 'are all diplomats' when working internationally and, even though they may not be promoting the government's agenda, international governmental support is needed in order to facilitate cultural exchange and trade too.

3.2 Soft power as process or outcome

Interviewees and workshop participants both recognised increased pressure from funding bodies and those in policy positions to demonstrate that artistic or cultural interventions can demonstrate soft power outcomes. This pressure to demonstrate positive outcomes from arts and cultural activities is understandable, especially if these were enshrined as objectives from the outset. There was general consensus from respondents that soft power outcomes could be achieved from investment in art and cultural activities, though there remain significant challenges in designing meaningful methods to measure those outcomes, over time. There was a stronger belief from respondents that some of the more meaningful soft power benefits are achieved through the *process* of engagement, even when the original outcomes are not achieved. For example, in the British Council's work with partners in Russia in 2014 as part of the Year of Culture, an extensive programme of performance and exhibitions was planned that would have led to some high profile outputs. However, due to the challenging diplomatic environment at the time between Britain and Russia, the decision was taken not to deliver the final productions and keep the work more low key. Though the final outputs were not delivered, the processual dimensions associated with developing the artistic work, the strengthened collaboration with partners and the new artist-to-artist

relationships forged were viewed as a success. It is important in any measurement of soft power to be able to capture and give value to cultural relations work that generates shared trust for working together in the future. Thus, soft power defined as a dynamic *process* was more useful here than simply measuring the number of exhibits, performances or audience attendances at the final offering. The task at hand is to identify strategic objectives that assign value to the processes involved in cultural relations work, involving the cultural practitioners themselves as well as satisfying the needs of policy makers and funders to account for investment. In this way, developing the 'right' long term relationships or the most sustainable partnerships could by themselves be legitimate objectives. However, it is important to note that whilst there was support for the idea that process could and should be valued in assessing the value of cultural relations or diplomacy activity, there exists a parallel demand from politicians, funders and policy bodies for what might be described as 'hard' measures that relying on existing, well understood quantitative measures, including return on investment.

In terms of nomenclature, there was some discussion about the role of cultural diplomacy as process or outcome in Europe, the UK and elsewhere in the world. One view was that the European voice was much more open to culture being used as a process rather than driven by specific outcomes. For example, the Council of Europe, or the regional exchange programmes and the prominent role played by culture in fostering open dialogue, understanding and stability in South East Europe in the 1990s has led to a flexibility and broader context for engagement. Whereas, in the UK, each international intervention is dominated by a particular outcome measure, like in the GREAT campaign. It, for example sees return on investment as key and thus is driven by outcome targets. Elsewhere in the world culture is being used as both a process (Columbia, in trying to foster peace) and outcome (Germany in re-branding its identity, measurable by, for example, increasing tourist visitors). There was some limited discussion as to whether in the post Brexit environment that the role of art and culture will be used more assertively in soft power processes and tentatively some consciousness that the arts may play a role in counter terrorism.

3.3 Evaluation and return on influence

An interesting discussion of evaluation, measurement, 'return on influence', sentiment and trust also emerged from the interviews and the workshop. There was a belief expressed by some that overseas embassies do a good job of tracking the people-to-people contacts that are central to cultural relations activity. They keep records of the number of gallery openings attended, by whom and how often – and also track future engagements undertaken as a result and any subsequent investment secured. Furthermore, it was noted that it is common practice to track key investors and seek to persuade them to support a project or programme in the future. This is a key strategy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and British Council (BC) in target countries, i.e. China. As one respondent noted, if China lends the UK culturally significant artefacts then it is important (for diplomatic purposes) that they are displayed and interpreted in a manner acceptable to the Chinese government (for example in the V&A or British Museum). It is vital that when visitors from China see these artefacts on display in the UK, it reflects the image of China that they want to see represented on the world stage.

Respondents felt that the UK Government needs to ensure continued funding to large cultural institutions at home in order to attract these relationships and, to ensure a strategic fit with cultural diplomacy or cultural relations objectives abroad. Thus, suggesting a need for an overall cultural policy or strategy that links UK cultural offerings with their international strategy for cultural diplomacy. Producing strategic soft power objectives, and identifying which agencies, programmes or projects will have responsibility for delivering on them, is imperative. Only then is it possible to track progress over time on the efficacy of relationships formed and activities delivered. The need for strategic thinking and forward planning was also mentioned in other examples of funding, including for example theatre travelling internationally (i.e. staging Iraq War inspired play Black Watch at the Pentagon). There was general agreement from all respondents that long-term evaluation data was a necessary part of both cultural diplomacy and cultural relations work. It was specifically noted that objectives on 'return on influence' needed to be built into such undertakings from the start.

Interview data also showed a level of agreement that measures such as trust and reputation were appropriate as national state level soft power objectives and, that these can be relatively easily measured using global surveys (albeit there are methodological problems with the use of proxies). Furthermore, engagement with digital diplomacy means that it is now important to track sentiment, extent of engagement and impact on citizens, at both local and global levels. Interviewees also acknowledged that more investment was needed to track soft power objectives but that some of this could be allocated to helping artists and other stakeholders or partners to understand 'return on influence' more effectively, for example.

A number of respondents felt that there was a need for greater understanding of 'return on influence,' along with insight into how this can be understood over time. One organisation argued that the BC needed to set smart objectives related to soft power and return on influence for their programmes and projects as to date that hadn't been a key role previously. The GREAT campaign shared their evaluation on return on influence with the British Council as they did not feel it was set up to do this. If it is possible to learn from the GREAT campaign and share resources across agencies this will lead to a better understanding on return on influence for all government partners. The FCO said they had now introduced a training programme in soft power for all staff working either for them or in their embassies. They felt their embassies were better able to track return on influence, through, number of exhibitions, openings and invites and follow through on these people-to-people connections. This was something that others could learn from in regards to tracking relationships and trust. They were tying this directly to soft power process as part of their communication strategy. This is potentially something that could be rolled out to other organisations and departments.

Drawing from the case studies it is obvious that state-sponsored programmes such as those in China are focussed on using culture as the vehicle for soft power change in relation to the attractiveness of China to others and are outcome driven. The Chinese government has the resources (human and economic) necessary that Vuving (2009) argues is essential to change attitudes and behaviours. The stark rise in the number of Confucius Institutes around the globe is testament to China's soft power offensive in using language and culture as a vehicle

for influence and change. A key difference is that China adopts a state sponsored approach to CD and is more outcome driven than process but does lead to changes in influence, where others adopt the auspices of non-state actors to carry out this role.

3.4 Conclusions

There was a general consensus that evaluation was the weak point in cultural diplomacy and cultural relations efforts. Government policy tends to focus on the big projects and significant, measurable impacts. The danger is that – particularly in international settings - smaller cultural projects lose out if their aims do not fit the preordained agenda for that year. Artists can find themselves in a situation whereby they must respond to 'Years of' or seek commissions as part of cultural programmes to secure funding or recognition. Open calls for funding applications available to artists are now far fewer in number and there is more focus on foreign investment, cultural image abroad and associated cultural branding opportunities. This means that, currently, the cultural sector is placed in a position of 'reactivity' and at times instrumentality whereby it is responding to, rather than shaping, ideas, exchanges and practice. The success of the GREAT campaign, partly in its own promotion has put pressure on other programmes to demonstrate smart objectives focusing on soft power outcomes that are demonstrable, measureable and open to scrutiny. The importance of the role of arts and culture in soft power processes of engagement, open dialogue, trust and reputation are in danger of being undermined. As we move into a political difficult climate with our European partners, as the UK exits Europe and the USA put pressure on cultural relationships with global partners. The last time relationships were so strained was post second world war. The British Council need to establish a set of tools for evaluating processes as well as outcomes and meaning as well as measurement.

