

Information Intervention: A Taxonomy & Typology for Government Communication

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ABSTRACT

Where government communication in the early 20th century fell under the umbrella term, “propaganda,” the post-WWII era saw a paradigm fracture into public affairs for domestic audiences, public diplomacy for foreign audiences, and psychological operations for hostile audiences. The continued diffusion of the Internet, however, has blurred such distinctions, mending this fractured paradigm. Based on in-depth interviews, this study typologizes government communication to contextualize how various tactics functions within the 21st century digital media ecology, through an “Information Intervention” taxonomy. In an age where state-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda are tantamount threats, this paper elucidates the field’s fundamental concepts by articulating who communicates with what audience, in what manner, with what intent, and with what desired outcomes.

Key words: information politics, public diplomacy, information operations, propaganda

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Introduction

Humans live in a civilized world based on rules. Such rules only have effect when they have a shared meaning and mutually understood interpretation. To understand any concept, there must be clear, concise, and delineated definitions so they may be diffused broadly, and so that shared discourse has a common framework from which to take place. Definitions are increasingly important because, like theory is to research, they become the lens through which one views, interprets, and understands the world (Bryant & Miron, 2006).

The Correlates of War Project, for example, defines “war” as more than 1,000 battlefield deaths. Under such a definition, 1945 to 2020 has been the most peaceful in human history (Powell, 2012). This contrasts the UN’s preference for “armed conflict.” With over 285 armed conflicts between 1946-2017 (Dupuy & Rustad, 2018), this concept invalidates the democratic peace theory of the post-World War II liberal world order. Terminology becomes the lens through which the world is perceived and understood.

With a rapidly expanding lexicon of terminology surrounding the concepts of “misinformation,” this paper advocates understanding core behaviors of government communication. This framework, referred to as Information Intervention, is based on the concept of interventionism to characterize how governments intervene in society in the 21st century. Informed by Cull’s (2008) Taxonomy of Public Diplomacy (PD), this work topologizes government communication within a taxonomy of Information Intervention.

Establishing fundamental characteristics of core concepts within a discipline allows for the creation of a shared lexicon through which scholars can debate. Such debates have increasingly evolved alongside advancements in information technology, with paradigm shifts occurring in conjunction with shifts in media ecology. Only from a framework of shared terminology can PD make contributions to its professional and academic counterparts.

How is PD to keep pace in the ever-evolving world of information persuasion when its scholars disagree on the field’s fundamental terminology? Meanwhile, international affairs uses terms including disinformation (la Cour, 2020), law uses “misinformation” and “propaganda” (Donovan et al., 2020; Kearney, 2007), diplomacy uses “foreign state-sponsored disinformation” (Nemr & Gangware, 2019), defense uses “psychological operations,” (Cowan & Cook, 2018), and information technology uses “information operations” and “coordinated inauthentic behavior” (Douek, 2020). More broadly, academia uses “computational propaganda” and “information disorder” (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Woolley & Howard, 2017), where think tanks use “influence operations” (Shapiro et al., 2020). This chasm of incompatible terminology inhibits as much debate as it causes.

As PD wades into the information age, state-sponsored disinformation combines with this mushrooming cloud of terminology. There must exist a better understanding of the philological underpinnings encapsulating how terminology manifests within contemporary media ecologies. The range of government communication requires a reconsideration of “strategic communication” as Information Intervention. Doing so rebalances government

communication away from idealistic concepts within integrated marketing communications toward a more realistic, grounded understanding of state behavior.

This article recontextualizes strategic communication toward an interventionism paradigm by typologizing four behaviors of government communication: PD, public affairs (PA), psychological operations (PSYOP), and propaganda. This sheds light into who communicates with what audience, in what manner, with what intent, and with what desired outcomes. It does so by presenting a taxonomy of information intervention classifying PD and PA as information politics, and PSYOP and propaganda as information operations.

Literature Review

The 21st century is inundated with government communication terminology, ranging from PD, to influence operations, state-sponsored disinformation, computational propaganda, information warfare, inauthentic coordinated behavior, malign influence, and others (Wanless & Pamment, 2019). Adding colloquial misuses of terms like “misinformation” and “fake news,” this article offers a framework for a continuum of government communication through the taxonomy of Information Intervention. What scholarship needs is not whimsically-coined terminology, but intellectual rigor brought to its core concepts (Riordan, 2017) to understand what they mean, and how they can evolve within modern political discourse. To understand the competition between digital diplomacy, state-sponsored disinformation, and computational propaganda, one must first understand the competition between PD and propaganda, then account for that framework within digital information ecologies.

Issues arise when there is a plethora of terminology lacking finite boundaries, or when discursive boundaries are narrowly defined. Looking to international law, legal text defines the reach *and* limits of international law’s application. Take for example the role of UN Peacekeepers during the Rwandan genocide. The purview of UN peacekeeping is to deter violence leading up to, or following, a conflict. As such, UN peacekeepers were ordered not to intervene while the Tutsi genocide was “in progress” (Lakin, 2019). The finite mandate of the UN’s peacekeeping mission bound the hands of the peacekeepers, allowing the genocide to proceed unchallenged from the forces deployed to stop it. Another example is the term “enemy non-combatant.” Where the Geneva Convention provides rights to combatants, the Bush Administration classified persons of interest as enemy non-combatants, a loophole where rights against detainment, extraordinary rendition, and torture were retracted (Lennon, 2015).

Words have meaning, and to follow “the letter of the law” is more than a platitude in policy development; the exact text of public policy holds substantial impact, especially in complex 21st century information ecologies. International law extending from the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal and Article 20 of the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, for example, address the purview of Propaganda for War (Kearney, 2007). What is to stop a state from claiming they did not spread propaganda that led to war, simply information

campaigns resulting in domestic violence? What is to stop a state from accusing another's PD efforts of conflating "fake news" with propaganda designed to overthrow a government?

Shortly after 9/11, Holbrooke articulated this lack of conceptual clarity, showing an inability to distinguish differences in government communication strategies.

Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or — if you really want to be blunt — propaganda. But whatever it is called, defining what this war is really about in the minds of the 1 billion Muslims in the world will be of decisive and historic importance. (Holbrooke, 2001, para. 1)

PD, broadly defined, are government efforts to improve self-image among foreign audiences to advance foreign policy interests. It has regularly been framed, however, as little more than its own predecessor, propaganda (Hopkins, 2015). Furthermore, there are accusations of using PD tools to influence political structures in foreign countries (Bischof & Jurgens, 2015). This debate arises from the extent to which propaganda and PD make use of similar, if not identical, tools and tactics to achieve only marginally different ends.

