THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Centre for Cultural Relations

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http://www.ed.ac.uk/centre-cultural-relations

Seminário de Cooperação Internacional
Thursday 7 January 2016

Today's presentation:

- The work of the Centre for Cultural Relations (CCR)
- CCR research on social media and international cultural relations:
  - Perceptions
  - Influence
  - Relationships
  - Behaviour change
- International collaboration
- Cultural relations today
- Data science, international relations and cultural diplomacy

The work of the Centre for Cultural Relations

- A focal point for interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange into transnational engagement

- Areas of research:

  - Connectivity – Perceptions – Relationships – Influence – Trust – Behavioural change

- Academic disciplines involved:

  - Social Science: Politics; International Relations; Development; Area Studies; Business…
  - Humanities: Culture; Art; Performance; Languages (Multilingualism); History…
  - Science: Informatics; Health; Climate Change

- Theory and practice:

  - Working in partnership: Foreign and Commonwealth Office; British Council; Scottish Government; European External Action Service; EUNIC; partners in other countries...
  - Practical and scholarly research – reports - workshops – seminars – public events

The work of the Centre for Cultural Relations

- Need to understand how international cooperation can work in the 21st century in order to address complex global challenges

- Contextual issues:

  - **Sustainable Development Goals** – Rio20+ focus on international cooperation;
  - **Geo-political change** – distribution and nature of power – state and non-state actors;
  - Impact of **digital communications technology** – *faster, cheaper, more complex…* (*Shirky* et al)
  - Importance of **networks** for understanding sites and flows of influence (*Manuel Castells…*)
  - **Cultural change**: idea of *hybridity* (work of *Jan Nederveen Pieters* – the *"Global Mélange"*);
  - Need for **new ways of working** in diplomacy, business, culture (*Jan Melissen – The New Public Diplomacy*);
  - Need to innovate in **public policy** – aligning theory and practice;

- Within that, to recognise and understand the role of culture (broadly defined, but includes art; science; technology; sport…).

The work of the Centre for Cultural Relations

- States need a **foreign policy** which takes account of the context:

    - The economic crisis and resource constraints;

    - The need both to maintain long-term relationships and to respond to events;

    - Rise of non-state actors, with multiple, different and contested belief systems and cultures;

    - Geography: many places are in conflict and crisis, all at once;

    - Changing cultural norms, beliefs, roles and identities;

    - Public opinion: a more complicated relationship between masses and elites, in both democracies and non-democratic states;

    - Information overload: there are limits to information processing – the need for quick response affects the choices leaders make;

    - How power and influence flow across digital communications networks…

The work of the Centre for Cultural Relations

This requires an approach to international relations and diplomacy which is:

- Interdisciplinary: to address complexity;

- Evidence based;

- Flexible;

- Able to work (analyse, communicate and influence) in both analogue and digital worlds;

- Strategically focused on specific contexts, many of which are uncertain and ambiguous;

- Culturally aware;

- Open to partnership and collaboration;

- Able to innovate;

- Able to operate in uncertain, ambiguous contexts.

CCR research on social media and international cultural relations

UK Connectivity: Practical research for the British Council, 2014.

UK CONNECTIVITY

Foreword

International engagement and relationships are becoming *faster, cheaper, and more complex*, due to the radically reduced costs of communication stemming from internet technologies. This challenges existing models of how we can understand international relations, including how soft power and influence work in the 21st century, and poses serious challenges for the conduct of our international relationships.

There is a vast range of international transactions, on a spectrum from the actions of states and multilateral bodies (eg the EU's engagement with China), through sub-state actors (devolved administrations, cities), civil society, business, sporting and cultural organisations, to informal actors and individuals. The multi-level, multi-centred nature of transnational engagement is acknowledged but not well described or understood.

This acceleration, reduced cost and complexity, has a problematic relationship with other global trends including:

- Shifts in the patterns of global power where Western norms, policies and practices compete for attention and influence, and are subject to a range of responses;
- A much more complex international environment with a fast-widening range of non-state actors;
- The accelerating pace of events, innovation and change; and
- Mounting opposition to trust in, and governance by, traditional institutions.

This is driving an urgent need for new approaches.

More than ever, we need to find ways to ensure that we can use all the tools and evidence available to us, to engage internationally with the benefit of data, analysis, knowledge and skill, but that we do so using all the options available to us, in ways that will help us engage effectively, whether it is with another country, a loose informal association of non-state actors, or an international network.