4.0 Proposal for the measurement of arts, culture and soft power

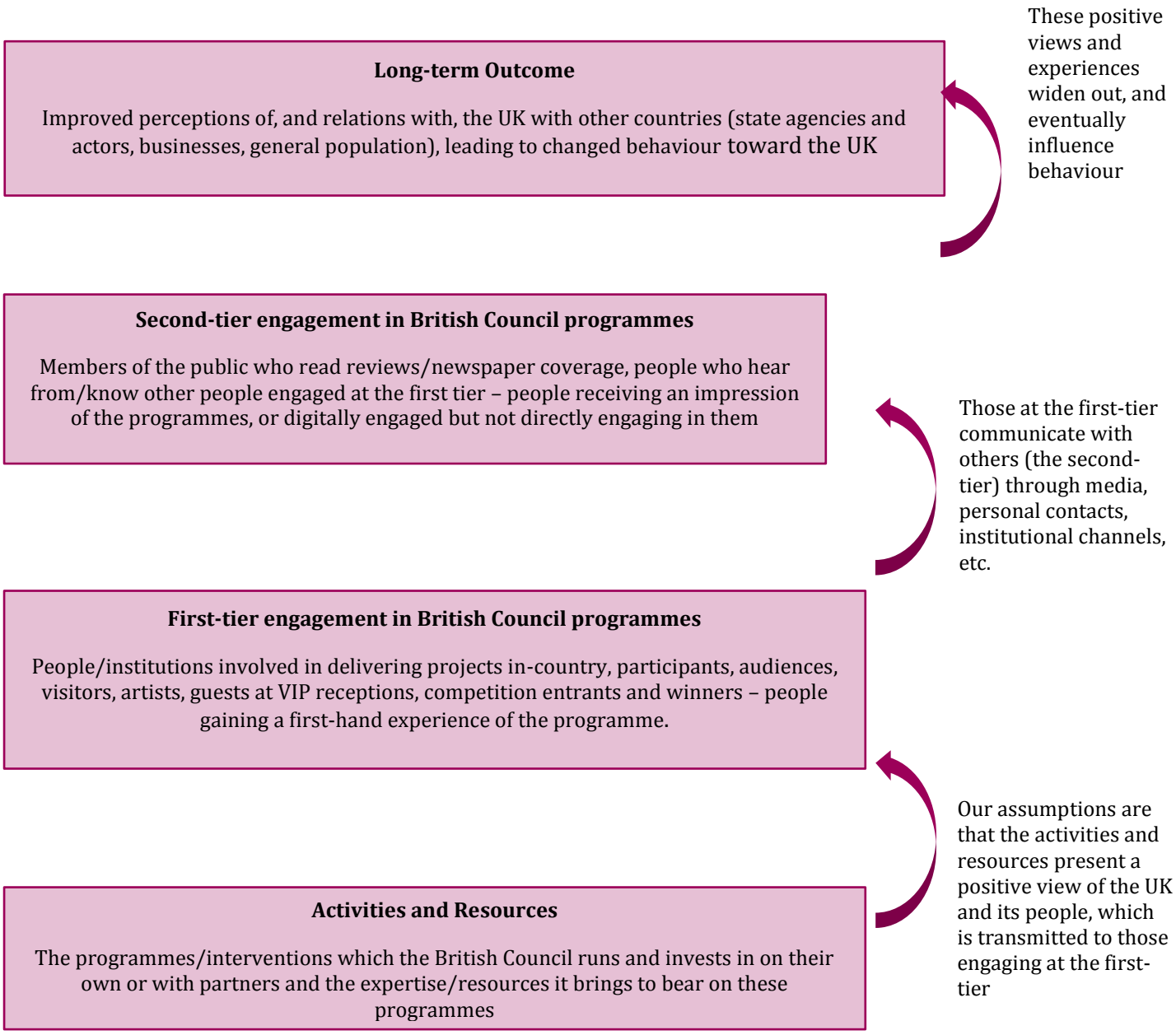
As this report has suggested, the British Council is now doing more with arts and cultural activity than ever before but it needs also to ensure it can evidence what difference this makes. As part of the original tender, it was proposed that an approach using a logic model – or a logic model framework, against which activities could be modelled and interrogated – would be developed. Logic models are not new, and substantial grey and academic literature exists supporting and evaluating the use of logic models. They are sometimes used alongside, or conflated with, theory of change models. For the purposes of this particular piece of work, perhaps the most significant difference is that a theory of change model might provide an overall hypothesis (at a strategic level) for arts and cultural interventions achieving soft power outcomes, but may not at this stage help to understand the specificity of how individual programmes are designed to bring about these outcomes. A logic model – with some modifications to encourage more emphasis on causality and a requirement to consider how the various elements of a project might be evidenced – is a tool which can be used with individual programmes and projects. In doing this, we hope it will open up immediate and practical areas for better evidence collection which can be directly applied to activities which the British Council is supporting.

Right now, whilst the British Council undertakes a range of work, which may create soft power outcomes, it currently finds it hard to articulate and evidence the process by which these occur. Importantly, there is also perhaps not as much information as there could be which supports British Council staff and others understanding how individual interventions work, what is suitable for repeating, transposing or adapting, and how individual interventions might, when grouped together, have an effect which is greater than the sum of its parts. At this stage, rather than jumping in with a detailed theory of change for which there is insufficient evidence to test against, we are suggesting a pair of tools that the British Council should treating as a working and evolving framework, in order to:

- Improve, where necessary, basic management information about arts and cultural interventions
- Support strategic choices about evaluation, beginning to really answer some complex questions
- Build upon the tools, potentially to support the ongoing use of logic models for specific projects (particularly where significant evaluation may be taking place) and to work towards a theory of change over time.

A proposed theory of change is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Theory of change



This model is very broad and it includes a number of assumptions. Over time, British Council staff should work together to unpack the following set of questions:

- What kinds of activities/resources (including digital), and how much of them, are required to change or significantly enhance the experiences and perceptions of those people who are engaged at the first tier.
- What are the specific benefits to those at the first tier of engagement?

- What influence or opportunity does a person at the first tier of engagement have to influence their own behaviour, that of friends, family, their organisations or other agencies and businesses?
- What prompts a first-tier engagement to turn into a second tier engagement? e.g. a VIP guest from a tourism agency to go back to their desk and change the behaviour of that organisation, a competition winner to tell all their friends about a positive trip to the UK, etc? How much activity does it take, and of what kind? Are we able to say which British Council intervention prompted a particular response, and link British Council activity to that outcome?
- Finally, what kinds of changed behaviours might impact significantly on relationships between another country and the UK?

To support developing a theory of change which takes an overview of the 'soft power' proposition – but which builds upon what we know about the differences of different types of activities and engagements with individuals – we suggest that the British Council uses a logic model framework as a tool to work with some individual projects. The model provides a framework for understanding and exploring a project, and for identifying what kinds of evidence might be required at an individual project level. The more discrete the unit of activity you use for a single logic model, the more detailed an exploration and an interrogation you can undertake.

When using the logic model, an activity or project can be mapped out completely – it may have outcomes which are soft power related, and ones which are not. It should encourage the person completing the model to think about all the possible benefits – for example, an outcome might be improved relationships between those delivering the projects on the ground (essentially a beneficial outcome from the *process* of delivering the activities). These logic models, revealing the detail of different kinds of activities, are then an important tool for interrogating and developing the theory of change. Looking at a logic model, we can ask: which of the aims, objectives and outcomes relate to or constitute *soft power* outcomes. Given what we understand from the detail of the logic model, what broader lessons about these types of interactions, engagements and activities can be translated into the theory of change?

The British Council could consider using the model on a range of 'typical' projects or activities, which are examples of similar types of activity which appear across different projects and programmes which they fund and operate. Using this model on recently completed projects might prove a valuable process of reflection; using it on 'live' projects could aid identification of areas for evaluation and data collection; using it on planned projects may help colleagues support each other in asking what the purposes of a project are. If staff use the model, as suggested, across a range of projects and activities, then it should help to identify the detail of the propositions behind different types of activities and engagements. As such, these will begin to help answering some of the following questions, which will help in building a more detailed (and semi-tested) theory of change:

- What activities take place, why and how?
- What kinds of first-tier engagements take place, and with whom?
- What partnerships are formed – informally or formally?

- How we engage and track key influencers?
- What experiences and perceptions those first-tier engage-ees bring to their engagement?
- Do they share their experiences with others through social media or other outlets and what is the sentiment they are expressing?
- What benefits they get from engaging – is this recorded?
- What they do, following that engagement?

4.1 Logic Model

The template provided in Figure 2 is a simple 'logic model'. It asks you to consider the different elements of a project, including what will be put into it, what choices are being made about approaches and resources, what you think it will do, and what you anticipate it can achieve. It is designed to help you identify what kinds of information you will need in order to know whether the project has achieved what you anticipated it would achieve, as well as whether there have been outcomes that were not anticipated. The template includes several headings under which there are questions, which should be helpful in prompting those using it to identify the right information. The headings are as follows:

Aims: You begin here with the high level aims of the project. *What* is the project designed to achieve? What is the purpose of the project – does it fit into the mission of the British Council and how is it aligned with its stated strategic objectives? When it becomes time to consider the logic model in the context of the theory of change for soft power, we might ask ourselves which (if any) of these aims relates to soft power?

Objectives: This is your first statement of *how* you are going to go about achieving the '*what'*, or your aims. These are usually the specific steps, which need to be taken in order to achieve the aims. It will be important to think about whether there are specific objectives, which relate to achieving the soft power outcomes you may be seeking – what would be required in order to achieve these?