Where computational propaganda is the evolution of traditional propaganda tactics based on the capabilities of the Internet, digital diplomacy is the evolution of traditional PD tactics based on identical Internet capabilities. Woolley and Howard (2017) view computational propaganda as "the application of algorithms and automated content curation to diffuse false information through social media" (2017, p. 6). Conversely, Bjola and Manor (2018) view digital diplomacy as the diplomatic use of social media to communicate with foreign audiences and influence agendas of online discourse. Instances like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) using paid advertising to micro-target audiences (Roose, 2018) highlights one of the United States' most prominent PD tools engaged in seemingly identical behavior to the Russian Internet Institute Agency's paid Facebook advertisements in the 2016 presidential election.

Such behavior poses a crisis for PD in an era defined by the threats of cyberspace. This case articulates PD and propaganda using identical strategies to achieve seemingly identical ends. Where the histories of propaganda and PD overlap, states must employ careful strategies during policy development to distinguish acts of PD from acts of propaganda. This is necessary for public confidence that a government operates in the public's best interest, from a morally "good" position.

Information Intervention

As PD is highly interdisciplinary, consideration must be made that "strategic communication" underlies strategies of public relations, advertising, and marketing. In such fields, public outreach and audience engagement are fundamentally idealistic, referencing mutually beneficial relationships and active two-way listening (Fitzpatrick, 2007). Not all, if many, government

communications fulfill such ideals, by either virtue or practicality. Other terminology is necessary to ground the study of PD in more complex, realistic approaches. The concept of Information Intervention (Arceneaux, 2019) provides this framework.

... information intervention requires an explanation as to how strategic actors engage and compete for ideational influence ... strategic actors utilize policy, law, subsidy and technology to manipulate the market and compete with others attempting to maintain or gain influence. (Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015, p. 246)

The digitalization of government communication has given rise to a sharp power paradigm (Walker & Ludwig, 2017), with states using cost-effective communication infrastructure to confront and destabilize adversaries; what Manor (2020) refers to as Digital Intervention. While the “digital” component is new, an “intervention” concept surrounding the *winning of hearts and minds* is established (Cooper, 2017; Ekici & Akbulut, 2015; Kothari & Tsakarestou, 2019; Manor, 2020; Mattiacci & Jones, 2020; Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015).

Given inter-state conflict is transitioning to less kinetic tactics, information-centric activities have an increasingly profound role to play. Though PD does not spill blood, it can give rise to moral and ethical concerns. As it is often referred to as the “War of Ideas” (Glassman, 2010), PD can constitute avenues for non-traditional political interventions (Kothari & Tsakarestou, 2019; Manor, 2020; Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015). Likening modern PD to a continuation of the Cold War, Isaacson spoke of international broadcasting as a weapon metaphorically; Kaufman, however, supports it as a tool for “modern media war” (Kaufman, 2002, p. 115). Based on the tactical spread of attitudinal influence, PD is a method for power-based domination through information intervention, i.e., *information politics* (Jordan, 2015).

Conversely, *information operations* are mechanisms for Information Intervention sitting opposite information politics. They involve the external injection of content into social environments that disrupt, discredit, or discontinue orderly political discourse and debate. Where information warfare is an applicable concept, it frequently denotes combative military responses. As states have conducted information operations ab immemorial, a space for ideational intervention below the threshold of military response is necessary. Rather than stressing warfare, the antithesis of diplomacy, Information Intervention provides a framework for acknowledging realistic, everyday state behavior without the knee-jerk necessity for retaliation or escalation.

While Powers and Samuel-Azran (2015) concede international broadcasting as intervention, they argue the “information warfare” perspective is inaccurate due to the destructive nature of war. To them, Information Intervention only serves constructive ends. Ultimately, “constructive” and “destructive” are subjective, and arguing ideational interventionism serves only constructive purposes is highly normative. Contrary to Powers and Samuel-Azran (2015), the application of state-sponsored disinformation suggests Information Intervention can be both

disruptive and destructive. Thus, Information Intervention does not serve constructive ends exclusively; rather, it is a neutral behavior applied by diverse actors for either constructive or destructive ends.

An example includes Russia's annexation of Crimea. *Russia Today* (RT) propagated pro-Russian sentiment, with the intention of influencing conversations amongst civilian populations and government officials. Broadcasts explicitly reported how Ukrainian troops killed children via crucifixion (Bazov, 2014) and how children were taught to kill birds that were the same colors as the Russian flag (Euromaidan, 2015). Russia's information intervention includes both historical and contemporary pro-Russian policies that, "problematize American or Western 'hypocrisy' and 'interference'; blame these traits for global instability; and advocate a 'multipolar' world as the optimal solution" (Szostek, 2017, p. 382).

This illustrates RT, a PD tool, engaging in influence tactics aimed at advancing Russia's foreign policy interests. While this case is Russia-centric, similar moral and ethical questions have been raised regarding The Voice of America (Uttaro, 1982), RFE/RL (Bischof & Jurgens, 2015), China's Global Television Network (Walker, 2016), and the BBC (Rawnsley, 1996). Where PD grew from analog technology, the Internet offers a new medium to reach and target foreign publics.

PD is a hotbed for debate among scholars and practitioners, with its meaning often residing in the eyes of the beholder (Pamment, 2014). With confusion surrounding PD's relationship to other government communication strategies, identifying the conceptual and practical comparisons involved in the formulation and application of PD's terminology is necessary. This research typologizes methods of Information Intervention: PD, PA, propaganda, and PSYOP. In doing so, it presents a framework where interventionism contextualizes PD as information politics, versus propaganda as information operations.

Method

This research uses grounded theory. A grounded approach is ideal in instances where existing literature and theory are insufficient to launch empirical research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), offering a range of inductive approaches for observations of the natural and social worlds (Charmaz, 2006). To ground Information Intervention, in-depth interviews allowed for aligning the proposed taxonomy and typology with the reality of state behavior.

In-depth interviews serve as an effective starting point for qualitative research (Bogner et al., 2009). Using experts in interview-based methods makes the research process more applicable and effective across inter-disciplinary fields. It also benefits the researcher by providing a range of first-hand assets and resources (Richards, 1996).

Where expertise can denote the level of experience an interviewee has, it does not denote limitations on professional diversity. For social science research, a wide range of experts should be interviewed to offer substantial evidence surrounding theoretical conclusions. The

use of diverse opinion leaders synthesizes a route to “obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts,” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p. 458).

