

Remote Negotiations: International Broadcasting as Bargaining in the Information Age

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International broadcasting refers to state media aimed at foreign publics. Scholarship on this topic lacks theoretical frameworks, particularly in light of structural changes in international communication, technological diffusion, and media complexity. Scholars consider the classic one-way propaganda model obsolete, and a new paradigm is needed. Many propose “dialogue” as the basis for effective state communication. Such a conception is not only misleading but unlikely given real political constraints. It neglects the complicated multi-stakeholder politics of communication between governments and other publics. This article adapts the two-level game metaphor of international bargaining developed by Robert Putnam (1988) to analyze state informational activities in a more complex media age. The proposed approach identifies the different stakeholders involved in sending and receiving information via international broadcasting. Broadcasting in the information age is better analogized as bargaining between domestic policy makers, mobilized issue publics, foreign governments, and target opinion leaders and groups in receiving states.

Introduction

Despite the proliferation of contemporary international broadcasting, research about it lacks theoretical development. One of the challenges facing public diplomacy scholarship in general is developing a clear framework for inquiry. As Entman observed, “a theoretical infrastructure” (2008, p. 87) is needed. As a new area of study emerging out of the marriage of practitioners and multidisciplinary

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academics, it is not surprising that international broadcasting research is methodologically populated by case studies, survey research, and anecdotes (Gregory, 2008). This research has produced descriptive literature about international broadcasters, narratives of their successes and failures, and contributed to a wider recognition of the practical obstacles they face. However, Gilboa's (2008) exhaustive literature review identified many of the field's weaknesses, especially its methodological and theoretical shortcomings, and suggested that scholars borrow from the social sciences to create "sophisticated frameworks for case study and comparative analysis" (p. 75). This article proposes a framework that addresses the contemporary challenges of international broadcasting efforts by a government toward a foreign population and can guide further empirical inquiry.

International broadcasting, or "the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another" (Price, Haas, & Margolin, 2008, pp. 152–153) includes the use of radio, television, and, increasingly, Web-based broadcasting targeting a foreign, as opposed to a domestic, population. Commercial broadcasters operating internationally, such as CNN International, Sky News, and Bloomberg News, are typically not included, whereas government-supported and -operated broadcasters, such as the Voice of America, the Al Jazeera Network, and the BBC World Service, are.² International broadcasting is often treated as "one component of public diplomacy" (Cull, 2008b, p. 31), an umbrella term used to describe a variety of state policies and activities directed at shaping foreign opinions, attitudes, and behaviors.³ It is worth studying because international broadcasting is becoming more common among states. Historically, international broadcasting was the province of the industrialized powers in the West. In the past two decades, new entrants into the TV field include India, Qatar, Venezuela, Japan, Iran, and China. When it comes to radio broadcasting, more than 60 countries broadcast beyond their borders. Traditional broadcasting states are increasing their content. While in the late 1970s, the Soviet Union and the United States aired 2,000 hours per week of multilingual programming to the world (Nason, 1977, p. 128), the American Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) reports that, in 2011, its civilian-run broadcasters produced more than 3,000 hours per week.⁴ The most ambitious broadcasting states spent billions of dollars in the past decade to influence global public opinion.

Among scholars, international broadcasting is often equated with propaganda, which can be defined as a "one-way communication system designed to influence belief" (Wood, 2000, p. 25). Recent examples of the simple one-way propaganda model include American broadcasting in the Middle East (Alhurra) and Chinese (CCTV) and Russian (Russia Today) broadcasters targeting Western audiences (Hafez, 2007), among others. This model is congruent with "messaging," or nonreflexively explaining the government's policies to foreign audiences (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 6). Some practitioners have taken a more

² The Al Jazeera Network is financed largely and significantly by the government of Qatar. The network's board of directors is chaired by Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer Al Thani, a member of Qatar's ruling Al Thani family. It is, from an analytic standpoint, an international broadcaster.

³ Failing to distinguish international broadcasting from public diplomacy, it should be noted, runs the risk of irking the "journalistic purists' . . . who wish to link the venture (or at least some practitioners) to 'objective coverage' with as little instrumental purpose and political guidance as possible" (Price et al., 2008, p. 171).

⁴ See <http://www.bbg.gov/about-the-agency/history/faqs/#q11>

conflict-oriented approach. Edward Kaufman, member of the BBG, referred to "modern media wars" (2002, p. 115). This approach has a long history, going back to World War II, when radio broadcasts were used to weaken the will of enemy publics and armies, sow confusion and dissent through misinformation, or combat other countries' propaganda.

Given the growing complexity of information sources, the propaganda approach as a prescriptive one is woefully outmoded. News audiences can too easily dismiss foreign broadcasts that do not satisfy their increasingly potent ability to fulfill their media preferences. Recent propositions rejecting one-way communication have held out "dialogue" in international broadcasting and public diplomacy (Kiehl, 2006; Lynch, 2000, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Riordan, 2004; Zöllner, 2006). A dialogic disposition, which involves two-way communication, listening as well as speaking, is necessary for a positive, constructive intervention into a foreign public sphere. It is also ethically superior. Our contention is that this model is rife with political impracticalities. Scholarship should move from developing an ideal type to generating realistic models that have descriptive and prescriptive utility and guide empirical research. Increasingly media-savvy publics will be skeptical of promises of dialogue, which require genuine (nonstrategic) listening and a willingness to change policies on behalf of state actors (Riordan, 2004, p. 8). States are not likely to change their policies based upon the opinions of foreign populations, because governments are not accountable to them in any direct or institutional way. It is improbable that any government broadcaster will listen to the degree promised by the term *dialogue*.