We need to be able to see the significance of the various elements which comprise this multi-dimensional approach. Some of these elements will be the traditional approaches of international and cultural relations, and these may be sufficient in some contexts. But we also need to be able to exploit the vast resources of information – big and open data – to challenge our self-image and generate new analyses based on our increased capacity to see ourselves as others see us, and to understand how to conduct ourselves as a trusted partner in an increasingly global communications environment where perceptions and reputation become contested assets of value.

This study approaches this question in 2 ways. Part 1 is an extensive review of current academic thinking on the role of social media in empowering political change. Part 2 presents original research on Twitter, which illustrates how Twitter analysis can help us understand how the UK's influence works via this important social media platform. It does not set out to be comprehensive, but it shows how these new forms of analysis contribute to our understanding both of the UK's digital connectivity, and of the influence the UK has in social media.

CCR research on social media and international cultural relations

UK Connectivity: Practical research for the British Council, 2014.

Part 1: current understanding of the impact of social media on political change:

- Do not assume that the use of social media will bring about change.
- Understand that social media exist in specific contexts.
- Recognise that social media use is often non-political.
- Social media create spaces where people can increase shared awareness.
- Social media connect people to the outside world.
- Recognise when states are acting to limit the use of social media.
- Recognise when states are using social media to manipulate opinion.

Part 2: The CCR working with the Informatics Department of the University of Edinburgh carried out analyses of the use of twitter in relation to:

- The international influence of the UK in relation to major political events (Ukraine and Syria in 2014);
- The importance of major sporting events in perception of the UK; and
- What the world tweets about, when it tweets about the UK.

Overall, these analyses confirmed that social media analytics can throw light on how UK public opinion engages in and influences opinion elsewhere, and also the terms in which "newsworthy" UK entities are discussed around the world.

The analyses also confirmed that traditional survey techniques are still needed to reveal complementary information, missing from the day to day exchanges on social media networks.

CCR research on social media and international cultural relations

UK Connectivity: Practical research for the British Council, 2014.

Main findings:

- Perceptions matter:
  - They can impact on decision making;
  - It helps to understand how you are perceived both by general populations and by decision makers and elites;
- Influence can be mapped:
  - Influence is affected by how you are perceived;
- Relationships:
  - Your relationships are important to how you are perceived;
- Behaviour change:
  - The goal of both hard and soft power – new analytical techniques shed light on the drivers of behaviour change.

International collaboration
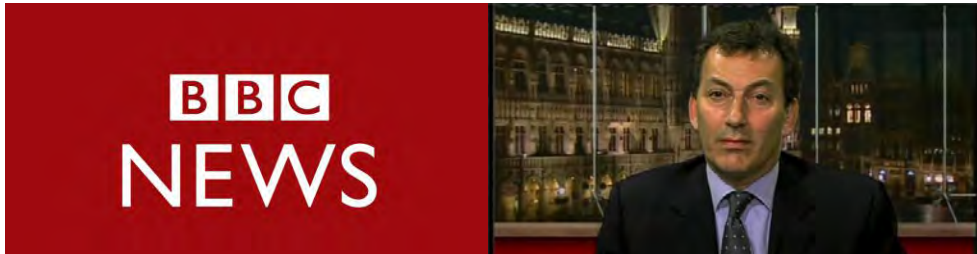
The coming year is one fraught with challenge for diplomats. Indeed, when it comes to forging international agreements while a perfect storm of populism, identity politics and insecurity roils electorates worldwide, I cannot think of a worse time for diplomacy in 25 years of covering it.
Beset by insecurity (economic and physical), voters in many democracies have moved towards parties rejecting traditional policies or models of co-operation.
A perfect storm of populism, Mark Urban, Diplomatic and defence editor, BBC Newsnight

"Populism" in this context is simply democracy revealing growing electoral extremism or polarisation, and it extends far wider than Europe.
Pat Buchanan, an "outsider" candidate in three US presidential elections, notes: "Nationalism and tribalism and faith - these are the driving forces now, and they are tearing apart transnational institutions all over the world."
In Europe, mass migration has brought matters to a head.

International collaboration

At the same time, we face challenges which require enhanced international cooperation:

- Sustainable Development goals;
- The EU's review of its external relations strategy (and its survival in its present form);
- Tackling economic crisis;
- Conflict prevention and resolution in the Middle East…

There are also major trends in science and technology which are changing the way we need to operate internationally

So, states need to decide what roles they want to have – what kind of actor they want to be – in the context of their relationships and obligations – these have implications for cultural relations:

- *Pursuit of national interest and influence* through hard power; soft power; public diplomacy; cultural diplomacy;
- *Economic attraction* through nation branding;
- *Reputation* through projection of norms and values; development; artistic quality and innovation;
- *Co-operation* through dialogue; cultural relations; exchange; participation…

Cultural relations today

- Traditional view based on idea of **national cultures** with diplomats as **cultural bridge builders**:

"you be d...nd!"   "vous êtes une bête!"