Table 1. Expert Interviewees

Interviewee	Institution	Expertise
Amelia Arsenault	Georgia State University	Public Diplomacy
Corneliu Bjola	University of Oxford	Digital Diplomacy
Samantha Bradshaw	University of Oxford	Internet Policy & Propaganda
Emma Briant	George Washington University	Propaganda; Information Warfare
Eytan Gilboa	Bar Ilan University	Public Diplomacy
Guy Golan	University of South Florida	Public Diplomacy
Jami Fullerton	Oklahoma State University	Public Diplomacy
Emily Metzgar	Indiana University	Public Diplomacy
Cayce Myers	Virginia Tech University	Media Law & Public Relations
James Pamment	Lund University	Diplomatic Studies; Public diplomacy
Christopher Paul	Pardee RAND Graduate School	Information Operations; Psych, Warfare
Steven Pike	Syracuse University	Public Diplomacy
Monroe Price	University of Pennsylvania	Media Law & Policy
Shaun Riordan	European Institute for Intl. Studies	Diplomatic Studies; Public Diplomacy
Paul Rosenzweig	George Washington University	International Law; Cybersecurity
Pawel Surowiec	University of Sheffield	Public Diplomacy; Propaganda
Candace White	University of Tennessee	Public Diplomacy
Rhonda Zaharna	American University	Public Diplomacy

Based on such epistemological foundations, this research uses in-depth interviews following a semi-structured format. The nature of semi-structured interviews provides direction within the interview process, offering control for the interviewer, but allowing the interviewee latitude to identify and expand upon questions where their background and expertise allows. The interview protocol is presented in Appendix A.

Interviewees, listed in Table 1, were identified based on their academic and industry specific experience. While most interviewees were identified independently, Monroe Price and Emma Briant were recommended during the interview process as experts within their disciplines. Interviews were conducted virtually from the United States, with the interviewee's originating from the USA, Europe, and Israel. Interviews ranged from 45-minutes to one hour in length.

Table 2. List of codes applied to the transcript dataset.

Themes	Codes	Code Options
Who conducts in types of information intervention?	Politicians, Military, Intelligence; Corporate; Civilians	20
In What Manner do they conduct in information intervention?	Overt; Covert; Mixed	12
To What target audience do they conduct in information intervention?	Domestic; Foreign; Mixed	12
Through what method is information communicated?	Framed Truth; Deceptive Lies; Mixed	12
What model or flow does the communication resemble?	One-Way; Two-Way; Mixed	12
What is the intent of such information intervention?	Inform; Persuade; Disrupt	12
What end does such information intervention serve?	Public Policy; National Security; Foreign Policy; Economic Policy	16

Transcripts were produced by Rev (www.rev.com) and analyzed coded using NVivo 12 for key concepts valuable to the progression of the research.

Following the interview process, transcripts were further analyzed for the presence of thematic characteristics, as identified by predetermined codes. Themes and codes as used in NVivo 12 are presented in Table 2. After the coding, an analytical memo was written to establish conceptual clarity in linking PD, PA, PSYOP, and propaganda within Information Intervention. (Bogner et al., 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Results

Actors

11 interviewees stated that PD suggests, and possibly necessitates, involvement with political institutions or branches within a state's government. Golan provides a standard USA-centric definition: "PD refers to the engagement of foreign publics by a government for the purpose of gaining support for its foreign policy objectives" (G. Golan, personal communication August 23, 2018). This notion of government centrality was reinforced by other interviewees, like Fullerton, who framed PD as a function of government speech (Fullerton, personal communication, October 1, 2018). A variety of the interviewees noted the functions of PD as encompassing governmental foreign affairs efforts, i.e., falling under the purview of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

Where most interviewees identified PD as state-centric, six offered the possibility of non-state actors partaking in PD.

It includes non-state actors ... as long as anyone ... is purposefully trying to establish good will and understanding in the values of your country, that's PD.
(White, personal communication, August 16, 2018)

This idea is aligned with more contemporary ideas of PD (Gilboa, 2008).

PA was more divisive across interviews. Six interviewees stated that PA was a core function of political institutions within a state's government.

PA is enacted by inter-political actors, which takes place and happens at the intersections between policymakers, domestic policy issues, and sometimes nowadays, foreign policy issues. (P. Surowiec, personal communication, July 23, 2018)

Three suggested PA was a role filled by military personnel, which is understandable given the prominence of PA Officers in military hierarchies. Two interviewees viewed PA as indicative of corporate-based efforts fulfilling government objectives.

PSYOP was identified in ten interviews as a notable practice by many militaries. "PSYOP, I would consider to be the work conducted by military personnel in theater" (J. Pamment, personal communication, September 3, 2018). Pike adds, "It's a term of art the military invented for what they do" (S. Pike, personal communication, July 26, 2018). Where the dominance of PSYOP in military institutions is established, two interviews noted that as militaries fall under governmental oversight, political elites could be implicated in the behavior.

Perhaps the most prominent was the lack of identification regarding propaganda. Interviewees universally referred to propaganda as a noun, i.e., "propaganda is" or "propaganda involves," etc. Conversely, the interviewees referred to PD, PA, and PSYOP as verbs, i.e., "foreign ministries do PD," or "militaries do PSYOP." Such semantic nuances are typically indicative of a difference in how interviewees perceive various strategies within Information Intervention. Overall, the sources of propaganda were not addressed.

Manner

Regarding the transparency of Information Intervention, PD was identified in five interviews as functioning in an overt and deliberately transparent manner. "PD is by definition transparent through and through. There should be no subterfuge involved ... whether mediated or relational" (E. Metzgar, personal communication, August 27, 2018). PD was noted as overtly seeking to communicate with public audiences through means that specifically offered transparent sources of content, and those which clearly expressed desired end-goals. As Bradshaw added, PD is, "visible and in your face. It's clear where the message is coming from and it's clear what the goal of this message is" (S. Bradshaw, personal communication, September 21, 2018).

On the contrary, three interviewees characterized propaganda as entailing covert, hidden, and secretive tactics. In contrast to PD, propaganda was most often viewed as a covert activity, where the source and/or desired end-goal of the propagandist is deliberately withheld

from message receivers. “Whereas propaganda, I tend to view it as being a little bit more hidden, especially in the digital age. You don’t necessarily know who the message is coming from” (S. Bradshaw, personal communication, September 21, 2018).