Context: Acknowledging the context in which a project takes place is important. Here you might consider what has prompted this particular project - is there a gap in current knowledge, or an area of need which is not being met? You should also think about the external factors or opportunities, which have shaped a project. At the basic level, most projects are taking place because – arguably – the people you are intending to engage would not otherwise get the experience that is offered by the activities you are putting in place. It may be that there is a particularly challenging political environment in the target country and the project is intended to engage people at the sub-political level.

Inputs: Recording the inputs to a project helps to identify the specific resources, which are being contributed or purchased to support it. Reflecting upon the choices made in terms of input will help in revealing any important assumptions that are being made about the possible effects of those choices. Inputs may include expertise and human resources. When discussing notions of 'return on' (whether investment or influence) recognising the inputs is particularly important.

Mechanisms: This is the place to record the processes that will happen as part of the project, or the activities which you expect will happen. When thinking about relevant evidence, you will need to consider how effective these processes or activities have been as part of the project.

Participants: It is useful to identify the participant group or groups for a project and, where possible, to consider what information you might need to know about those participants. Information may need to be collected in order to know whether you have reached the participants you were seeking to engage with, or to help to assess the relationship between a particular participant group and certain outcomes. This may also help you to explore the relationship between the particular participants in a project, and the choices that have been made about inputs and mechanisms. You might choose to include not only members of the public/targeted participant groups, but also those people who are participating in *delivering* the project. Doing so will be one way of recognizing that the first 'benefits' of a project may take place between the British Council and its delivery partners, building relationships and going through a process of developing new activities together.

Outputs: When you first fill the template in, you will be projecting what you think the outputs of a project might be. In the context of arts and culture you might expect these to include performances, productions, exhibitions, partnerships and media coverage. This may also include the process of engagement, people to people participation, leading to new relationships and partnerships.

Outcomes: As with the outputs, when you first complete this template you will be identifying what you think will happen as a result of the project. Outcomes should focus upon the difference, which has been made by the project. Again, in relation to soft power you ought to identify to what extent the particular project could be expected to make a contribution to what could be termed a soft power outcome. Some projects will be designed to lead to outcomes that are not concerned with soft power or only parts of the project can contribute to soft power outcomes.

Figure 2: Logic model

Aims	Objectives	Context	Inputs (Resources)	Mechanisms	Participants	Outputs	Outcomes
Broadly, what we want to achieve **Why we want to achieve it (what is the moral imperative)** **How does it fit with the British Council's mission and values?**	What are the steps/individual elements which need to happen in order for your aims to be achieved?	What are the external factors that affect us? What are the starting points for our activity? What do we already know? What is already taking place?	What resources are we putting in? Why have we chosen them? Who are we working with? How will we know if we have chosen the right approach and resources for this project?	What activities or processes are we undertaking? How will we know what the 'take-up' will be? How will we know if it is the right or appropriate activity/process to achieve our aim?	Who will the participants be? How will you know if you have reached the participants which you wanted to? How many participants are there? What do you know about their participant habits before your project? What was the participants' experience of the project?	What outputs do we expect? How will we know if they have happened? Did anything happen that we didn't expect?	What outcomes do we expect? How will we know if they have happened? Did anything happen that we didn't expect? Do any of the outcomes achieve soft power aims/objectives – or do they go towards achieving these? How far down the line do they go? (Thinking about the Theory of Change)

5.0 Recommendations for the British Council

In order for the British Council to develop an evidence framework for arts and culture and soft power to explore 'whether' and 'how' arts and culture contribute to soft power outcomes the UWS-led research team offers a number of key recommendations alongside the use of the draft theory of change and logic model:

1. The British Council needs to identify a small number of high level outcomes for its arts and cultural activity, internationally, that its arts and cultural activities can be more effectively aligned to and which will enable meaningful evaluation to take place. Some of these may be considered 'soft power' outcomes. This will lead to less reliance on reactivity and avoid the reductionism to return on investment that is current practice.
2. The British Council should align the work it is conducting on the development of results and evidence strategies in the arts and cultural area (and in other areas) with the specific evidence requirements of soft power.
3. The British Council should develop a set of parameters that it will use for evaluating soft power outcomes and processes. The tools for evaluation of process will differ from those of outcomes and this needs to be clear to all staff involved in setting project objectives. This will lead to a more meaningful approach to evaluation for return on influence as well as return on investment.
4. The British Council should use the logic model on a range of real projects and/or activities to build an understanding of what is taking place when it undertakes different kinds of arts and cultural interventions, and that it transfers this understanding to testing and developing a more detailed theory of change which can reflect the diversity of activities and engagements taking place. It would be helpful for the British Council to pull together the available baseline data it possesses in advance of implementing the logic model proposed here.
5. The British Council, in using the logic model and testing/developing the theory of change over a period of 2-3 years, should seek to systematically track the evidence of change (if any) using a range of methodologies and methods, including proxies where other forms of research are unavailable. For some programmes and projects the generation of systematic quantifiable data will be necessary whilst in others greater value will be accrued from going 'narrow and deep' (via case studies linked to the 'why' questions detailed above). There is still the potential for scalability from the findings produced as a result of an approach like this.

6. The British Council should consider the development of monitoring and evaluation training for staff responsible for collecting and collating data in across its operations, internationally to ensure ownership of the evaluation agenda. Given the nature of the British Council's operation webinars should be produced involving evaluators and British Council staff to make these training opportunities available to the greatest number of people.

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APPENDIX 1: Case Studies

The following four case studies comprise interesting examples of contemporary public and cultural diplomacy, cultural relations and soft power in action. Each case has a different rationale for inclusion. China is included as it offers an example of a nation that has re-presented itself as a global super power but is, at the same time, keen to launch a soft power offensive using language, sport and culture. Columbia is included as an example of nation that is slowly emerging from decades of conflict and entering a more peaceful era, in which it is trying to utilise culture to pursue exchange, peace and tourism development. Columbia is also attempting to suspend a 'brain drain' and attract inward investment. Germany and the Goethe Institute was chosen as it represents an established Cultural Institute set up post-World War II with the mission of re-branding Germany and creating a much more favourable new image for the country. Lastly, the Russian Federation is included as there have been strained political relations between UK and Russia in recent years but there have been some significant arts and cultural interventions that are worthy of investigation, including two large 'Year of' events. Such 'Years of' events are increasingly being used as part of cultural relations and cultural diplomacy activities. The case studies are developed from questions provided by the British Council and asked of key contacts, this work has been supplemented by additional examples from elite interviews and academic literature.

China Case Study

Background context

Though soft power has been on the political agenda in China since the early 1990s (Wilson, 2015) it is only in recent times that the People's Republic of China has demonstrated a far greater awareness of the strategic potential of soft power. Chinese authorities have worked to set up Confucius Institutes as a component of *China's Peaceful Rise* intended to promote Chinese culture internationally in an attempt to surmount 'hostility towards communism and negative images of the nation and its people' (Lo & Pan, 2014:4). China has used its economic and investment strength as a vehicle for soft power, with its economic success opening up opportunities across the world that has enabled it to assert itself as a global power. However as D'Hooghe (2015) notes, it is cultural soft power that Chinese officials view as the principal means of enhancing the country's attractiveness to international audiences in the long term.

Wilson (2015) argues that China, like Russia, has a preference for a state-directed approach to realising soft power. This preference is accompanied by concern about the role of autonomous civil society structures in domestic society. In China, there is a suspicion and scepticism of the West's approach to soft power which tends to involve Non-State Organisations (NSOs) and other civil society groups. Wilson (2015) goes on to suggest that soft power became an official goal of the Chinese state in 2007 when the CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao talked of soft power as a cultural construct, emphasising the need for cultural creativity and the role of culture as a facet of soft power – albeit for a domestic audience.

In China, the soft power debate is often conducted around the 'right to speak' (D'Hooghe, 2015: 111). Critics suggest that foreign powers (e.g. the US) use culture as a weapon to curb the power and influence of emerging nations. There is, however, also an acknowledgement that China is deficient in soft power resources, particularly tradable cultural commodities. In addition, the country lacks the channels (D'Hooghe, 2015) required to reach global audiences effectively. China's approach to soft power has also been somewhat limited by the censorship that exists in the country. Sensitive or contentious topics are more difficult to discuss outside of governmental structures. Moreover, while national attractiveness is an important rationale for exploring soft power in China currently the approach that the CCP has taken to the development of a soft power profile is chiefly a state-directed one.