The calls for dialogic engagement motivate the types of rethinking this article builds upon. One model related to dialogue is networked diplomacy, which proposes shedding the hierarchical nature of state communications to match the flattened and fragmented nature of information and communication technologies (Castells, 2008; Metzl, 2001; Seib, 2012; Zaharna, 2005, 2007). Similarly innovative approaches stress "mutuality" (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 19), "collaborative" (Fisher & Lucas, 2011, p. 300), and "relational" or "bridging" (Zaharna, 2010, p. 147) aspects of public outreach in the new information environment. Castells (2008) argues for public-to-public diplomacy outside of the governments. Lynch suggests dialogic flows emerge around specific topics, such as relations between Muslims and the West (2005, p. 5). While these signify important readjustments to the new media environment, it is questionable to what extent states and foreign publics can really be effectively linked parts of the same nonhierarchical network given the many gaps between foreign governments and receiving publics. The most basic gap is the inherent power differential. Also, given the fundamentally divergent interests and identities between states and foreign publics, there is little basis for network connectivity. There must be a better account for state interests and audience behavior and preferences in today's increasingly complex media ecology.

This article builds on these developments by offering three theory-building contributions. First, we produce a model that is both descriptive and predictive, as opposed to the descriptive-normative character of dialogue-based approaches. Second, we shed idealist assumptions such as the notion that institutions and people can change based on the sheer power of good ideas or quality of relations. We must understand primary actors in their own terms and reduce expectations of dramatic persuasion effects. Agents of a state, such as state communicators, primarily represent their employers' interests. This is a deep obstacle to them participating in the level of equality, reciprocal association, and free

exchange insinuated by a network model. Calls for dialogue are useful for moving the academic discourse beyond the propaganda model that defined international broadcasting previously, but models must carefully reflect the strategic realities and processes of policy formation that dictate the terms of state broadcasting and foreign policy in general.⁵ Descriptions of international broadcasting must treat its agencies as governmental institutions embedded in the output end of policy formulation in nearly all broadcasting countries. However, this article repurposes key tenets of the work on dialogue, especially mutuality, collaboration, networked relations, and accommodation. It also shares the critique of the traditional propaganda model in light of increasingly complex media environments and savvy audiences. Third, we are seeking a more generalized model that is not limited to only the United States. In order to be theoretically sound, a model needs to reflect universals among all externally broadcasting states.

This approach considers domestic publics as increasingly important. We adapt liberally the two-level game metaphor of international bargaining developed by Robert Putnam (1988) to suggest that international broadcasting should be analogized to bargaining at the international level. With both bargaining and broadcasting, states are pursuing national policy goals. Traditional bargaining involves directly engaging with another government or other governments toward an agreement, such as a formal treaty or a memorandum of understanding. International broadcasting targets the publics of other states. While it is not aimed at securing a legal agreement between states, it is undertaken to influence public perceptions about the broadcasting country or international issues.

This analogy between broadcasting and bargaining is particularly apt in another sense: the proliferation of global, regional, national, local, and social media means that broadcasting relies on a bargaining-like dynamic to attract audiences. Originally, much international broadcasting activity aimed at closed media markets where people yearned for varied information sources. This was before satellite television and the Internet brought dizzying diversity in information sources. State broadcasters had a tremendous advantage in a noncompetitive marketplace—they were the only alternative, which gave them great leverage. Information scarcity is now less of a problem than is information excess (Benkler, 2006; Grant, 2004). The classic one-way flow typified by the government propaganda model is obsolete. States can no longer broadcast blindly toward undifferentiated masses: the analogue of a take-it-or-leave-it bargaining stance. People have a much greater ability to fulfill their information needs through a variety of modern media. Broadcasters must adjust their content and formats to connect to audiences, a process we propose is a means of bargaining for audiences' attention. Yet this can be done only to the extent that it furthers the underlying mandates of international broadcasters, which are defined as pursuing national interests—a fact that cannot be downplayed in theorizing.

With such evolution in the international information ecology, one could question the significance of such a focused effort proposing a new model for international broadcasting. Marwan Kraidy (2008), for example, points to the failure of Alhurra, the U.S.-financed television news network broadcast to the Middle East, as cause for a "public diplomacy reset," recommending a shift in resources away from international broadcasting toward student exchanges and additional Fulbright programs. It is important to

⁵ It may be less of a false promise in public diplomacy, especially since traditional diplomats and embassies are mandated to listen, as in monitor the sentiments of countries they are stationed in.

not take one example of failure as an indication of a decline in the geopolitical importance of all international broadcasting. As a counterexample, Al Jazeera's controversial but decisive role in advancing political upheavals and revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria in 2011 (Fisk, 2011) provides a compelling proof of the importance of international broadcasters in contemporary international politics. While Al Jazeera did not cause political upheavals in the Middle East, it did work with political dissidents to facilitate continued pressure on autocratic leaders such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Edwards, 2011; Hroub, 2011). For example, Rached Ghannouchi, chairman of the Islamist Ennahda Party, which won a plurality in Tunisia's first democratic elections since the fall of Ben Ali, described the network as a "partner in the Arab revolutions" (Agence France-Presse, 2011). Moreover, using financial resources as a benchmark, international broadcasting is becoming an increasingly important element of statecraft, with governments around the world, including the United States, Iran, China, Russia, Japan, Venezuela, Israel, and France, increasing budgets for broadcasting abroad.

This article proposes a model for explaining the success and failure of international broadcasting in a range of contexts. Putnam wrote, "we need to move beyond the mere observation that domestic factors influence international affairs and vice versa, and beyond simple catalogs of instances of such influence, to seek theories that integrate both spheres, accounting for the areas of entanglement between them" (1988, p. 433). Given the historically documented role of domestic publics in shaping broadcasting efforts (Cull, 2008a; Price, 2002) and the impact of broadcasting on foreign publics (Johnson & Parta, 2007; Nelson, 1997; Price, 2002), Putnam's two-level game model is especially apt.

Below, we explain Putnam's two-level game framework for international negotiations between nation-states. Following the explanation is an outline of the Negotiative Communication Game. Each of the key stakeholders in broadcasting is then reviewed.