Not all interviewees, however, identified propaganda as exclusively covert. The concept of “white propaganda” was used to represent scenarios in which messages are transparent. “I don’t think it’s covert, I don’t think that its evil in any way, I don’t think that it spreads falsehoods. So maybe people talk about soft propaganda, or white propaganda, so I guess you could call it that” (C. White, personal communication, August 16, 2018). As Rosenzweig noted, “if they’re operated in a transparent and overt manner by governmental things, they’re at most propaganda and most likely at best PD” (P. Rosenzweig, personal communication, July 12, 2018).

Target audience

11 interviewees suggested PD was designed to communicate exclusively with foreign audiences. “The key concept here, it’s about engaging with foreign publics as a government, as a means of foreign affairs” (C. Bjola, personal communication, July 30, 2018). Cull (2008) identified five key pieces of PD: listening, advocacy, cultural and exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting. Where the nomenclature of international broadcasting entails communication with public audiences abroad, Zaharna suggested that PD was, “the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of people and leaders of another, targeting a foreign, as opposed to a domestic, population” (R. Zaharna, personal communication, July 19, 2018).

PA was identified as identical in its practice to PD, yet exclusively targeting of domestic populations. “PA is when the U.S. is talking to its own citizens and a set of rules apply. PD is when the government is talking to foreign citizens and the rules change” (S. Pike, personal communication, July 26, 2018). Certain interviewees suggested associations between PA and white propaganda, “I’d move on to mention PA, which is generally targeted at home audiences, is communication with the domestic press and is generally the truthful aspects of propaganda in western democratic societies” (E. Briant, personal communication, August 24, 2018).

Where several interviewees referenced the target audience of “propaganda,” opinion was evenly divided around the inclusion/exclusion of domestic populations. In four interviews, propaganda was characterized as targeting uniquely foreign populations. “Propaganda refers more and more particularly in the community of practice, to non-attributed efforts to influence foreign publics” (A. Arsenault, personal communication, August 3, 2018). Conversely, four other interviews mentioned such efforts can be directed at a multitude of audiences, both foreign and domestic. “Propaganda typically is associated and affiliated with persuasive communications, on a national or international scale” (P. Surowiec, personal communication, July 23, 2018). With a balanced perception that propaganda targets both foreign and domestic populations, the target audience of propaganda was identified as mixed.

Like PD, PSYOP was identified in four interviews as being understood as solely targeting foreign populations. “It’s exclusively focused on foreign audiences, since military information support operations are never directed against US persons” (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018). As PSYOP is regarded as military-centric behavior, and PA officers hold significant hierarchical prestige in modern military rankings, the relationship between PSYOP officers (targeting foreign audiences) and PA officers (targeting domestic audiences) might be called murky at best, and was noted in interviews as becoming less and less clear.

PSYOP is targeting hostile actors and enemies ... In America it's quite controversial to target domestic audiences ... there has become an increasing blurring between the practice of PSYOP, PA, and PD. (E. Briant, personal communication, August 24, 2018)

Method for content creation

Methods for content creation ranged from minor re-framing of factual truths, to using objectively unverifiable falsehoods outright, with most strategies falling somewhere within that continuum. Four interviewees portrayed PD as employing strategically framed truths to benefit the interests of the message sender.

It has a particular tone to it, but it's not making up facts. It's not purposefully trying to mislead people. It's trying to convince people of a particular ideology but it's not using and fabricating stories to convince them. (S. Bradshaw, personal communication, September 21, 2018)

Pike added, “When Americans say ‘We do PD, we only tell the truth,’ there’s shading there” (July 26, 2018). Where PD content is purposefully framed to serve strategic interests, it operates predominantly on the side of factually verifiable, framed truths.

PA was found to operate in the same way, gravitating toward content that is strategically framed. “PA statutorily is bound to the truth ... Even though they themselves won’t perpetrate any falsehoods, you have to know what you know and what you don’t know in order to be able to give honest answers” (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018). Both PD and PA involve communication with respective target audiences, employing predominantly truthful and honest information presented in a subjective manner.

In contrast, four interviews noted propaganda makes more use of lies and falsehoods to achieve its objectives. “If it’s blatantly false, it’s wrong, it shouldn’t be done, it’s propaganda” (Fullerton, personal communication, October 1, 2018). Six interviewees noted, however, that propaganda functions most effectively when based somewhere between objectively verified facts and blatant falsehoods. “Propaganda is the dissemination of truthful or untruthful information by a government for the purpose of influencing public opinion domestically or

abroad” (G. Golan, personal communication, August 23, 2018). Paul elaborated on this notion:

It involves falsehoods, but not whole truths, to convey a mistaken impression or get attitudes or behaviors to change where they wouldn’t if presented information more honestly. (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018)

Based on the extent to which propaganda makes use of partial truths through deceptive falsehoods and lies, the method of content creation for propaganda was identified as mixed.

Lastly, PYSOP was classified in much the same way as propaganda. Where certain perspectives were presented characterizing PSYOP as behaviors involving both extremes of the spectrum of truth, the overall opinion of the interviewees was that PSYOP existed much more in the center of a sliding scale between objectively verifiable truths than towards blatantly deceptive falsehoods. “I think a lot of people recognize that in wartime, governments can and do lie, especially to an enemy audience” (E. Briant, personal communication, August 24, 2018). As Fullerton added,

PSYOP feels like a weapon strategy … it can be false. It can be tricky and that’s all right because it serves an end in a war situation. (J. Fullerton, personal communication, October 1, 2018)

Where some, if not a majority, of PSYOP content may make use of lies, not all such content has been observed as doing so.

Even though [PSYOP] are not doctrinally confined to virtuous persuasion, most of their activities still fall into virtuous persuasion. They use true information, sometimes selectively conveyed, for an intended influence effect. (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018)

Based on the extent to which interviewees identified PSYOP as engaging in everything from partial truths to fully deceptive falsehoods and lies, the overall method of content creation for PSYOP was identified as mixed.

Model of communication flow

Five interviewees characterized PD as having a two-way flow, denoting an almost circular relationship between message senders and receivers. “Good PD involves engagement. It involves listening, and it involves having a conversation” (J. Pamment, personal communication, September 3, 2018). Indeed, “one of the key features is you try to reach out to foreign publics with a goal to build some bridges. You try to build the relationship” (C. Bjola, personal communication, July 30, 2018). As a two-way process, PD communicates with foreign

audiences through dialogue and conversation, a process that ultimately seeks to build and/or maintain a relationship. Dialogue is defined as participatory interactions involving multidirectional exchanges of information (Cowan & Arseneault, 2008). Relationships are connections facilitating multi-beneficial collaboration in the form of policy support, simplified trade and travel, and exchanges of culture, values, and beliefs (Storie, 2018).