"This cartoon, from the end of the 18th century, suggests that there is room for some bridge-building between cultures. The need for bridge-building between cultures is related to the reality that the world consists of different countries, a fact rooted in history."

Geert Hofstede

Hofstede, Geert. "Diplomats as cultural bridge builders." Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy (2004): 25-38.

Cultural relations today

Culture in the national interest: the UK today

- No clear policy, but possible to speak of a turn back to traditional methods based on public diplomacy and nation branding;

- The GREAT Britain campaign *"showcases the very best of what Britain has to offer. We welcome the world to visit, study and do business with the UK."* (Cabinet Office);

Cultural relations today

Traditional cultural diplomacy can work:

UK 21 September 2015: "This is good finance as well as good art."
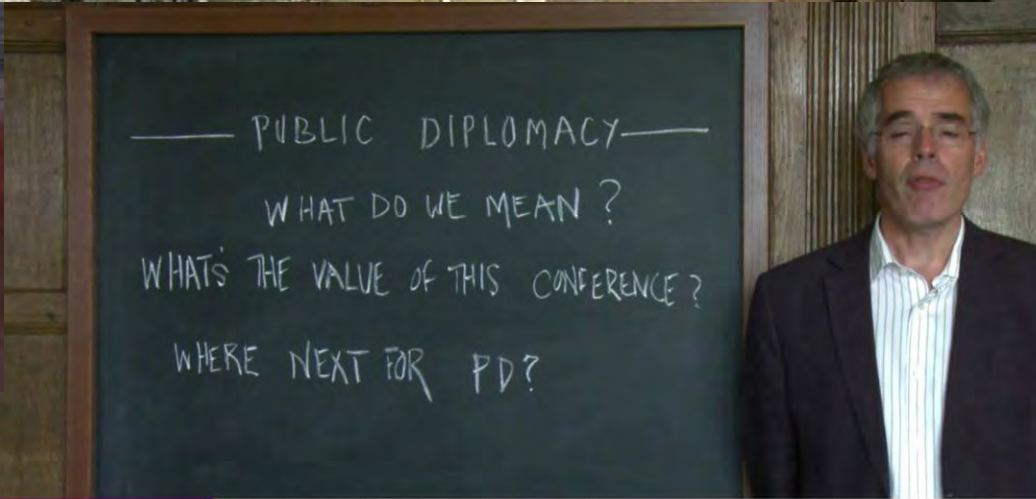George Osborne announces £7m to take British art to China:

UK guarantees £2bn nuclear plant deal as China investment announced

Cultural relations today

But traditional approaches are facing new challenges, especially how should cultural relations work in the digital world?

Cultural relations today

Perceptions matter - competing for attention: is nation branding effective and how would we know?

- Do we have a brand strategy?
- Does it reflect reality?
- Does it reflect what is important?
- What measures are there and how reliable are they?
- Do we need new ways to know what our international reputation really is?
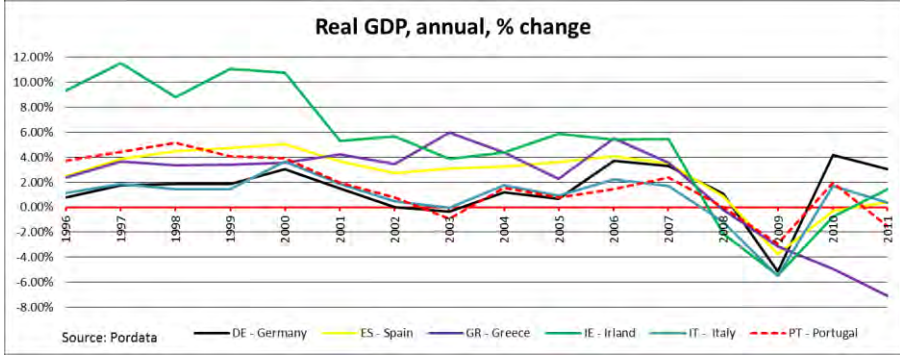
Cultural relations today

Do others see us as we see ourselves?