China's cultural diplomacy

D'Hooghe (2015) argues that cultural diplomacy has always been important to the People's Republic of China but its role has been increased in recent years. In China, cultural diplomacy refers to "international exchanges in the educational, scientific, cultural and artistic fields" (ibid. 115). Debates in China on cultural diplomacy mainly relate to three ideas, the first is "that China's culture needs to be protected against the invasion of foreign, in particular, Western, culture; [the second is] the country's inability to capitalize on culture; and [thirdly] the

questions of which cultural aspects to promote" (ibid. 118). The protection of China's cultural heritage is, however, controversial as China has found it difficult to translate its culture into popular exports abroad. Partly, the perceived problem with the inability to capitalise on its culture abroad relates to the restrictions placed on the scope and creative freedoms of artists and other cultural producers. The focus on traditional culture in official cultural diplomacy efforts has also been a limiting factor as is the relatively low attractiveness of Chinese ideas and values overseas. The absence of a global media influence also limits the reach of China's cultural diplomacy efforts.

D'Hooghe (2015) suggests that "China's cultural diplomacy […] is hampered by the fact that there is no freedom of cultural expression in China" (ibid. 64). This is important for the role of arts and culture in soft power because, in this case, art is often viewed as a political tool, serving politics rather than enabling creativity and pushing boundaries. Avoiding the cultural pollution of western popular culture, the CCP supervises "all artists, cultural venues, institutions, and industries" (ibid. 65). Internationally renowned artists, writers and filmmakers are not in receipt of support unless they promote traditional and apolitical art. As a result of these tight restrictions, China has not been as successful as its neighbours in Japan and South Korea at exporting its contemporary cultural assets. The need to promote China in a positive light becomes a problem for the Chinese government in terms of soft power.

Principal activities, programmes and projects

D'Hooghe (2015) identifies a range of approaches that China has used over the last two decades to extend its public and cultural diplomacy efforts. China's public diplomacy instruments include the media, new media, foreign media, cultural institutes and activities, educational institutes and activities, Confucius Institutes and foreign aid. Wilson (2015) identifies five measures as the mainstays of China's soft power policy: the establishment of language and cultural centres; the promotion of friendship associations; the enrolment of foreign students in institutions of higher learning; dispersing forms of foreign aid; and efforts to develop an international media presence.

Cultural Exchanges and Cultural Institutes

China developed more extensive cultural exchanges abroad in the mid-2000s with learning exchanges central to that activity. D'Hooghe (2015:171) suggests that the Chinese Ministry of Culture has "established cultural exchange relationships with more than 160 countries and regions and currently runs nine foreign Chinese cultural centres in cities" across the world.

The Chinese Education Ministry launched a new initiative to encourage the teaching of Chinese abroad in 2005 including, as a core feature, the extension of Confucius Institutes, culture and language centres. The Confucius Institute Project is an element of China's soft power policy that naturally contributes to its public diplomacy activities, the institutes are government-funded cultural centres in schools and universities overseas. Since 2004 more than 400 Confucius Institutes (and 600 smaller Confucius Classrooms) have been set up in 120 countries and regions (Lo & Pan, 2014:2 - figures to the end of 2013). The

Institutes are focussed on providing an understanding of China that is primarily based on language learning. The Confucius Institutes are, compared with Russia's more regional cultural institutes, global in focus – with the majority located in the US alongside others in Africa, South America and the Caribbean. However, there have been questions about the financial and curricular independence of the Institutes and the Chinese Government's long-term aims have been questioned (see for example Hartig, 2012; Paradise, 2009; Lo & Pan 2014). Some Confucius Institutes have recently been closed in Canada and there have been concerns expressed by partner academic institutions that restrictions are placed on academic freedom and conversations are steered away from subjects that the Chinese government deem to be sensitive.

Recruiting foreign students has also been a strategy of the Chinese administration; their stated aim has been to attract 500,000 international students to China by 2020 (Wilson, 2015). China's approach to foreign student recruitment has been multi-faceted with exchange programmes and cooperation agreements with the US and other regional entities.

International media expansion

The media has been viewed as an important instrument in shaping public opinion in China, with the domestic media in particular subject to strict content controls. Press freedom in this sense is very limited and is supervised by the CCP's publicity department. Since 2009 China has invested heavily in the expansion and strengthening of China media outlets abroad. CCTV (China Central Television), for example, is expanding rapidly and seeking to provide a "CNN-like, internationally-popular, television station" (D'Hooghe, 2015:165). Wilson (2015: 1186) argues that "China's extensive efforts to increase its global media footprint are rooted in the conviction that cultural predominance is a major path to the exercise of global influence." China's state-owned news information agency has 109 foreign bureaus, China Radio International broadcasts in 62 languages. CCTV broadcasts programmes in seven languages and is now available on the internet, cable, satellite and even YouTube (Wilson, 2015). China Daily, a newspaper supplement, is published in major international newspapers. Through such media expansion China has sought to extend her reach globally, this has been done with particular focus on the USA and the African continent. China's news agencies are growing rapidly and are now comparable, size wise, with many of their western counterparts such as the BBC.

Though online media is more difficult to control, the Chinese government has "developed an extensive system to control the internet" (D'Hooghe, 2015: 54). Though the Chinese are extremely active social media users the government controls internet service providers and blocks specific foreign media websites and think tanks as well as western-owned social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. The government employs significant numbers of internet police to manage online interactions and to prevent criticism. And yet, the internet is hard to lock down and those seeking to control access to content are often lagging behind the availability of work-arounds. In that sense, "social media have thus, in recent years, provided more room for citizens to connect independently with civil society abroad" (D'Hooghe, 2015: 56). The Chinese blogosphere is also

perceived as tool of soft power as it projects a vibrant culture to an international audience.

Governmental and non-governmental organisations also use new media to build networks and reach, although there remains a concern from government officials over how to retain control over conversations in this interactive space. A preferred approach is the provision of interviews to the foreign media in order to disseminate messages to foreign audiences.

Sport, cultural and commercial events

De'Hooghe (2015:220) also shows how China has used what she calls, "proactive public diplomacy" in the form of sporting, cultural and commercial events. In particular, she focuses on the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo suggesting that both events helped China to enhance its public (and cultural) diplomacy capacities and capabilities. These events created an "expansion of instruments and actors; strengthening of the coordination system of public diplomacy resources and actors; the cultivation and training of a pool of talented people who master policies, know business and are good at communicating the basis of a public diplomacy system with Chinese characteristics." Even more importantly, the Beijing Olympic Games provided China with the opportunity to use sport as a cultural form to enhance international recognition, prestige and nation building (Xu Guoqi, 2008). From the bid process onwards, the Games organisers emphasized the uniqueness of the ancient Chinese culture in its emblems (e.g. the logo, the form of the candidature file, the 'New Beijing, Great Olympics' promotional film). The bid committee also used sophisticated PR and marketing techniques, including celebrity 'influencers' to communicate with a sceptical public abroad. Domestically, China used art and cultural activity to secure widespread domestic support (De Hooghe, 2015).

The Chinese Ministry of Culture also organises cultural events and festivals across the world; these include both one-off and longer-term ventures. The Chinese New Year Celebration programme is a good example of this, the project reaches across 82 countries, attracting "high level officials as well as more than 1,500 media organisations" (D'Hooghe, 2015: 171). In terms of UK-China cultural relations, the UK Now Festival was a UK-China event held in China in 2012, the year London held the Olympic Games. The Festival was designed to achieve the same kind of impact that its predecessor, China Now, had generated in 2008 when Beijing hosted the Olympic Games. The British Council also sought to use the UK Now Festival as a significant vehicle to deliver on its vision for arts in a major market, seeking to find "new ways of connecting with and understanding each other through the arts." The UK Now Festival took place over nine months between March and December 2012, managed by the British Council (who were also the largest investor) but including 11 corporate sponsors. The Festival included a range of art forms, from visual arts and film to theatre and design. The cities included in the festival ranged from Beijing and Shanghai to Kashgar in North West China. The festival's evaluation report indicated that 4 million people attended events over its lifetime, which comprised 254 events running in 29 cities across China.

Creative industries

In recent years, China has sought to grow, modernise and internationalise its creative industries, especially through the formation of cooperative projects with foreign countries (e.g. Beijing Design week, Shenzhen International Cultural Industries Expo). In order to extend its ambition, a more open creative environment, domestically, will need to be fostered.