Conversely, propaganda entails a one-way communication process. “Propaganda is message selling. You have a message and you’re putting it across. You’re not engaging. You’re not listening. You’re selling your message” (S. Riordan, personal communication, August 28, 2018). Fullerton elaborated on this notion, asserting that, “propaganda is covert, it’s false, it’s intended to benefit the sender, it’s intended to benefit the propagandist with little thought of the receiver” (Fullerton, personal communication, October 1, 2018). As a one-way process, propaganda advances the position of the propagandist at the cost of the receiver. There is no dialogue between the propagandist and audience, nor is there a healthy, or existent, relationship between the two parties.

Another notable finding is there was no mention of the directional flow for PA or PSYOP. Based on other characteristics, such as manner of communication (overt/covert) and methods for content creation (framed truths/latent falsehoods) linking PD and PA, while also linking propaganda and PSYOP, it can be suggested that PA likely consists of two-way flows of information (i.e., a dialogic model), while PSYOP likely consists of one-way flows of information (i.e., a broadcast model). PA more often communicates with domestic audiences through interactive dialogue and transparent conversation in a process that builds and/or maintain relationships. PSYOP more often communicates with the intention of advancing the position of the military, disregarding certain engagement attempts or reaction-based communications from target audiences. PSYOP is therefore identified by the absence of response-based dialogue between PSYOP officers and target audiences, as PA demonstrates some semblance of relationship-building between PA officers and their target audiences.

End goal intent

Ultimately, three fundamental components repeatedly surfaced as indicators of the inherent objective or end-goal for Information Intervention: to inform, to persuade, or to disrupt. Eight interviewees characterized PD as designed to persuade foreign audiences.

Foreign publics influence the decisions their governments take. If we don’t think foreign publics influence the decisions of their governments, and change decisions of their governments in ways that favor us, why are we spending money and resources on PD. (S. Riordan, personal communication, August 28, 2018)

While the goal of PD may be to persuade foreign audiences of stances they would not endorse under normal circumstances, there is always the potential that an effective PD

campaign might disrupt the social and/or political order of another state. PD seeks, “to affect the composition of their markets for loyalties, to destabilize, to help mold opinion among their public and otherwise to assert ‘soft power’ for the purposes of achieving the national ends of the transmitting state” (R. Zaharna, personal communication, July 19, 2018).

In considering intentions behind PA, interviewees classified it as seeking to both inform and persuade a domestic audience. “I have a very specific definition of PA. It is still an attempt to inform or persuade” (S. Pike, personal communication, July 26, 2018). Where the emphasis of PA may be informing a domestic audience, this does not mean that such efforts do not also have persuasive effects. “Now, there is a debate within and around the PA community when old PA can say that their mission is to inform but not influence, that suggests that they believe there’s such a thing as value-free information, that it is possible to inform without influencing” (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018). As such, and based on the possibility of communication both informing and persuading, the end-goal intent behind PA has been identified as mixed.

Propaganda is characterized by a similarly mixed relationship, between persuasion and disruption. Where some interviewees characterized propaganda intent on persuasion, others characterized it as a behavior of disruption.

Propaganda is a collective term encompassing activities that are political or strategically motivated to shape ideas, emotions, and behaviors or opinions of a target audience. (E. Briant, personal communication, August 24, 2018)

Thus, propaganda was identified in some interviews as being defined by its end-goal intention of persuading a target audience. Conversely, other interviewees expressed that persuasion may have been an unintended side effect, but ultimately the end-goal of propaganda was to incite or assist in some form of social and/or political disruption.

If the context is false ... this is not PD. This is where you cross the line into propaganda ... sharp power is simply a modern term applied to propaganda; the difference, this is propaganda done with digital media. (E. Gilboa, personal communication, August 15, 2018)

Bjola added, “See, for instance, the case that happened in the Skripal case in the UK, in which you basically use disinformation to confuse ... It’s so easy, nowadays, to flood the channels with so much information that is particularly offensive” (C. Bjola, personal communication, July 30, 2018). The end-goal intent for propaganda has therefore been classified as mixed.

Lastly, PSYOP was characterized as playing different roles across the spectrum of “inform/persuade/disrupt.” Two interviewees suggested there may be times when PSYOP seeks to inform from a posture of neutrality. “I would consider that to be a range of

communication activities, beginning with basic intercultural communication. So, putting up signs that people understand, for example, that you need to stop at a checkpoint” (J. Pamment, personal communication, September 3, 2018). As Briant further explained, “Mostly they tend to emphasize that they do kind of informational messaging. So, ‘Get out of this area quickly! It’s about to be bombed’” (E. Briant, personal communication, August 24, 2018).

Despite the optics of PSYOP serving as a neutral informer, it was consistently identified as comprising varying degrees of inherently persuasive communication. Three interviewees independently elaborated upon this juxtaposition. “Psych ops is something that I think of as being a type of practice to change public opinion through sometimes deception, or various means” (C. Myers, personal communication, July 18, 2018). Paul added, “It’s about efforts to influence foreign actors, so key elements of the definition are that it acknowledges you’re trying to conduct influence, and that you want to get someone to do or not do something” (C. Paul, personal communication, July 11, 2018). To that end, PSYOP may be identified as having a persuasive end-goal.

That is not to say that PSYOP does not additionally foster societal disruption. In three interviews, references were made concerning the extent to which PSYOP sought purposely to initiate or perpetuate degrees of social and/or political discontinuity.

You’re not convincing the other side, you’re undermining the confidence of foreign publics in all narratives … trying to fragment political and social debate … it creates chaos which [adversaries] can take advantage of. (Riordan, August 28, 2018)

In such scenarios where PSYOP seeks societal disruption, it diffuses information that exasperates, if not initiates, social and political divisions that interfere with normal societal functions, benefitting the interests of some external, adversarial state.

Policy outcome

The range of policy options relevant to Information Intervention includes public policy broadly defined, or the overarching view of an administration controlling and directing all other policies. Supplementing this are the areas of foreign policy, national security, and economic policy. Five interviewees identified PD as serving foreign policy outcomes.