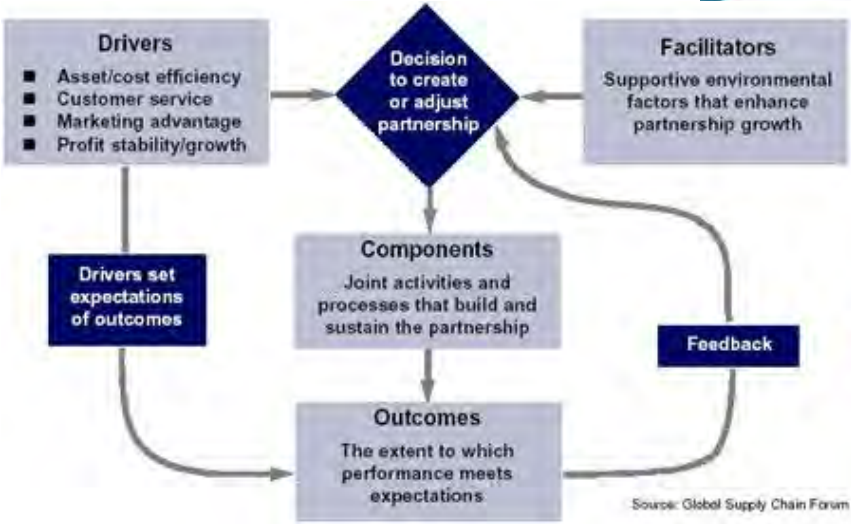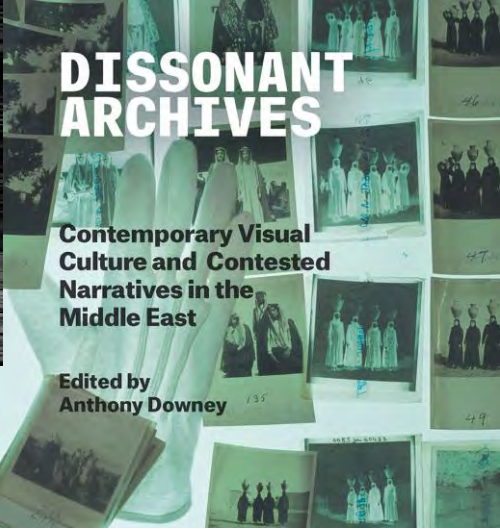What do people talk about when they talk about us?

Do we know how we want to be seen?
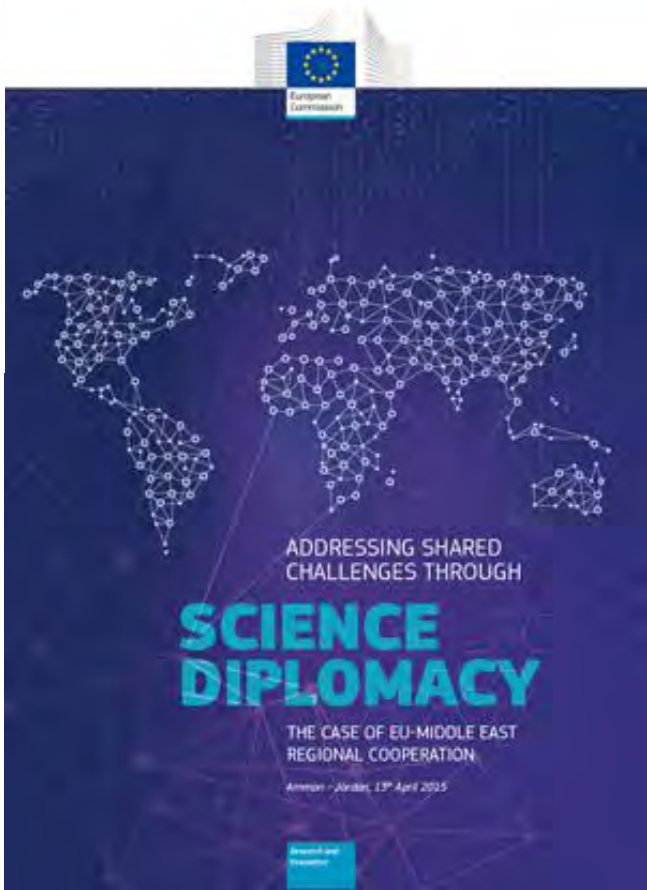
Do we have a strategic narrative?

Cultural relations today

New forms of partnership: reaching the hard to reach

Maghreb :: Norden

innovation and multidisciplinarity in the desert

Carlos Perez Marin architect

marsed drâa درعة

DISSONANT ARCHIVES

Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East

Edited by Anthony Downey

PREMIER SKILLS

BRITISH COUNCIL

PREPARATORY ACTION
'CULTURE IN EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS'

Engaging the World:
Towards Global Cultural Citizenship

ADDRESSING SHARED CHALLENGES THROUGH
SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

THE CASE OF EU-MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL COOPERATION

Amman - Jordan, 13th April 2015

The Global Supply Chain Forum arrived at the following definition of a true partnership:
"A partnership is a tailored business relationship based on mutual trust, openness, shared risk, and shared rewards that yields a competitive advantage, resulting in business performance greater than would be achieved by the firms working together in the absence of partnership."