Evaluation of success

As the contemporary Chinese situation demonstrates to a degree, successful diplomacy efforts are dependent upon more than the mere desire to project a certain image. To be credible, and accepted in a local-overseas context, the image must be consistent with the views that the target audience hold of the promulgators of the diplomacy. D'Hooghe (2015) emphasises the importance of understanding, and evaluating, the reception of public and cultural diplomacy activities if it is going to be possible to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. Intended messages can be misinterpreted or simply disliked. There is a problem of measurement that is common to many countries not only China. However, D'Hooghe argues that given the significant investment China makes in diplomacy the absence of systematic evaluation methods is problematic. Banks (2011) suggest there are three reasons why evaluation of diplomacy is so difficult; impacts can only be seen over the long term; the evaluation needs to measure concepts that are intangible; and the evaluation results may not be directly attributable to a diplomatic intervention. It is relatively easy to count numbers of attendees, the number of 'eyeballs' on a film or cultural performance, but much more difficult to ascertain "how these activities impact on people's view of and attitudes towards" (D'Hooghe, 2015: 335) a country. Opinion polls have been the most popular instrument used to assess the public and cultural diplomacy efforts in China – though there are obvious limitations related to sample size, the nature of questions, the timing of the survey and the instability of people's perceptions.

The global reports that exist to provide insights into others' views of China do not seem to recognize its cultural soft power efforts. As D'Hooghe (2015) notes, results from Africa and Latin America rated Chinese popular culture in the form of music, movies and television poorly. China's rich traditional cultural heritage was rated much more highly. Interestingly, young people and experts (as opposed to the general public) have more favourable impressions of China than the general public and developing nations have more favourable perceptions than the advanced nations of the West, in particular. Huang and Ding (2006:27-28) make the case for examining other proxy measures in order to gain insight into the efficacy of the soft power project that Beijing has undertaken. They point to the increase in numbers of foreign tourists traveling to China, which increased 88 fold over the period 1978-2005, as a positive indicator of the success of Beijing's promotion of Chinese cultural assets overseas.

In terms of assessing other facets of China's cultural diplomacy efforts, sporting and cultural events are easier to assess, at least in the short term. The *UK Now Festival* was assessed in terms of the number of events held, the number of people attending and the number of people accessing the *UK Now* offering online. Originally, the festival sough to reach 15 cities in China but this was surpassed by

almost 100% (29 cities reached). Beijing and Shanghai hosted most of the events but many other cities also hosted elements of the festival. Baseline measures for the success of the festival were missing, and this led to some less robust estimates of 'impact' being relied upon. For example, the evaluation of the *UK Now Festival* claimed that "the top 10 cities reached through live events together account for approximately 10.4% of China's population of 1.34 billion people, many of whom are likely to have absorbed some messages about the festival and the UK, whether or not they participated directly, given attendant publicity" (River Path, 2013: 6). Similarly, the extent of participation (in person and online) was difficult to assess as it was not possible to disaggregate those who took part in events from those who only took part online. In relation to value for money, there is also a reliance on relatively simplistic measures that focus primarily on direct investment (which was equated to £3.3 million for the *UK Now Festival*) and value achieved (estimated at £10million for UK Now). However, both of these measures are restricted to direct and indirect costs (British Council and sponsors) and actual costs including contributions from venues in China and financial agreements with UK artists and promoters, as well as direct investment from sponsors and the British Council, and in kind funding. Crucially, value for money assessments do not count the so-called intangible benefits – those that relate to enhanced cultural and business relations – and yet this is vital for an estimation of the role of arts and culture in soft power.

Moreover, in order to assess the impact of participation on cultural relations or diplomacy there is a need for more nuanced measures that look at sentiment and perceptions of participants. Much of the evaluation conducted around *UK Now Festival* was anecdotal and related to positive feedback and experiences from artists and audiences. Recommendations from the *UK Now Festival* (RiverPath, 2013) suggest that there is a need for a more robust evaluation approach, especially in the development of proxy indicators to quantify often intangible benefits. In particular, it is important to set a baseline outlining what programmes, projects, events and festivals are trying to achieve. Starting with a theory of change and accompanying logic model was recommended as an outcome of the *UK Now Festival*.

Lessons learned

China has an extensive set of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations activities and has invested in them significantly. Nevertheless, China's soft power success is limited by the perception that the state continues to exert power through the activities of state actors as opposed to through non-state actors. This, in turn, affects China's ability to generate trust. Wilson (2015) compares China, with Russia and concludes that China places more "attention on culture as a determinant aspect of soft power." However, the problem facing China is not related to the cultural resources it possesses and the unique characteristics of Chinese culture and language that is attractive to a global audience. Rather, it is the state-directed nature of the cultural diplomacy/soft power pursued that creates problems alongside the limited domestic freedom cultural practitioners (artists, writers, film-makers) have to strengthen the cultural offerings that might be attractive to international audiences.

Colombia Case Study

Background context

Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America with a population of almost 48 million. It is rich in mineral and energy resources and this has established Colombia as an attractive destination for exploration, mining, and investment activity. However, Colombia has also experienced political, economic and social unrest over the last 50 years, with weak governance, corruption, drug trafficking, poverty and a history of violence casting a long shadow over the country. Most damaging of all was the more than 50-year civil war with FARC. The international community's perception of Colombia was clouded by a negative reputation and some commentators have described it as a near 'failed state' in the late 1990s. In 1999, Plan Colombia (a joint Colombia-US strategy) was proposed to help Colombia deal with the problems associated with drug trafficking, poverty, human rights violations and a lack of state development in the country. The US government supported the plan to the tune of $1.3 billion on the basis of producing peace, prosperity, and the strengthening of the state. Through two presidents, the Plan provided a range of hard and soft measures (Nye, 2004) that address the conflicts within the country as well as building up the state's capacity to address security issues and building (and rebuilding) public infrastructure).

Whereas the country had previously been viewed as an unsafe tourism destination, contributing to a failing economy and a brain drain of its brightest talents, Colombia has sought to reinvent itself in the eyes of the world over the last decade – partly utilising hard (military and security) power initiatives alongside softer strategies (building the capacity of the state to function effectively). It has seen investment growth and improvement in security and the Government has sought to reduce inequality and eradicate extreme poverty. The President, Juan Manuel Santos has also publicly declared his desire to bring peace to a country that has suffered from ongoing civil wars. Foreign perceptions of Colombia have been changed in what some have called a post-conflict situation for the country.

Colombia-UK cultural and diplomatic relations have been enhanced since 2013 when President Santos met with the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron. Trade links between Colombia and the UK have been strengthened and, after the USA, the UK is now the second largest foreign investor in the country. Columbia also has a growing foreign direct investment and a large population of young people (the average age is 28). The British Council is committed to using education as a key facet of cultural relations and Colombia has a commitment to free education for all children in public schools. Though there is no national curriculum for English, President Santos has stated a desire for Colombia to be a 'centre of bilingualism' in the region with major improvements in English teaching and learning by 2019. In terms of other British Council interests, Colombia invests £500million per annum in infrastructure, science and innovation and has ambitions to encourage more Colombian professionals into higher education abroad. The UK currently attracts 1,000 international students from Colombia each year.

In 2015, Colombia hosted the World Art and Culture Summit for Peace. The Summit brought together over 400 national as well as international artists from 37 different countries. Singers, writers, painters, actors, and other cultural producers gathered in the Colombian capital of Bogota to discuss the role of arts in conflict resolution and peace building.

Principal activities, programmes and projects

In Columbia, and across the Americas, the British Council's cultural relations strategy has three main pillars (1) Arts (2) Education and Society and (3) English and Exams. In terms of *Arts* the strategy seeks to bring contemporary UK creativity to the Americas, secure UK collaborations with institutions and artists in the Americas and support for the development of arts infrastructure; initiate programmes which address issues of social cohesion, and provide support for creative economies in the region and the UK. For *Education and Society*, the strategy promotes UK higher education across the continent; international opportunities for young people in the UK (expansion of programmes for school linking and professional development of teachers and head teachers and a broader strategy for basic education dealing with equity, quality, training, inspection, curriculum, and technology) and new programmes in youth employment, governance, sport, social enterprise, sustainable communities and opportunities for women. Finally, in *English and Exams*, the strategy seeks to promote the UK as an English language learning destination and a provider of innovative English teaching solutions; generate an expansion of teaching with new delivery models including online and blended courses in more locations for new audiences; and, bring about a major growth of large scale training solutions for teachers of English at all levels.

In Colombia, the British Council is committed to helping policy makers to develop a national English language strategy and developing an English language curriculum that shares UK teaching methodologies and resources, helping more students and researchers get to the UK, including equipping them with the English language proficiency and qualifications they need, helping Colombia strengthen its creative industries and harnessing the GREAT campaign to promote UK culture and business and strengthen the UK's reputation for innovation, science, education, sport and entrepreneurship (British Council 2014).