You do diplomacy for a reason, you’re trying to achieve something. PD is a subset of diplomacy. Diplomacy is a subset of state craft. State craft is how we achieve our foreign policy objectives. (S. Riordan, personal communication, August 28, 2018)

Gilboa added, “PD … is designed to engage foreign publics in order to influence foreign policy … for that public to influence the foreign policies of the relevant country they live in”

(E. Gilboa, personal communication, August 15, 2018). While PD may advance a country's foreign policies, they can be linked with other policies, such as national security or a state's economic policy abroad.

As a domestic-centered behavior, three interviewees identified PA as addressing elements of domestic policy, two to foreign policy, two to economic policy, and one to national security. Given that PA constitutes government communication with its domestic population, it is conceivable to suggest the full range of state policy can, and is, addressed under its purview. The outcome for PA, therefore, is classified as public policy broadly defined.

None of the interviewees linked propaganda or PSYOP to specific policy outcomes. Given the target audiences between PD and PA, it is arguable propaganda can affect a range of outcomes, including domestic, foreign, economic, and national security concerns. Propaganda is therefore classified as fulfilling a public policy role, again broadly conceived. To the contrary, given PSYOP's linkage to defense and intelligence, it PSYOP arguably advances national security goals. Understanding national security primarily defends against military offensive, such attacks often come from another state, i.e., abroad. While the outcome of PSYOP may be advancing a country's national security, such interests can easily be linked with foreign policy.

Discussion

The twenty-teens will be remembered as the dawn of “fake news” and Russian election meddling. Communication has entered a new, infinitely more complex arena. The acquisition, alteration, and dissemination of information has become an effective means to achieve political, social, economic, and military ambitions. Actors now need mastery in the tradecraft of Information Intervention to survive.

This study does not uniquely identify any one state as having unilaterally mastered successful strategies for navigating today's Internet-based media ecology. State-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda are simply evolutionary manifestations of a centuries-old conflict domain where actors engage in frame competition (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The competition occurring on the battlefields of cyberspace is what the 21st century will be remembered for. Strategic narratives are crafted as tools in a winner-takes-all battle for influence, but unlike previous centuries, this battle does not require bloodshed.

Evidence shows states now use the Internet to influence public opinion in ways that favor their interests or undermine their adversaries. Pressing issues arise when trying to distinguish public and digital diplomacy from quickly-coined, newsworthy syntax. Information Intervention is not one seamless activity, rather a taxonomy offering secondary levels of application as information politics and information operations.

Politics is using power to impart influence. Information politics, then, is using communication to influence less powerful opponents through soft power tactics and the

marketplace of ideas, i.e., encouraging political discussion and perspectives for rational debate. Such behavior constitutes public diplomacy (PD), digital diplomacy, and public affairs (PA). The inclusion of PA is imperative as PD increasingly acknowledges the influence of domestic functions by diplomatic organizations (Bjola & Manor, 2018; Just, 2015; Pisarska, 2016).

Conversely, information operations control and maneuver information to compel weaker opponents with sharp power tactics (Walker & Ludwig, 2017) that exasperate information disorder (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). This includes spreading inaccurate and damaging information, stressing emotive and primal instincts of identity, and promoting in-grouping versus out-grouping. Such behavior constitutes propaganda, psychological operations (PSYOP), and their contemporary successors: state-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda.

Where the 20th century was replete with debates on distinguishing PD from propaganda, online information disorder leads to similar debates between digital diplomacy and computational propaganda. To adapt within increasingly complex information ecosystems, PD needs a centralized and rigorous lexicon to collaborate across disciplines and contribute to policy development. Such contributions can be made through the USA's Department of State, Agency for Global Media, and Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

PD needs stronger, adaptable terminology that grows rather than embracing new, colloquial concepts. This study defends PD's core concepts by articulating functional characteristics applicable to in-person, analog, and digital programming. To that end, this research presents an Information Intervention taxonomy (Arceneaux, 2019) from which PD, PA, PSYOP, and propaganda are typologized. The taxonomy and typology are presented in Table 3.

Findings

This research outlines the boundaries of what constitutes Information Intervention. Through in-depth interviews, the taxonomy and its niche lexicons are outlined. PD was defined as state-crafted messaging with audiences in publicly overt and attributable ways, with framed content appealing to rational cognitive processing aimed at advancing sociopolitical interests both with, and without, public feedback. Utilizing soft power, PD intervenes in foreign social forums. Approaching foreign stakeholders overtly offers forms of attribution, accountability, and transparency. With greater transparency and accountability comes increases in credibility and the capacity for PD programming to be found trustworthy (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015).

Table 3. Taxonomy of Information Intervention and Typology of Governmental Communication Behaviors

Paradigm	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Tertiary Level	Who Engages	In What Manner	Target Audience	Through What Method	Appeal Type	Comm. Type	With What Intent	To What Policy End
Taxonomy				Typology							
Information Intervention	Information Operations	Propaganda	White	Collaboration across Political & Civil Society	Overt	All Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	One Way	Cognitive Modification	Promote, Support, and/or Change Public Policy
			Gray	Collaboration across Political & Civil Society	Mixed	All Audiences	Mixed	Mixed	One Way	Attitudinal Modification	
			Black	Collaboration across Political & Civil Society	Covert	All Audiences	Deception through Falsehoods	Emotional Appeal	One Way	Attitudinal/Behavioral Modification	
		Psychological Operations	White	Military and/or Intelligence Groups	Overt	Foreign Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	One Way	Cognitive Modification	Support National Security and Promote Foreign Policy
			Gray	Military and/or Intelligence Groups	Mixed	Foreign Audiences	Mixed	Mixed	One Way	Attitudinal Modification	
			Black	Military and/or Intelligence Groups	Covert	Foreign Audiences	Deception through Falsehoods	Emotional Appeal	One Way	Attitudinal/Behavioral Modification	
	Information Politics	Public Diplomacy	Traditional	Political or Civil Institutions/Persons	Overt	Foreign Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	Mixed	Attitudinal modification	Support Foreign Policy and Promote National Security
			New	Political or Civil Institutions/Persons	Overt	Foreign Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	Two Way	Attitudinal modification	
		Public Affairs	Government	Political or Military Institutions/Persons	Overt	Domestic Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	Mixed	Cognitive Modification	Promote, Support, and/or Change Public Policy
			Corporate	Civil Institutions/Persons	Overt	Domestic Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	Mixed	Attitudinal modification	
		Interest Group	Civil Institutions/Persons	Overt	Domestic Audiences	Framing Truth	Rational Appeal	Mixed	Attitudinal modification		

Providing verifiably framed information, via rational-based arguments, appeals to cognitive reasoning. Such content will be credible through increased and sourced attribution, and logical, cohesive arguments, will further motivate audience engagement beyond one-step consumption. This leads to more processed evaluation and stronger desired effects (Cyr et al., 2018). Such elements constitute open political discussion and debate. While not always in the direct interest of the audience, information politics and PD gravitate toward socially and politically constructive ends.