Putnam's Two-Level Game Theory of Diplomacy and Domestic Politics

Robert Putnam's (1988) two-level game model offers a theory of international negotiations based on interacting, strategic games that occur when states attempt to reach compacts. Moving away from the realist paradigm of international relations, Putnam's model seeks to explain when and how domestic politics impacts international bargaining between states. Putnam's model proposes a primary dynamic between two interactive, reflexive ("linked") levels. The first level is between diplomats or states' representatives at the international level, and the second level is between these bargainers and their respective domestic publics and/or political institutions. The goal of the first-level game is to strike an agreement that will find ratification at the end of the second-level game. Borrowing the language of game theory, the range of concession-benefits trade-offs the domestic public is ultimately willing to accept is called the "win-set." If the international negotiators formulate an agreement that falls within the domestic win-sets, they will succeed.

Win-sets are not static. They are influenced by developments in negotiation, perceptions, changes in the political winds, and countless other contingencies. Putnam (1988) argues that in contrast to prior thinking about international negotiations, there are domestic politics to consider: "parties, social classes, interest groups (both economic and noneconomic), legislators, and even public opinion and even

elections, not simply executive officials and institutional arrangements" (p. 432). This definition is required to contemplate the "domestic determinants of foreign policy and international relations" (p. 432). Interest groups lobby for favorable outcomes and have sway since elected officials vie for their support, at least in democratic systems. State-centric approaches to international bargaining fail to incorporate this.

The two-level game analogy revealed the complexity of international negotiations in which parties consider the preferences and potential reactions of their own and opposing issue publics. The exigencies of the domestic political milieu confine strategic movements in negotiations. International negotiations are ultimately framed by the size of overlap between their domestic win-sets. Putnam (1988) declares that "larger win-sets make level I agreements more likely, *ceteris paribus*" (p. 437). Similarly, win-sets at the respective second levels set the range of potential mutual gains from the negotiations.

What factors determine the sizes of win-sets? At the domestic level, public preferences, coalitions, and institutions shape the range of acceptable outcomes. An understanding of this level must stem from "a theory about the power and preferences of the major (domestic) actors" (Putnam, 1988, p. 442). In principle, this could accompany a wide array of ideological and theoretical outlooks, from Marxism to neo-corporatism. It is important to note that well-intentioned domestic actors can and do disagree about what is in the national interest; international negotiators can be caught in the middle of such factional conflicts. Political leaders are beholden to certain coalitions, which will play a more significant role in Level 2 by reason of their proximity to power. The politicization of negotiation topics and terms in the public or by interested actors can severely limit the scope of the win-set if the electoral base is mobilized around negotiation issues (See Figure 1: Putman's two-level game model).

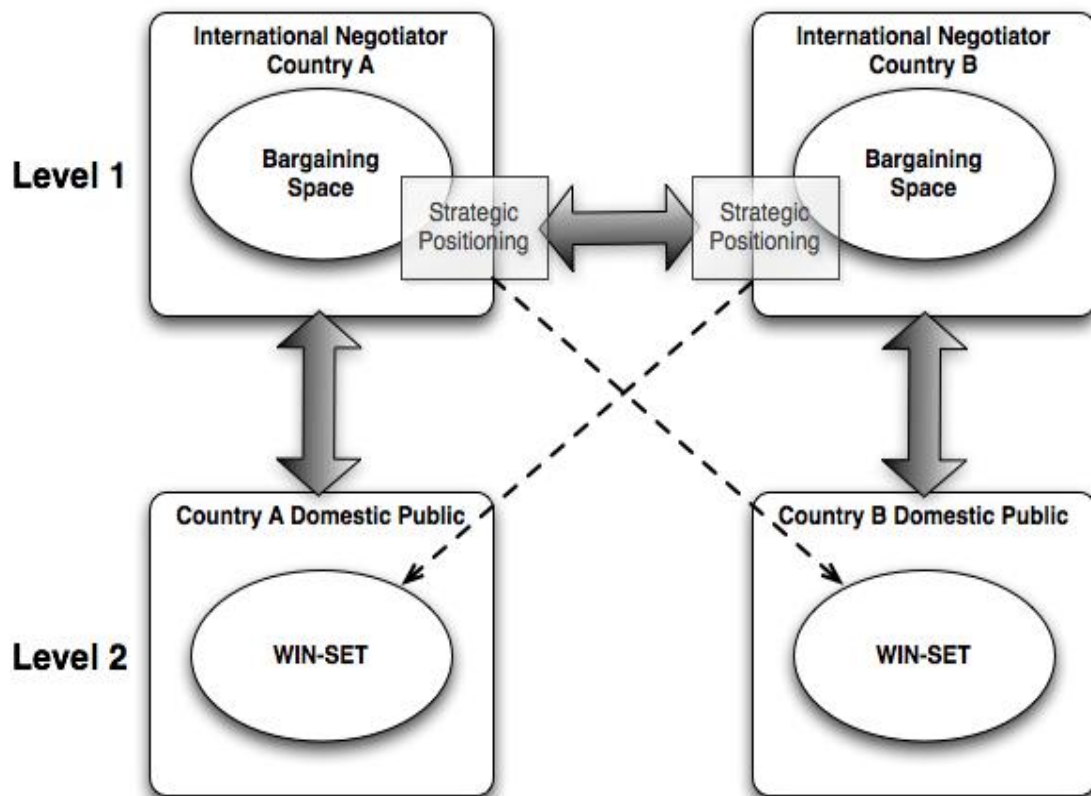


Figure 1. Putnam's two-level game.

If international negotiations are salient, they may also involve international pressures—such as public diplomacy by other states—that impact domestic politics and, thus, the win-sets. This is called reverberation. It affects the “domestic balance” (Putnam, 1988, p. 454), which could influence the negotiation positions. Putnam argues that this type of feedback can be problematic but that it can be explained in several ways. First, because of the complex interdependence of states, the risk of offending the domestic publics of a negotiating partner “may be costly in the long run” (Putnam, 1988, p. 455). Second, international negotiations may involve public suasion, possibly moving public opinion in favor of an agreement (though they could just as easily have the opposite effect). Putnam notes that reverberation is more common among close allies and in economic as opposed to political or military negotiations. He

also points out that some political institutions may welcome and promote foreign publicity—reverberation—about international cooperation in order to increase the win-sets.