Arts

The UK already has historically had strong relations with Colombia politically and in terms of artistic and cultural exchanges. The British Council's arts programme is based on the belief that a direct experience of the arts makes a vital contribution to the development of society, shared prosperity and mutual attraction which strengthens cultural relations, through inspiration. It works with a wide range of stakeholders including the Colombian Ministry of Culture, the Chamber of Commerce, local authorities, NGOs and the private sector. Its arts work in Colombia aims to support the building of trust for the UK, focusing on new work, audiences and models, new talent, ideas, media and showcasing. In addition, the British Council's work in the arts seeks to enhance the UK's role contributing to the stability and cohesion of Colombian society, to personal well-

being, employability in the new economy and growth and prosperity. Specifically, it sees to fulfil these objectives by:

- Maintaining and strengthening its sector credibility within Colombia - especially in cities where the British Council's presence is being renewed - and among key stakeholders, artists and arts organisations in the UK.
- Supporting Colombia's ambition to be recognised as a "pivotal hinge" and gateway between the South and North of the Americas
- Demonstrating that the UK is one of the world's liveliest crossroads of cultural debate, experiment and innovation
- Demonstrating that the UK has skills and experience to offer which are relevant to building a resilient and expanding creative economy
- Demonstrating that the UK has much to share - and wants to learn more from others - on the power of the arts to inspire, transform lives and communities, challenge inequity or exclusion, and address conflict.

The British Council has increased its investment in the arts in Colombia and a key facet of this work is the decentralisation of it activities beyond the capital city of Bogota. The reach of the British Council's work now extends to other large cities such as Medellin. After a lull in support for the arts, the British Council is now increasing investment and activity and that has allowed its staff based in Colombia to increase the scale and reach of its work. This presents an opportunity for the UK politically and economically as well as socially. Socially, the British Council is looking at art and social action and sees artistic and cultural activity as a way to change lives for those young people affected by the guerilla conflict.

The main strategic priorities of the British Council in its Arts Programme include: developing new audiences by raising awareness to cutting-edge arts content from the UK as well as extending its reach beyond Bogotá to underdeveloped audiences in the regions of Colombia, especially the youth sector; recognising emerging artistic talent and innovative excellence, through a strong association with new creation, promoting links and collaboration between Colombia and the UK; capacity building, aiming to offer access to knowledge-transfer, exchange and training opportunities to artists, creators and leaders of Colombian arts institutions; initiating and supporting arts and social action which will help Colombia address the issues of peacebuilding by reaching out to the significant portion of the population who lack access to artistic activities and education for their development through culture; celebrating the artistic excellence of the UK, through regular showcasing of UK art productions across all art forms.

In terms of specific projects, the UK was invited to be guest country at the Bogotá Music Market in 2016 (http://www.bogotamusicmarket.com/), the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce's foremost effort at fostering international relations in the music sector. The delegation comprised 14 British buyers, music journalists and a high profile keynote speaker. Business objectives were part of the initiative but there was also an ambition to enhance cultural exchange and mutual understanding through music. The UK delegation held talks, workshops and networking events designed to explore potential business and creative

partnerships, including the development and promotion of world music projects. Also in the field of music, the British Council, along with Fundación Batuta, piloted an academic seminar on Music and Social Transformation that brought together 57 music agents and initiatives from around the globe and sought to have long-term influence and national transcendence, carrying major impact over social conditions for music students, professional musicians, cultural agents and public policy makers interested in social transformation and peace building through music and arts in Colombia. The British Council view the promotion of arts and music as an appropriate tool for the construction of peaceful environments and the promotion of social transformation. The UK was represented by 6 initiatives (Streetwise Opera, Music in Prisons, Buskaid, Beyond Skin, Drake Music and Paraorchestra), 2 keynote speakers (PhD Keith Swanwick and PhD Craig Robertson) 2 panel moderators (Cathy Graham and David Codling) and 2 workshops (World Voice and Leadership in the Arts). Public, private and academic sectors in Bogota's historical city centre were engaged in the initiative in order to think about music's pertinence in social transformation and peace building.

In the field of dance, the British Council also supports talent from the UK by helping them secure avenues for showcasing their work in Colombia and working with emerging dancers both in the Bienal Internacional de Danza de Cali and in Bogota's Teatro Mayor's young dancers programme. Relatedly, the British Council in partnership with a Colombian dance company and the Bienal Internacional de Danza de Cali seeks to engage emerging Colombian dance talent from early on and help them grow professionally and artistically.

Evaluation of success

There are no clear mechanism in place for how Colombia evaluates its arts and cultural activities and the British Council is just beginning to address this issue in terms of the effectiveness of its work in Colombia. That said, there is a recognition that with increased investment and activity there is a need to more effectively understand what impact its work is having.

Lessons learned

Interestingly, there is an intention to position the UK as a friendly power in Colombia which, it is expected, will lead to many other benefits associated with commercial and political opportunities. The arts are viewed as providing a 'soft' way to increase dialogue, trust and mutual understanding. The UK is already well received in Colombia, alongside France which is organising a France-Colombia 'Year of' celebration in 2017. The British Council is repositioning its art strategy in Colombia to take advantage of the unique political and social 'moment' being experienced in the country. Colombia is viewed as an emerging country but that presents its own difficulties in terms of social challenges, language training and the like.

Russia Case Study

Background context

The British Council has been working on developing long term cultural and education links with Russia since 1959, when an Anglo-Soviet Cultural Agreement - providing for reciprocal, quota-based educational and cultural exchanges - was signed. In the 1990s, the level of such collaborative activity increased with the development of an extensive programme and network of offices in 15 cities in Russia. However with the recent deterioration of political relations between Russia and the UK, all the British Council offices closed in 2007-8, with the exception of the Moscow office. In the subsequent period, the British Council has sought to rebuild relations, utilising a series of arts, cultural and educational activities. For example, Russia was invited to be the guest country at the 2011 London Book Fair, Russian artists participated in the Cultural Olympiad for London 2012 and UK artists participated in the cultural programme for the Winter Paralympics in Sochi in 2014. These activities culminated in the development of a UK-Russia Year of Culture in 2014, which has been followed with a Year of Language and Literature in 2016.

The principal focus of the British Council's work with, and in, Russia has been the increase of opportunities for greater people-to-people contact to build mutual understanding between the two countries. The importance of building *trust* is a central component of the British Council's activities with Russia, using the UK's assets – language, education, culture and creativity – to facilitate greater collaborative relations between people and institutions. Crucially, the British Council seeks to "identify and engage with Russia's own agendas in areas such as education, science, English language teaching, the arts and creative industries" (British Council, 2016).

Principal activities, programmes and projects

In the earlier periods of the British Council's work in Russia, the focus was on educational and cultural exchange, which though important for thousands of people, was limited in its reach to a wider public. In recent years, the British Council, along with public and private partners, has utilised 'Year of' events as an important vehicle to increase links and dialogue between the UK and Russia and extend the reach of these activities.

UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014

2014 was designated the UK-Russia Year of Culture and sought to "provide a high-profile platform for developing new relationships and strengthening existing ones" (British Council, 2016). The British Council was responsible for designing, developing and delivering the UK programme in Russia, which included all art forms, the creative industries, education, science and language. The programme's objectives were six-fold, including political (increased access to influencers and decision makers), English language (develop network of language schools), education (encourage young Russians to study in the UK), arts

(more audiences to engage with British arts and culture through digital channels), partners and sponsors (demonstrable return on investment for partners) and the 'springboard' effect (create further opportunities and a self-sustaining network for UK cultural, educational and scientific institutions). Though ongoing during a turbulent political period, the British Council was committed to maintaining "open dialogue between people and institutions" (British Council, 2016) and delivered the largest UK cultural programme to date in Russia, with over 340 events held in Moscow and 12 other cities. Popular highlights included: a programme of contemporary British theatre and dance at the Chekhov Theatre Festival; exhibitions of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, a multimedia exhibition, *The Golden Age of Russian Avant-Garde*, devised by Peter Greenaway; a programme of restored Hitchcock silent films from the BFI with new contemporary scores; and the Barbican/Eon Productions exhibition *Designing 007: 50 Years of Bond Style.*

UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature

The UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature in 2016 provided the British Council with an opportunity to build on investments in, and benefits derived from, the UK-Russia Year of Culture. The Year of Language and Literature utilised the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death as its focal point but also aimed to celebrate and encourage a broader appreciation of UK and Russian literary and linguistic traditions as well as collaboration between institutions and business. The demand for English language in Russia was met through the programme, working with the Ministry of Education and Science to deliver a Shakespeare Schools Olympiad involving students and teachers in 40,000 schools across the Russian Federation (British Council, 2016). Moreover, a number of innovative approaches to engaging 'next generation Russia' were tested, including the Emoji Shakespeare App and the Shakespeare Lives on the Moscow Metro project. Overall, the Year of Language and Literature built on two of the UK's principal soft power assets, language and literature (with Shakespeare at the forefront) to increase both people-to-people and institution-institution contacts.