Propaganda —a method of information operations— communicates in covert, non-attributable ways with fabricated or factually manipulated content. Utilizing sharp power, propaganda injects information that dilutes, exasperates, or disrupts participatory political debate and discussion. Approaching audiences with non-attributable content, in either source, intent, or financial backing, forces audiences to evaluate information in sub-optimal conditions. As lack of source becomes disassociated from content over time —the sleeper-effect— the message becomes increasingly credible, contributing to information disorder (Gaffney et al., 2016).

Supplementing credibility issues caused by fabricated and non-attributable content are the effects of emotive appeal strategies. Propaganda tends to embrace messaging that rejects rationality, endorsing inflammatory or controversial themes. These elements constitute political discussion that is inherently counterproductive, if not nonexistent. While foreign information is seldom in the interest of the recipient, such efforts force upon the target audience an information environment belabored with such an antagonizing degree of information disorder that it becomes socially and politically destabilizing.

Contributions

Understanding the functional characteristics of PD and propaganda allow for critical and transferable insights substantiating the functional differences between their antecedents. Digital diplomacy utilizes soft power strategies through engaging foreign demographics in information politics; messages are freely available to the mass public, overt in their sociopolitical intentions, attributable in terms of their origin/source, transparently convey their financial backers, are verifiable to some extent, and appear to be rational in nature. Digital diplomacy favors political models endorsing free speech and an open, inclusive Internet.

Conversely, state-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda utilize sharp power by engaging demographics with messages that: are comprised of information packages delivered via micro-targeting, are covert or deceptive concerning intent and purpose, lacking cues of attribution, cannot be verified via reliable external sources, and that emphasize emotion-laden topics and controversial perspectives. State-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda are tools for combatting adversaries at the political and civil levels, often trying to control speech and deter an open, free Internet.

Many states have increased efforts to regulate both platforms and behavior on them. Such regulatory efforts include the European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation, the United States' Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act, France's Fight Against the Manipulation of Information Act, (La Lutte Contre la Manipulation de l'Information), Great Britain's Counter-Terrorism & Border Security Act and PREVENT Measures, and Israel's Amendment No. 34 to the Modes of Propaganda Bill addressing Threats to Election Integrity.

While PD and propaganda are addressed within public policy, their broad conceptualizations position them largely outside the practical, i.e., enforceable, scope of the law. The coming decades will see policymakers increasingly develop laws and mandates to curtail state-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda. Understanding states will continue to use information politics while condemning information operations, the codification of public policy must distinguish characteristics demarcating PD from propaganda, and digital diplomacy from state-sponsored disinformation and computational propaganda.

To do this, efforts must appreciate the nuance of policy-speak, where political intent seldom lends to practical interpretation. Discourse on PD and propaganda tend to be either conceptually normative or pejorative. While legislative and judicial systems function at slower paces than their political counterparts, the bridge between these worlds must be built from universally acknowledged semantical bricks.

PD scholars should contribute to policy construction through theoretical and empirical insights that are not always accessible to policymakers. To do that, it must articulate where and how information politics differ from information operations. In a time where society is speeding down a digital information superhighway, such a contribution could provide cohesion and clarity to both the construction and communication of public policy.

Limitations

While the taxonomy and typology contribute to scholarship, they are not without limitation. First, it is important to approach these frameworks and definitions as general guideposts rather than absolute boundaries. The practice of politics is not black and white, nor should the study of it be either.

As PD is linked to Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and PSYOP to the military, how might a military attaché assigned to a foreign embassy be classified? To answer this, other categorical variables must be considered: attribution of content, authenticity of factual content, appeal tactics, communication behavior, discernable intentions, and what policy the content benefits. An argument could be made, for example, to classify Dutch military attachés in the United States, such as Marcel Buis (@nl_army) and Paul Herber (@NLDDATT), as white PSYOP, if not PD.

Alternatively, simply because MFAs are linked to PD does not mean they are incapable of supporting socially deconstructive ends. Russia's London Embassy (@RussianEmbassy), for

example, adopts hostile, sensational and emotive rhetoric that destabilizes civil discourse (Manor, 2021). One case involves Russia's MFA (@mfa_russia) and London Embassy denying involvement in the Skripal poisoning, casting doubt on the evidence even after confirmation by the Swiss. Such tweets by Russia's MFA and embassy accounts could be classified as information operations.

Additionally, while the Russian MFA may not engage overtly in PSYOP, it is arguably a part of an active echo-amplification network. Bot farms repost and reference inaccurate, Russia-centric narratives published by the MFA (Global Engagement Center, 2020). This strategy was deployed during and following Russia's annexation of Crimea. Given the interplay between government agencies and proxies, the MFA's outreach could be labeled as a component of an information operation.

A second limitation concerns sample selection of interviewees. The list was largely comprised of active academics rather than practitioners. Further, interviewees represented Western-based institutions either by professional association, employment, or education. More research is needed to better ground the terminology employed by this research within 21st century practices by contemporary, career practitioners that are demographically representative of varying practices across East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or Central and South America.

A third limitation is that while this paper offers a framework contextualizing terminology, additional work must begin applying the framework. One possibility includes the application of the Information Intervention framework in multiple case study classifications. Scholars may consider Operation Glowing Symphony, the USA government's response to ISIS' social media recruitment (Martelle, 2018), or the U.K.'s Integrity Initiative (Walker, 2018). A third recommended case for analysis could center on the information campaign deterring Sweden's vote to join NATO in 2016 (MacFarquhar, 2016).

Conclusion

Government communication represents a cornerstone of political and communication scholarship. Early 20th century notions of propaganda gave way post-WWII to public affairs for domestic audiences, public diplomacy for foreign audiences, and psychological operations for hostile audiences. The Internet has reacquainted these concepts, blurring demarcations and mending this fractured paradigm. Using in-depth interviews, this study presents a taxonomy of Information Intervention. Through its application in typologizing propaganda, public diplomacy, public affairs, and psychological operations, critical reflections on how each exists in the 21st century. In a time where state-sponsored disinformation challenges fundamental components of political stability, this research offers insight into who communicates with what audience, in what manner, with what intent, and with what desired outcomes.