The Negotiative Communication Game of International Broadcasting

International broadcasters are required to negotiate with—or tailor their content toward—diverse parties and publics simultaneously in the information age. A state's broadcasting efforts aimed at influencing other publics should be modeled as a negotiation.⁶ Instead of a treaty as the outcome of the negotiation, a receptive audience is the end goal; hence, the receiving public rather than the receiving government is the primary partner. International broadcasting in the information age more closely parallels the mutuality of negotiation than it did in previous eras. This motivates an updated, descriptive model for understanding international broadcasting as a tool of statecraft.

The information age is characterized by the mass proliferation of media and information outlets. This multitude of sources engendered "the paradox of plenty," in which "attention rather than information becomes the scarce resource" (Nye, 2004, p. 89). This is in stark contrast to Cold War era international broadcasting, in which foreign government media were the only alternatives. Sending governments often negotiated with receiving governments to access their transmitters and frequencies. Keohane and Nye (1998) claimed that the market for information tilted toward the supply side, meaning the provision of information is greater than before; the "cheapening of information transmission has opened the field" (p. 83). In all but a few of the most isolated and controlled media markets, foreign broadcasters need the audience more than the audience needs the broadcasters. The range of win-sets of agreeable content that foreign audiences will accept has become smaller, because it is easier for them to simply defect or walk away from the negotiations by switching their attention to another source of information.

When governments establish media aimed at foreign publics, what is negotiated? An international broadcaster is negotiating with a receiving public for its *reception* and eventual *acceptance*, to borrow the first two terms of Zaller's cognitive processing model (Zaller, 1992, p. 51). These terms are useful for showing how broadcasting can resemble the rapidly iterative process of bargaining. *Reception* refers to a person's attention, and *acceptance* is a function of a message's integration with someone's existing beliefs systems, identities, and underlying ideologies. In the model outlined here, the broadcaster must adjust its content and programming based on appealing to audience preferences and preexisting attitudes—this is essential to having an audience. Receiving publics will offer their attention to a broadcaster that piques their interest and relates to them. In the information age, the audience has more options, and the broadcaster must be adaptable if it hopes to engage audiences.

⁶ Putnam's model is dyadic, though many negotiations are multilateral. International broadcasting can either be dyadic—between two countries—or multilateral. If one broadcaster sends one signal to different countries, this naturally narrows the room for maneuvering since it means accounting for even more publics.

Foreign publics may be open-minded toward foreign, state-subsidized information sources for many reasons. Despite the dramatic growth in news media around the world, market failures—whereby local news providers do not meet citizen information needs—persist. Sometimes international broadcasters have comparative advantages covering certain news stories. For example, in the case of Al Jazeera and the Arab Spring, the Qatar-based broadcaster provided Arab audiences current accounts of protests and the reactions by Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan, and Syrian governments—accounts that were often censored or reported without sufficiently detailed reporting by other regional and global news media. Countries where domestic news sources face funding woes may find international news better supplied by international broadcasters.

Even in cases where audiences view particular foreign governments skeptically, international broadcasting can effectively build a loyal community of viewers through creative formats that are not yet available in national systems. For example, the Voice of America's *Parazit* (Persian for "static," a reference to what happens when the Iranian government blocks the satellite airwaves illegally broadcast into Iran) is a program written and produced by a team of young Iranian exiles living in Washington, DC. Modeled after Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, *Parazit* is a satire on current events in and about Iran, highlighting hypocrisy among Iranian political, social, and religious leaders. The show is critically acclaimed and drives over 22% of Iranian households to tune into VOA TV each week (Broadcasting Board of Governors & Gallup, 2012). *Parazit*'s Facebook page receives more than 30 million page views per month, and its YouTube channel generates an additional 45,000 views each week, making it among the most popular shows viewed in Iran (Brown, 2011).

Other types of innovative programming embrace the opportunities of the modern media infrastructure. Sometimes local and indigenous broadcasting may not provide sufficiently compelling programming when compared to its foreign counterparts. Government investments in entertainment education programming, such as popular BBC World Service programs in India and Nigeria, for example, demonstrate the potential to lure foreign audiences to tune in to—or negotiate with—international broadcasters in highly competitive, saturated media markets (Cody, Fernandes, & Wilkin, 2004). Similarly, Radio Sawa, the American-financed FM radio station available throughout the Middle East, attracts large numbers of listeners with a mixture of popular Arab and Western musical artists (Christie & Clark, 2011).

There are countless other reasons why audiences may be open to reception—from curiosity about other perspectives to cross-checking their own news sources to expanding their entertainment options. Enhancing reception, and increasing the chances of useful acceptance, requires adjusting to the preferences of receiving publics.

	Putnam's Two-Level Game	Negotiative Broadcasting Game
<i>Negotiated Outcome</i>	International Agreement or Treaty	<i>Reception of Broadcasting by Target Public</i>
<i>Success</i>	Ratification & Policy Impact	<i>Acceptance & Policy Impact</i>

Figure 2. Comparing Putnam's two-level game to the Negotiative Communication Game.

The Negotiative Communication Game parallels Putnam's (as shown in Figure 2) in the following way: If audiences that are attentive to foreign government broadcasting emerge, this signals tacit agreement over attention resources on the part of at least some of the receiving public, a semi-successful negotiation.⁷ The influence over and change in public opinion the broadcaster seeks—acceptance—is the analogue of treaty ratification. This is useful because reception and acceptance are very different metrics for international broadcasting. As U.S. congressman Gary Ackerman noted, "Simply measuring audience size is great, but it doesn't tell us how much or whether our broadcasting influences those who receive it" (cited in Robinson, 2009, para. 21). An international broadcaster's goals are to attract and impact a foreign audience in order to promote the sponsoring government's foreign policies and image, or, as one prominent U.S. government report on public diplomacy put it, "to move the needle" of public opinion (Djerejian, 2003). With treaty negotiations, ultimate implementation starts with ratification rather than treaty signing; for international broadcasting, reception is the necessary first step, but acceptance is the primary goal.⁸ Success does not necessitate large audience shares. Broadcasters often target small subsets of a citizenry—issue publics—such as public opinion leaders or particular ideological slivers of civil society amenable to the broadcaster's programming. Whether acceptance by audiences translates into real

⁷ We use the terms *sending countries* and *receiving countries* to indicate the countries that sponsor and are targeted by international broadcasting. This may not be the best terminology since this article discusses why target audiences *do not* receive foreign, government-sponsored broadcasting aimed at them. Receiving implies a level of consent that simply is not often acquired by sending governments.