Evaluation of success

The role of arts and cultural activities in achieving soft power objectives is fraught with difficulty from the perspective of measurement. However, there is some evidence that UK-Russia cultural activities and programmes have produced valuable outputs, processes and outcomes. In relation to the British Council's activities pre-2012, Ipsos MORI found that in Russia there was a 21 percentage point increase in net trust in people from the UK if Russians had been involved in cultural activities with the UK (studying in the UK, involvement in joint projects with the UK or attending a cultural event organised by a UK institution (*Trust Pays*, British Council, 2012). This research strengthens the idea that people-to-people contact is important and that cultural relations activities, including arts, education and English language activities can be a powerful vehicle for developing positive understandings of – and feelings towards – the UK.

For both the UK-Russia Year of Culture and the Year of Literature and Language,

'reach' has been a core objective. The British Council has sought to reach millions of Russian people and measures of success have reflected this emphasis on the quantity of interactions. For example, it is estimated that the most popular UK-Russia Year of Culture events, performances and exhibitions, reached one million people face-to-face and 12.5 million people overall (British Council, 2016). The 12.5 million figures included digital reach. The British Council estimates the value of media coverage obtained for the programme at over £13million. They also estimate that it would have cost over £6.5million to deliver the UK programme at market rates, but the bulk of the costs were met by host venues and sponsors of individual events, with the British Council only investing £785,000 (12%) of the cost using its grant in aid.

One of the challenges facing the idea of soft power influence through arts and cultural activities is the prevalence of programme evaluation data monitoring which is, by definition, focused on short terms outputs. In the Russian example, the Year of Culture and the Year of Language and Literature are both evaluated in terms of the number of performances, exhibitions and events delivered but there is an absence of ongoing, longitudinal work to complement and enhance this and it is difficult to measure the value of the process components too. There is a range of other research and evaluation studies relating to soft power being undertaken (e.g. Trust Pays, 2012, GREAT Britain Campaign) but these have international coverage and it is difficult to isolate the situation in individual nations from the aggregate figures. There are alternative international UK reputational surveys (including the GfK-Anholt 'Nation Brands Index', the IfG-Monocle soft power survey and the 'IMD 'World Competitiveness Yearbook) but each uses different methods and it is difficult to assess how the programmes or projects delivered in, for example, Russia contribute to the UK's position in their respective leagues tables.

Lessons learned

Over the last two years the scope and scale of UK-Russia art and cultural activity has increased exponentially, at a time when political and diplomatic relations have been most strained. The two recent 'Years of' represent significant opportunities to strengthen relations with Russia particularly as they have focused on areas where the UK has something relevant to 'offer' to Russia (particularly, English language, higher education, literature and cultural leadership). Initiatives like the Shakespeare's School Day, which reached all 40,000 Russian schools provides a good example of an embedded initiative that builds on existing literary links between the two countries and, furthermore, embraces 'next generation Russia'.

It is, however, important that the British Council can measure the effectiveness of its people-to-people and institution-to-institutions contacts and assess whether the development of 'friendly knowledge and understanding' has been an outcome of its investment. To date, success has been measured predominantly in terms of the scale of events, exhibitions and activities delivered and the number of people reached, whether in person or online. The value of the 'influence' secured from the 'Year of' events is less clearly defined. The British

Council is clear in its belief that by "sharing the best of the UK's culture and education, we increase trust between the peoples of the UK and Russia" (British Council, 2016) but there is a need for the extent of this trust to be measured, over time. In order to attempt effective measurement appropriate measures to assess the extent of change in feelings of trust built through partnerships in culture, education, science and language. These might include the number and value of new business partnerships, the number of new cultural partnerships existing 5 years after the 'Year of' activity or the number of language schools delivery English language provision.

There has been a noticeable increase in the attention paid to the value of media exposure, including digital and social media, as a means of quantifying the 'impact' of the UK-Russia cultural activities. Whilst it is certainly the case that this media exposure generates awareness and interest from a wider public, there is a need to go beyond the raw numbers to assess the reception of these messages and the sentiment of those receiving. The British Council is assigning a PR value to the coverage generated by the Year of Literature and Language, but again there is a need for a consistent methodology and approach to evidencing this if it is to be a useable tool for the whole of the British Council's soft power work.

Germany Case Study

Background context

The Goethe Institute (GI) was founded in 1951 when Germany was divided along the east-west axis. The Institute was headquartered in Munich from the outset. The GI is a German not-for-profit organisation. It was initially a West-German (BRD) initiative, focused on the promotion of German language teaching, only later were cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy activities included in its remit. Its first office abroad was opened in Athens, Greece, in 1952. From around 1960 the GI took over functions of other (West) German cultural exchange offices abroad and in 1970 it became the most important promoter of (West) German arts, culture and cultural heritage. During the cold war the GI promoted German culture in parallel to the East German (DDR) "Kultur- und Informationszentren" (KIZ). The biggest difference between the two rivalling institutions was that the East German centres had a clear political ("communism-promoting") agenda, whereas the Goethe Institute did not involve itself directly in political issues.

After the fall of the Berlin wall and the reunification of Germany in 1990 the role of the GI grew quickly. By 2000 it had around 155 offices in 98 countries all over the world. At the time of writing there are currently 159 GI's in 99 countries. It remains a non-governmental organisation and is an independent actor as far as its programmes and priorities are concerned. The Institute has its own Board of Trustees, General Assembly and Advisory Board. However, some 60 per cent of the GI budget comes from the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), with which the GI has a general agreement since the year 2000.

The total turnover of the GI in 2015 was almost 388 Million Euro, broken down as follows[11]:

Income:

Sales Revenue from language work:	135,089 Million Euro
Contribution from Ministry for Foreign Affairs:	229,663 Million Euro
Other Revenue	22,806 Million Euro

Expenditures:

Material expenditures:	39,384 Million Euro
Personnel expenditures:	165,157 Million Euro
Investment expenditure:	9,292 Million Euro
Other expenditure:	172,725 Million Euro

[11]Goethe Institut Jahrbuch 2016

The Goethe Institute is, to a large extent, financially dependent on the MFA, but this relationship operates on the basis of the "arm-length-principle" as regards financing and independence. Nevertheless, representatives of the GI do not conceal the fact that political priorities within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may have importance, both for the general orientation of the GI and for the choice of "country-years". The country's Foreign Minister can also influence the degree of priority for cultural diplomacy, cultural exchange or cultural promotion abroad. The years 1990-2000 were viewed as the golden years for the GI, whereas the period 2000-05 and 2009-13 were less positive, with the Institute forced to close one or two offices and endure budget cuts. During the last three years the Goethe Institute has again enjoyed strong political support from the Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

The GI, as well as the 153 German embassies, 12 multilateral missions and 61 Consulates (General), has lately been able to benefit from (and may to some extent have contributed to) Germany´s high popularity ratings worldwide. Having left its terrible history, including Nazism and a divided country, behind, the country has grown into the natural defender of democracy, human rights, tolerance and freedom. Germany is a leading nation of culture and arts and a first class producer of industrial and technological products. Germany, at both government and civil society levels, is the most loyal defender of the ideas and values constituting the European Union. Consequently, in the last 5–10 years Germany has been rated as one of the two or three most popular and respected nations in the world in global surveys (for example the Anholt index).

Apart from the Goethe Institute, which is by far the major stakeholder in cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange, the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, also plays an important role. Furthermore, some very active foundations such as the Bosch Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Konrad Adenauer Foundation also make significant contributions to German cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange, achieved through the granting scholarships for foreign students to Germany, supporting exchange programmes, not least in the field of cultural management and organising arts exhibitions, concert tours and other cultural events across borders. They all have a certain focus on young people in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, promoting both German language and personal contacts between young people in Central Europe. Like the GI, these foundations are also active in "intercultural" projects, promoting the integration of immigrants and refugees in Germany.

Principal activities, programmes and projects

The GI normally refers to its three main tasks: (1) German Language; (2) Library service and similar information service to customers; (3) Culture and Arts.

German language teaching has increased considerably in recent years, particularly in Southern Europe, in connection with the ongoing economic crisis. However, language teaching is to a large extent self-sustaining and generates considerable revenue. A total of 271986 persons attended German language schools and 435102 persons took language exams at the GI.

The library and information service is the least spectacular of the three priorities, but will always have a strong position (and involve considerable workload for GI staff). The digitally fully equipped 95 libraries had almost 883756 visitors and 2.9 million Facebook followers in 2015.