Drivers
- Asset/cost efficiency
- Customer service
- Marketing advantage
- Profit stability/growth

Decision to create or adjust partnership

Facilitators
Supportive environmental factors that enhance partnership growth

Drivers set expectations of outcomes

Components
Joint activities and processes that build and sustain the partnership

Feedback

Outcomes
The extent to which performance meets expectations

Source: Global Supply Chain Forum

Data science, international relations and cultural diplomacy

The Ukraine crisis

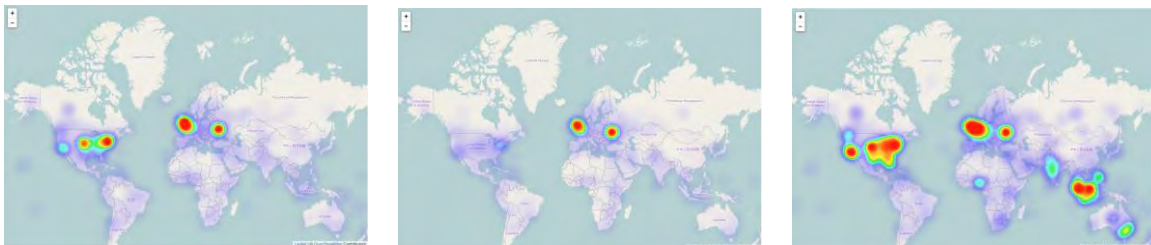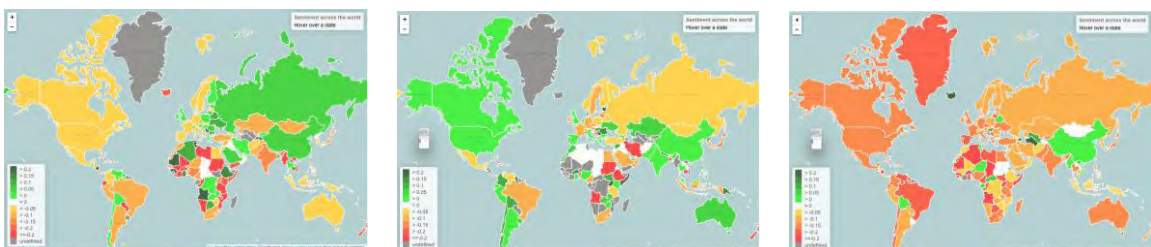*Figure 1: geographical distribution of tweets about Ukraine*

Figure 2: attitudes maps: Ukraine

Ukraine: conclusion
From the above, we can chart where in the world English-speakers who use Twitter were engaged with the Ukraine crisis; how attitudes in different countries towards Ukraine changed as the crisis developed; who and what places people were tweeted about, and flows of influence around the world. This analysis showed that the UK was a net exporter of influence on Twitter to the USA, and that the average influence of the UK's Twitter users was considerable, ranking well above Canadian users (in 10th position) and USA users (who were 16th).
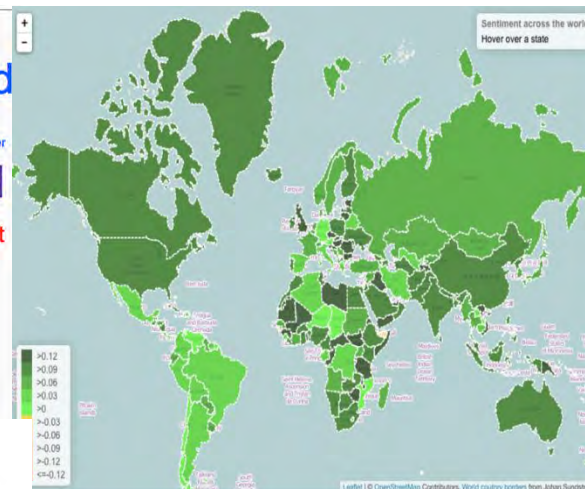
London 2012 Opening Ceremony: conclusions

Large scale sporting events generate a huge amount of activity on social media. This event was favourably received, but it revealed that Twitter traffic in English generated favourable comment about cultural and sporting figures familiar to those in English language cultural contexts – and comment was not always directly relevant to the event in question. The analysis also hinted at the limits to using retweets to measure influence and possible major differences in national levels of connectivity and influence measured by followers.

Olympic Games 2012