⁸ The parallel is not exact, of course, since ratification has a clearer protocol, has greater predictability, and may have fewer extraneous factors impacting it, whereas acceptance may be more variable across different populations and in different policy contexts.

policy changes depends on the structure of political systems of the receiving countries and is therefore out of the international broadcaster's hands.

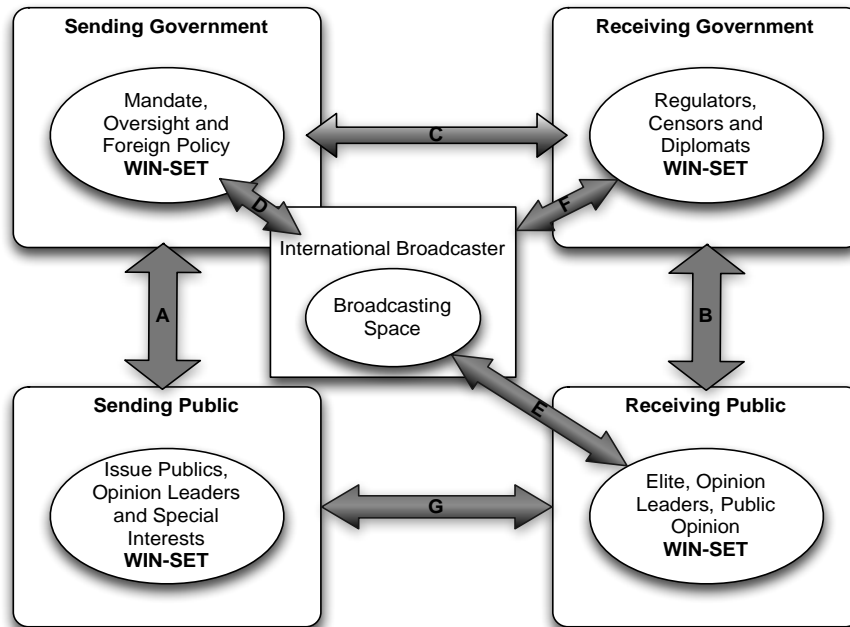
Putnam's two-level game metaphor is useful because both international negotiations and broadcasting are bound within state-institutional frameworks premised on exchange, intending foreign policy outcomes and constrained by domestic politics. Although the goal of the international bargainer is to maximize national interests, it requires finding a mutual agreement—some recognition of the other's needs and interests. International broadcasting mirrors this in an informal, sociocognitive rather than legalistic way, since the outcome is not a binding instrument but is ideational, informational, and communicative. While uneven negotiations can result in actual agreements that are implemented, the most consistently viable and efficacious agreements are based on mutually beneficial ends.

According to this model, broadcasting that only fulfills domestic political agendas and narrow notions of the national interest while disregarding the receiving public's tastes, preferences, and needs will fail to attract receiving publics. In such a case, international broadcasters are not operating within a framework of what Habermas (1987) called "communicative action." The use of language in communication as opposed to instrumental action, he argues, intrinsically entails mutual understanding, as opposed to an ends-defined notion of success. As a vision of ethical communication, Habermas' communicative action can be extended to public diplomacy interventions within the global public sphere (Lynch, 2000, p. 330). Negotiative communication, in this analysis, then refers to the exchange of "ideas and information" within generally "reciprocal and multidirectional" communicative frameworks (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, p. 18). A negotiative format is therefore one that responds to audience preferences and needs while also being cognizant of key domestic actors and governments' mandates or redlines. *This implies gradation from journalism that simply pays heed to the audience's epistemic reality, on the low end, to open formats premised on viewer-created content, citizen journalism, and call-in shows, on the high end.*

This model presents several new, understudied limitations on effective international broadcasting. Putnam's approach is useful as an application since these communication ideals are only attainable as long as the sponsoring government and domestic public—specifically attentive and activated portions of the public—grant international broadcasting channels sufficient independence to communicate within the target audience's win-set. Greater independence from domestic politics enhances the agency's ability to tailor content but also risks weakening its long-term support, especially if the broadcast content is either not valued as a tool of statecraft or, worse, seen as contrary to a state's national interests.

Applying Putnam's model goes beyond Habermas' theory since the two-level game is based on a notion that communicative action cannot be fully divorced from instrumental, utility-maximizing aims. While this may not rise to the ethical standards argued by Habermas or implied by "dialogue," it is a useful distinction for understanding the paradox of international broadcasting. Governments broadcast in order to further national interests. Too often, calls for dialogue assume away this basic fact, but that does not mean dialogic communication is impossible. An audience-building approach, according to the market, may demand formats and content along the line of what Habermas and dialogic models envision.

According to Price (2003), this is at the heart of the traditional tensions of international broadcasting: "the struggle to harmonize goals of 'objectivity' with the need to act as an effective instrument of propaganda, the potential split between advancing national policy and acting as a credible journalistic enterprise" (p. 51). Reformulation of "agreement" in the context of international broadcasting could be understood in terms of the broadcasting space. That is, what is the range of agreeable content for all the stakeholders? This negotiative approach accounts systematically for both the government's inevitably instrumental motivation and the receiving public's expectations and information needs (See Figure 3: Negotiative Communication Game).