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Researches political public relations and public diplomacy, with supplemental interests in law and public policy. His work merges a variety of disciplines to develop policy frameworks and solutions to issues posed by modern political and communication practices, ranging from disinformation, to computational propaganda and influence operations. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as *New Media & Society*, the *Journal of Public Affairs*, *Journal of International Communication*, *Journal of Public Interest Communication*, and the *American Behavioral Scientist*, as well as through multiple book chapters, policy papers, and thought leadership pieces.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. Are you familiar with the term, Public Diplomacy?

- a. If Yes: How would you most accurately define Public Diplomacy?
- b. If No: I am going to provide you with the following definition: The Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy defines Public Diplomacy as, “the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.” Further, Mediated Public Diplomacy is defined in the scope of this study as the extent to which such activities are carried out through telecommunication broadcast technologies such as radio, television, and the Internet.
 - i. Is there anything you would like to add or disagree with in the definition provided?

2. Are you familiar with the term, Public Affairs?

- a. If Yes: How would you most accurately define Public Affairs?
- b. If No: I am going to provide you with the following definition: The U.S. Public Affairs Council defines Public Affairs as, “the management function responsible for interpreting the corporation's noncommercial environment and managing the company's response to those factors” involving “the key tasks of intelligence gathering and analysis, internal communication, and external action programs directed at government, communities, and the general public.”
 - i. Is there anything you would like to add or disagree with in the definition provided?

3. Are you familiar with the term, Propaganda?

- a. If Yes: How would you most accurately define Propaganda?
- b. If No: I am going to provide you with the following definition: Whitton defines Propaganda as, “the communication of acts, fiction, argument, and suggestion often with the purposeful suppression of inconsistent material, with the hope and

intention of implanting in the minds of the “target” audience certain prejudices, beliefs, or convictions aimed at persuading the latter to take some action serving the interest of the communicator.”

- i. Is there anything you would like to add or disagree with in the definition provided?

4. Are you familiar with the term, Psychological Operations?

- a. If Yes: How would you most accurately define: Psychological Operations?
- b. If No: I am going to provide you with the following definition. The U.S. Department of Defense defines Psychological Operations as: “planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behaviors favorable to the originator’s objectives.”
 - i. Is there anything you would like to add or disagree with in the definition provided?

5. Would you please explore any similarities and/or differences you see between public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, and psychological operations?

6. Based on your current understanding of International Law, i.e. international norms for state behavior, do you believe any of these four concepts, public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, and psychological operations, violate international law?

- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
- b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

7. Based on your current knowledge, would you describe the United States’ Voice of America as public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, or psychological operations?

- a. If necessary: Would you please elaborate further?

8. Based on their use of state-sponsored broadcasting systems to influence foreign audiences, do you believe the United States has engaged in foreign intervention?

- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
- b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

9. Based on your current knowledge, would you describe China's CCTV as public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, or psychological operations?

a. If necessary: Would you please elaborate further?

10. Based on their use of state-sponsored broadcasting systems to influence foreign audiences, do you believe China has engaged in foreign intervention?

a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?

b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

11. Based on your current knowledge, would you describe Russia's RT as public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, or psychological operations?

a. If necessary: Would you please elaborate further?

12. Based on their use of state-sponsored broadcasting systems to influence foreign audiences, do you believe Russia has engaged in foreign intervention?

a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?

b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

13. In International Law, the concept of Self-Determination states that every country has a right to govern its own people free of external influence. Further, the concept of Non-Intervention states that governments have a responsibility not to interfere in the internal workings of other countries. Do you believe any of these four concepts [Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Propaganda, Psychological Operations] violate Self-Determination and/or Non-intervention?

a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?

b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

14. The International Court of Justice established a precedent in *Nicaragua v. USA* (1986) and *DRC v. Uganda* (2005) for “Indirect Foreign Intervention.” This precedent suggests that countries can engage in foreign intervention without the direct use of military forces or resources. To the best of your knowledge, would you consider public diplomacy a form of indirect foreign intervention?

a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?

b. If No: Would you please elaborate?

15. The United States Congress is currently reviewing proposed revisions to the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) that would force Confucius Institutes in the country to register as foreign agents, based on their financial backing by the Chinese Communist Party (Foreign Intervention Transparency Act). Not unlike how U.S. national laws compel social media endorsements to clearly identify their posts as advertisements, based on their invested interests in the desired outcomes of the sponsor, do you feel that public diplomacy content should clearly identify its financial support system?
- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
16. There are many who believe public diplomacy in the 21st century is engaged in by governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private corporations, and even private persons. Do you believe a state can be held responsible for the actions of corporations or private persons?
- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
17. The United States Intelligence Community has concluded that 13 Russian private citizens with the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg purchased advertisements on Facebook during the 2016 presidential election aimed at influencing the results of the election. Would you consider such behavior to be public diplomacy, public affairs, propaganda, or psychological operations?
- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
18. Do you believe the Russian state shares any culpability or responsibility for the actions of its citizens?
- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
19. In 2008 the U.S. Department of State, headed by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, made the digitization of foreign policy and public engagement a priority. Since that time, the majority of the global diplomatic core has adopted digital strategies for public diplomacy. Do you feel that existing international law regulating radio and television broadcasting is capable of sufficiently regulating public diplomacy initiatives carried out on the Internet?

- a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
- 20. Based on how Facebook advertisements were used in an attempt to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and the following data privacy issues with Cambridge Analytica, do you feel social media accounts operated by national governments can be used in such ways that violate international law?
 - a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
- 21. Considering that the Facebook advertisements were algorithmically targeted to key demographics, based on user data, do you believe the EU's General Data Protection Plan (GDPR) would serve as a viable option to help mitigate the targeting of such advertisements in the future?
 - a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
- 22. While much of diplomatic behavior is regulated by the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, this international treaty was adopted in a pre-digital age. The 2001 Budapest Convention on Cybercrime is the landmark international treaty regulating state cooperation around crimes on the Internet. To the best of your knowledge, do you consider the cybercrime convention a potential framework for regulating state-sponsored persuasive broadcasting on the Internet?
 - a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
 - b. If No: Would you please elaborate?
- 23. Now that you have answered 22 questions, you have some idea of the direction of my research. To the best of your knowledge, are there any areas of international, regional, or national legislation or case law you would recommend I investigate further?
 - a. If Yes: Would you please elaborate?
- 24. Based on the answers you have provided today, are there any additional thoughts, opinions, or recommendations you would like to offer on my current research?
- 25. Again, based on the answers you have provided today, are there any key experts, academic or professional, you would recommend that could benefit my current socio-legal research?