In its Annual Report (Jahrbuch, 2016) the GI stresses its role in building bridges across cultural and political boundaries. The GI opens doors between culture, education, science and development and it demonstrates trust in the power of the arts to ask questions and unsettle the status quo. Culture and Arts have become the major aspect of GIs activities abroad. In 2015 no less than 19661 cultural events were organised worldwide, attracting 11 million visitors. The projects represent good examples of the comprehensive use of culture and arts as a tool for cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange. The GI has a clear ambition both to promote Germany and German culture and to facilitate intercultural dialogue. It is also important to note that the GI explicitly promotes an understanding of Europe and develops shared European perspectives.

From June 2016 until May 2017 the GI is celebrating a 'Mexico year' with a full programme of music, arts and literature. In previous years the Institute, in close cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, organised a series of "BRIC"-years, with comprehensive cultural programmes in Brazil, Russia, India and China. These 'country years' are selected by the German government, according to political and cultural diplomacy priorities. The respective GI office receives considerable extra funds from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for this purpose. The Russia-Germany year, for instance, was held June 2012-2013 and was very successful for both nations. The Russia-Germany cultural relations have always been strong, in music, between museums and between individual artists, authors, theatre people and others. 2012-13 many German investments, not least in the automobile sector, took place. The Russia-Germany year could be organised in relative political harmony, since it ended before the Ukraine conflict started in spring 2014 and created a new, negative atmosphere between Russia and a majority of EU countries, including Germany. EU sanctions in place since 2014 have prevented further development of the very positive bilateral developments that were underway by the end of 2013. For 2017 a Germany-Georgia year is planned. The opening will be a Gala concert in the Berlin Philharmonie on 7th January 2017. Out of the thousands of culture and arts projects in 2015, the GI "Jahrbuch" spotlights some examples of successful initiatives, including:

"*The East African Global music Campus*" (centre in Addis Ababa) The GI cooperated with local conservatories. Musicians, teachers and producers learned to preserve and successfully perform their music under changing market conditions. "*Colomboscope*" (50 international artists with "shadow scenes" in Sri Lanka). In the programme "The City identity urbanity" visitors got involved in literary discourse on the future of Colombo. The Sri Lanka counterparts were very satisfied. "*German Season in Indonesia*" (including screenings of the works of Fritz Lang as preparation for the Frankfurt Book Fair where Indonesia was guest country). This was initiated by the MFA. GI was one of the main operators for 25 projects on politics, economy, culture and education. The German embassy reported good response from the Indonesian side. "*Cultural and Educational*

Academy" (comprising mobilisation in Kiev of Ukrainian cultural life). Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jazz club operators, museum curators and festival planners met with representatives of state authorities and developed new cultural formats and ideas in round-tables. The response from the Ukrainian side was very positive. "*This Beach (Dublin)*" (a play exploring confrontation between a European family and a group of refugees). The play was considered very thought-provoking. "*Turin Book Fair*" (Germany, with 25 authors, presented itself as a guest country at the *Salone del Libro* Torino). Visitors were able to meet with German writers and talk with them about their views on "wonderful Italy". This was a successful cultural diplomacy project. "*Librarian in Residence*" (a young German librarian with a scholarship to New York reports on efficient digitalisation of libraries). Several German institutions are reported to have applied her ideas. "*25 years of German Unity*" (favourite works of German authors presented at the Goethe Institute, Minsk, Belarus). Readings were appreciated and enhanced Belarus interest in modern German literature. "*Ambassadors for three weeks*" (the future of the United Arab Emirates introduce themselves on a journey through Germany. As part of the UAE Youth Ambassadors Programme, 18 Emirati students gained their first insights into Germany´s economic and cultural life). The encounters with young women and men offered their hosts insights into the culture of the Emirates, one of the world´s fastest growing economies.

Evaluation of success

The GI is fully aware of the difficulties of measuring efficiency and quantifying the results of cultural and artistic work but the Institute recognises its responsibility to account for the outputs and outcomes of the many activities it is involved in that are financed from public resources. The Institute has a comprehensive evaluation programme, which was introduced to give the necessary feedback to the finance-supporting Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to serve as an important instrument in developing further competence and facilitating strategic planning and sustainable working methods. The GI is aware of the difficulties involved in evaluating cultural work. The impacts arising from a specific project do not always follow a simple one-to-one logic. A concert, an artist in residence or a book release can have direct effects including attendance, audience reaction and awareness-raising, but they may also have long-term effects on cultural relations and sometimes even consequences for the foreign policy relations with the country concerned.

Cultural and artistic work influences international relations in a very complex way. It brings insights, experiences, positions which do not necessarily end up only in "a piece of art", but can create new networks, creative ideas and broader horizons for action. The artistic process itself is often as important as the final "artistic result", for the intercultural understanding it might be even more important. The GI and broader approaches to German cultural diplomacy apply a broad concept of "culture" which means that not only the arts and so-called "high-culture" are promoted, but also popular culture. Culture is defined as a dynamic process of dialogue and diversity. In this perspective the GI has engaged academic competence for the evaluation of its approaches. The relevance of programmes and projects are evaluated. Definite or unambiguous answers to

questions are not necessarily requested. The evaluators should rather identify the relevant questions to the given context and thereby follow up with proposals of quantitative or qualitative methods. Dialogue orientation and group discussions are likely to give the best and most complete information on the cultural processes.

The GI follows the evaluation standards of the OECD, where issues like relevance, efficiency, cultural and educational importance and sustainability are central. In the spirit of Germany´s general political goals the activities of the GI should be based on general values like pluralism and democracy. Any evaluation must also have these values in mind. Furthermore some basic principles should be observed:

- Facilitate intercultural understanding
- Focus on co-productions with civil society in host country
- Recognise the intrinsic value of the arts and of aesthetic creativity
- Insist on high quality and innovation
- Work with sensibility toward the cultural context/ambience
- Stress continuity and sustainability
- Always work with a clear anchoring in German cultural life

In the latest GI publication on evaluation, "Kultur wirkt" (Culture has effects) five examples of recently presented evaluation reports are mentioned:

- "Cultural Innovators Network" - More than 20 GI's in the Mediterranean region cooperated over two years with a view to encouraging pluralistic transformation processes through theatre and visual arts. Evaluation was carried out over nine months utilising interviews with the participants and through an evaluation workshop. 91 percent of participants confirmed that the project had really contributed to transformation, as intended.
- "Identity Move" – Transnational platforms for theoretical and artistic research on dance and stage performance. Headquarters GI in Warsaw, workshops, labs, performances and presentations in various East- and South European cities, from Athens to Prague and Warsaw. Evaluation was carried out over 12 months through document analysis, focus group discussions and comprehensive interviews with curators and artists. The evaluation confirmed that the project goal of establishing networks across borders was reached.
- "Networking" – On the possible success in creating networks and cultural partner relations within Netherlands, with the GI Amsterdam and GI Rotterdam as base. A four-month evaluation, exploring building of "social capital" at and around each GI, found that the two institutes had been successful in expanding their sustainable local networks considerably.
- "Cultural Management" – Since 2008 the Goethe Institute has a programme in cultural management training, mainly for freelance artists or for non-governmental organisations. During two months in 2014 some 158 Alumni were interviewed. 90 percent of the participants declared that the programme had had positive effects on their career.

- "Urban Places – Public Spaces" – A series of discussions on the role of culture in city development, with Munich "Kammerspiele" as the hub, was organised with participation – live, through live-streaming and/or through social media – of artists and city experts from Istanbul, Sao Paolo, Madrid, New York, Rotterdam and Johannesburg. Evaluation was carried out over nine months in 2015. It was concluded that the project had made an important contribution to the internationalisation of the importance of culture and City development.

Through its evaluations the GI also wishes to assess extent to which the programmes and projects undertaken correspond to the ambitions of dialogue, high quality and innovation, contribution to increased interest in arts and culture and the a free exchange of culture. Do the projects contribute to the appearance of new local cultural actors/stakeholders, irrespective of the GI? Do the programmes contribute to a positive German brand and to trustful bilateral relations with the host country? Given the complexity of evaluation of culture and arts the GI evaluators conclude that the formulation of clear project goals and objectives is crucial. This is not only indispensible for a relevant evaluation but also a precondition for a successful and sustainable project.

Lessons learned

In the ongoing and ambitious evaluation process of the GI both evaluators and the direction of the GI are aware of the risks of the "McKinsey syndrome" in the evaluation of culture and arts. They are aware that pure commercial or managerial efficiency criteria are not enough. So, evaluation has to comprise much more than counting visitors, measuring revenues, counting cultural events and media coverage. It is also important to note that Germany has a strong tradition of public support for culture and arts without asking 'why' a cultural institution or project is doing what it is doing. The German cultural policy paradigm seeks to protect culture and art from being instrumentalised by politics or other non-cultural interests. Evaluation as a permanent means of strategic improvement and more sustainable cultural relations and networks will continue to have high priority within the GI.