A. The **sending public** includes special interests, NGOs and mobilized issue publics who closely monitor the content of their international broadcaster. Alternatively, **sending governments** keep the sending public informed of its initiatives and policy successes, thus shaping public support for its international broadcaster.

B. **Receiving governments** can enact and/or enforce policies that restrict citizen access international broadcasters, while the **receiving public** can mobilize and apply pressure to their government to change policies.

C. The **sending government** can pressure a **receiving government** to increase access to international broadcasting content, or provide its broadcaster's journalists more accurate information. Alternatively, the **receiving government** can pressure the **sending government** to change its information policies or support for the international broadcaster. More broadly, the overall relationship between the sending and receiving governments shapes the perceived need for and investment in international broadcasting.

D. The **sending government** determines the mission, governance and level of support for the **international broadcaster**. The international broadcaster can advocate for its interests, usually to increase resources and/or editorial independence.

E. The **international broadcaster** is responsible for the content broadcast to the **receiving public**, though some of that content may be user-generated. It must adjust to target audience preferences (win-set) and therefore be receptive to feedback.

F. The **international broadcaster** can also directly influence the **receiving government**, though in limited ways, through reporting targeted at foreign policymakers, or by reporting news that directly challenges the ruling party. The **receiving government** can also directly influence an **international broadcaster** through flak, arresting its journalists, or jamming its broadcast signals (thus the thin arrow from the receiving government to the international broadcaster).

G. Publics can communicate directly through transnational networks, tourism, social media, etc. Their communications can impact international broadcasting.

Figure 3. Negotiative Communication Game.

International broadcasters are in a precarious balance familiar to international negotiators. Extending well beyond the discursive norms governing a foreign public sphere is not unlikely to yield an audience. Pursuing the receiving publics' interests too effectively, or dialogically, may engender reception but fail to win strategically valuable influence with the audience—for example, by airing lurid or simply entertaining content, a station could attract viewers but fail to inform their opinion in any substantial way. Similarly, utter capitulation to the discourse of a foreign public is either going to obstruct the pursuit of national interests or be seen skeptically as empty pandering by receiving publics. Government-supported broadcasters gain from the inherent pragmatism of compromise built in to negotiation. The basic thinking behind negotiation rests on a nonidealist assumption: parties who may not agree on every issue can find some middle arrangement for coordinated action. However, for international broadcasters, this means goals must be reasonable, not what U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden once termed "a bridge too far" (El-Nawawy, 2007, p. 126). Sheer persuasion may be one such example of a far bridge. Opinion may not be completely converted, but even a level of understanding, with residual disagreement, could be seen as success depending on the particular goals and context. Frames within international broadcasting media, after all, compete with perceived reality. In Entman's (2008) theoretical model of public diplomacy framing, "cultural congruence" (p. 92), or the degree of resonance frames have in a political culture and actual policies, is the "most important determinant" of a frame's impact. Public diplomacy is, after all, "no substitute for bad policy" (Cull, 2008b, p. 36). International broadcasters must consider the actual impact of preexisting foreign policies when forming their strategies and metrics of success.

Audience reception is a highly interactive exchange—more fluid and dynamic than the formal, rule-governed protocol of international bargaining. For the audience, the barriers to exit are quite low. They simply change the channel, turn the radio dial, or type in a different URL. Unlike international negotiators, they suffer few consequences. This important difference advances the point that an orientation of negotiation is crucial to public diplomatic discourse because audiences are not captive and are increasingly immune to the "one-way injection" of a single mass media outlet (Price et al., 2008, p. 153). There is rich competition in an ever-growing media environment defined by an "explosion of information" (Nye, 2008, p. 99). Audiences can simply defect by turning to sources that better cater to their information needs. This is a pivotal contrast with the Cold War era, when foreign government-sponsored media were the only alternatives in many authoritarian countries.

The Stakeholders in the Negotiation Process

International broadcasting as a negotiation involves four primary stakeholders: the sending government, the sending public, the receiving government, and the receiving public. The win-sets of each stakeholder shape the broadcasting space of effective formats and programs. While the broadcasters' relations with foreign publics are of primary importance, the governments and sending publics are also critical to the structure of the negotiations process.

Sending Government: Mandate, Regulations, and Funding

The regulatory structures and political economy of international broadcasters are determined ultimately by the sponsoring governments. Governance, funding, mandate, and oversight can enable state broadcasters to deploy a dynamic negotiative approach, or not. Regulatory schemes vary greatly. It is worth outlining just two of the competing ways of structuring broadcaster-state relations for the sake of demonstration. Among Western international broadcasters, there is a distinction between the Voice of America (VOA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) models. The VOA is "institutionalized as a government agency." The BBC, on the other hand, is "an autonomous public corporation" (Zöllner, 2006, p. 170). This difference translates into varying levels of broadcaster "autonomy limited by and within the overlapping societal subsystems of media and politics" (Zöllner, 2006, p. 170). The instrumental distinction between the two is the result of how each is funded. VOA's funding is contingent on political processes through the legislature, which provides a mechanism for political controls and public interference. The BBC's funding is derived from an administrative arrangement that is relatively isolated from annual legislative oversight, though the total amount is subject to political dispute. Independence varies to different degrees across all sending states, some of which have much tighter controls in place than in the VOA case. These models are distinct from the nature of France 24's close proximity to the state, which is evident in its mission statement, content, and "discursive" style (Chalaby, 2009, p. 187; Kuhn, 2010, pp. 277-278). A range of structures also exists in nondemocratic systems. Broadcasters may be formalized as agencies under the tight control of political overseers who direct content (e.g., Russia Today), or they may just operate within known redlines that prohibit certain topics and views but are otherwise free to operate (e.g., Al Jazeera). They may be subordinate to foreign policy agencies or somewhat independent from them.

Despite formal independence, outlets can still internalize elements of nonbinding government guidance. For instance, Deutsche Welle (DW) enjoys significant programming independence, especially after new guidelines provided for editorial independence in 2003. However, a self-commissioned study suggested that DW reconsider the "German agenda" proposal in the 1997 legislation calling for it to provide "information about Germany" (Hafez, 2007, p. 125). This resulted in literalist broadcasting decisions, such as "out of touch" reports on the performance of German schools aired in war-torn Afghanistan (Hafez, 2007, p. 125). Autonomy allowed the station to have the reflexivity to rethink such reportage. In 2004, the director general, Erik Betterman, called the German agenda "obsolete for a long time" and reaffirmed the need for news "from the region for the region" (Hafez, 2007, pp. 126-127). His primary concern was competing within an increasingly globalized media market.

The fact of differing levels of independence leads to one of the primary assertions of the Negotiative Communication Game: *the more sponsoring governments control broadcasters, the more vulnerable they are to domestic political exigencies and the less responsive they are to the preferences of the receiving publics*. Generally, governmental control inhibits state broadcaster market performance. However, dependence may have advantages. The more dependent a broadcaster is, the better access it has to the varied resources of the state, some of which could provide access to information in times of crisis that is otherwise unavailable to foreign audiences.

Sending Publics: Domestic Politics and International Broadcasting

Putnam's two-level model sought to import into studies of international negotiations a consideration of the role of the respective publics: why the domestic win-sets matter for the efficacy of treaties. International negotiators seeking agreement and ratification must strategically consider the preferences of both domestic publics and their negotiating partners. Otherwise, agreements that gain their signatures may go unimplemented. International broadcasting is a part of foreign policy, which is linked invariably to domestic politics in the United States and in other democratic sponsor states (Rosenau, 1967). It should be no surprise that when it comes to how states communicate with others, "domestic politics seem to have influenced the outcomes as forcefully as changing international circumstances" (Price, 2001, para. 3). Polarization among domestic actors can confuse international outreach. Lynch (2000) observed that "[d]omestic political disagreements play a major role in shaping the course of international dialogues" (p. 328).

Domestic politics, especially but not only in participatory systems, constitutes the content of international broadcasting agencies at a deeper level. As public bodies, the content of international broadcasters emanates from broader discursive milieus and worldviews situated in political culture and history. As Price (2002) noted, "instruments of international broadcasting are a reflection of the priorities and the internal politics of the sender nation" (p. 6). This goes for the multitudinous outlets Taiwan deploys to reach China's airwaves (Wood, 2000, p. 163) as well as for Israel's plans to launch its own satellite network modeled on Al Jazeera. Broadly, views on the value of independent public broadcasting, public funding in general, and the internationalism that usually accompanies such independence are formative currents within political cultures. Canada's "inclusive diplomacy" is situated within a broader political tradition of institutionalized public consultation (Vickers, 2004). This should not discount the many other factors that shape organizations. The BBC World Service, for instance, has a broadcasting legacy that carries a "historic role" (Price et al., 2008, p. 170). Fueled by the organization's prestige and professional journalistic culture, it can stand outside, though not completely free from, domestic politics and culture.

More useful to this question are the capacities of issue publics, opinion leaders, and vested interests—Putnam's domestic political actors—to politicize communicative content and generate pressure on international broadcasting through media and government channels. This pressure can be intended to push broadcasting in a direction or prevent it from moving in another. The role played by domestic actors could be one of active monitoring or simply responding to high-profile "burglar alarm" instances that stumble into the public realm. The important thing is that in such a system, international broadcasters must consider a domestic win-set shaped by relevant public discourses and enforced by issue publics, opinion leaders, and special interests.

In a political culture based on participation, issue publics, opinion leaders, and interest groups have the capacity to politicize broadcasting content and therefore compose the most active and engaged of the domestic win-set (Zaller, 1992, p. 68). As a tool of foreign policy, broadcasting necessarily intersects with interests advanced by domestic coalitions comprised of organized issue publics. In one

instance, international broadcasting was used as a concession to placate an adversarial domestic politics for harsher foreign policy. Price (2002) wrote about the use of Radio Free Asia's China broadcasts as a "domestic trade-off to build support" (p. 63) for China's most-favored-nation status. In the United States, political leadership faced concerns about China's human rights record and growing economic prowess. Radio Free Asia took the form of a political token to induce political support for most-favored-nation status. Interest groups can also include commercial enterprises, industries such as tourism businesses, and others who have a material stake in how a country depicts itself abroad. They impact international broadcasting in other ways as well. Early regulations on American international broadcasting "were shaped by concerns of commercial broadcasters who feared government competition. Ambivalent political leaders were responsive to domestic pressures, less concerned about journalism norms" (Gregory, 2008, p. 279).

The foreign policy process in participatory governments incorporates actors with alternating visions of the national interest and motivations, sometimes constraining the range of options available to policy makers. As Henry Kissinger (1969) noted, "consultation with other nations becomes very difficult when the internal process of decision-making already has some of the characteristics of compacts between quasivergent entities" (p. 266). There is an increasing reluctance to hazard a hard-won domestic consensus in an international forum. Politicians are less likely to accede to international agreements the more their domestic support base is at risk. Despite the jurisdiction and expertise executive governmental departments and ministries tend to exercise over foreign affairs, their positions are not independent of the coalitions of issue publics who either elected or support the political leadership. This is an obstacle to more collaborative forms of international broadcasting, which require compromise: "Governments that must conform first to the demands of their domestic constituencies are often unable or unwilling to make those compromises" (Cowan & Arsenault 2008, p. 24).

Issue publics relate to international broadcasters between two distinct, polar dispositions: adversarial or cooperative. In the case of adversarial politics, international broadcasters are subject to the *monitoring and pressuring* of interested domestic groups and opposition parties scanning the foreign airwaves for "mistakes" by agencies. As a result, international broadcasting content is politicized, limiting the ability of international broadcasters to function within their target media markets and public spheres. The lack of autonomy and presence of watchdogs induces a risk-averse management culture: governments are unlikely to provide "funding and personnel for ambitious experiments in public broadcasting" (Hafez, 2007, p. 127).

On the other hand, a cooperative participatory politics is fostered when governments *institutionalize domestic political input* so that an open public consultation process constitutes a nation's public diplomacy. For example, the Canadian government has

pioneered new forms of dialogue with citizens in the development of foreign policy with systematic outreach programmes whereby citizens have the opportunity to have an input into foreign policy and diplomacy, rather than just being the passive recipients of information on it. (Vickers, 2004, p. 186)

Politicization of international broadcasting is more likely given the increasing access domestic publics have to content broadcast overseas, the equivalent of Putnam's "reverberation." The information feedback loop of globalizing media blurs the borders between international and domestic publics (Vickers, 2004, p. 183), even if international broadcasting is "largely unnoticed" by sending publics (Hafez, 2007, p. 118). Coverage aimed toward international audiences is accessible by domestic audiences. Cull (2008b) writes, "This has produced messages for Kandahar crafted for Kansas and—to sustain the example—messages for Kandahar delivered with a public fanfare desired to impress Kansas with just how much was being done to win the war of ideas" (p. 48). Also, the increased feedback between parts of the world enhances the ability of interested issue publics and opposition parties to assess international broadcasting content. The Internet cheapened monitoring costs.⁹

Receiving Government: Restrictions on the Free Flow of Information

The receiving public's government has some leverage over access to the media market. International broadcaster access often depends to some degree on the regulations and technologies of distribution domestically. Governments can require broadcast licenses for earth-bound distribution means, such as cable and over-the-air broadcasting. They could control satellite access by regulating the ownership and sales of dishes. Also, they have the power to obstruct access via signal jamming, Internet filtering, and threatening and restricting foreign journalists, and they even can directly lobby broadcasters and their sponsoring governments. Although these means are not always highly effective, they can cause some interference.

Receiving countries' governments will attempt to manage the informational fields if foreign media threaten to disrupt status quo politics. Receiving states compete with external broadcasters in a "market for loyalties," which Price (1994) used to mean the competition for people's allegiances and identities. Governments seek to regulate this market to enhance national power and stability. Price et al. (2008) applied this concept in describing international broadcasting as "a set of external efforts employed largely, but not exclusively, by governments to break through cartels that control the flow of words and ideas within markets" (pp. 168–169). International broadcasters also must be attuned to receiving government's conditions and sensitivities (Price, 2002). For example, in June 2009, in the aftermath of the disputed elections in Iran, the Iranian authorities accused journalists from the BBC and U.S. international broadcasters of spreading illegal propaganda. Iran restricted access to information by jailing and/or deporting their journalists.

Receiving Public: Cultural Congruence and Credibility

International broadcasters must understand what comprises the target win-set, the array of a public's media expectations, preferences, and needs. The target group should be identified first. It may not be the general public but the elite (Entman, 2008, p. 89). Constructing programming formats requires

⁹ For example, groups such as BBCWatch (<http://www.bbcwatch.com/>) and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle Eastern Reporting in America (<http://www.camera.org/>) monitor international broadcasters for bias against Israel.

understanding both the relevant foreign media markets and public spheres and what entering them as a particular actor loaded with symbolic meaning and reputation means (Castells, 2008, p. 78). Knowing where one stands in the interpretive field of a receiving public is central to a negotiative approach.

International broadcasters should engage the target's public sphere as it exists. Publics can signal their receptivity through chatter, stated opinion, feedback, and viewing behaviors. Independent audience and market research plays an especially important role in evaluations and programming decisions. Broadcasters must understand the informal rules of the target audience media marketplace and public sphere. If competitors attract viewers through viewer-created content, call-in shows, text message responses, and town hall forums—and viewers are hungry to speak back to sender nations—international broadcasting should facilitate such exchange-based mechanisms. Appealing to audience taste is especially important in the competitive media environment, with the "rise of nongovernmental groups that rival states in the wielding of discursive or symbolic power via media and that deploy media locally and transnationally in pursuit of political goals" (Price et al., 2008, p. 153).

If broadcasters propagate an agenda through simplex information flows and the audience, or opinion leaders, are savvy enough to employ oppositional readings (Hall, 1980) or dismiss the content, then attitudinal change is unlikely; international broadcasting efforts fail. But this is not to say that all content associated with a foreign government will be unsuccessful. There are situations in which receiving publics may prefer direct, accurate, and timely information about current events otherwise unavailable via their domestic media outlets. For example, in the aftermath of a 2010 earthquake that left Haiti's infrastructure unable to serve its citizens' needs, the BBC World Service launched *Connexion Haiti*, a multimedia, multilingual service that provided information about where to go for medical care, food and clean water. Broadcasters responding to a public's specific information needs are typically quite effective.

Conclusion

In Putnam's model of two-level games, bargaining is not simply between two states. Different levels of structured considerations and interests are dynamically related in the game he describes. By the same token, international broadcasters are reaching out to receiving publics with several other constraints, or filters impacting the broadcasting space. The Negotiative Communication Game of international broadcasting contributes to theory-building by systematizing a description of the pressures that impact state broadcasting to foreign populations. It emphasizes several important—but understudied—factors that both constrain and in many ways constitute the nature of a nation's international broadcasting: (1) broadcasters' abilities to compete are structured by the governance and mandate of the *sponsoring government*; (2) broadcasters emanate from the *domestic political culture and the assemblage of publicly circulating worldviews that make up issue publics* in pluralist political systems; (3) broadcasters are limited by the powers and pressures of the *receiving country's government*, though this filter is not always an automatic or censorious one; and, most crucially, (4) broadcasters must compete for *the attention of foreign audiences* and thus must be in tune with audience expectations and informational needs in order to succeed.

This follows Putnam's (1988, p. 433) advice that the entanglement between domestic politics and international affairs should be theorized and studied. In a world of porous informational borders, domestic politics constrains international broadcasting, making it harder for agencies to compete in media-rich settings. The Cold War model of propaganda broadcasting is no longer relevant. Instead of the false promises of dialogue, we should be thinking of international broadcasting as a rapid, informal form of multilevel bargaining for that increasingly scarce resource, attention—the first step to acceptance.

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