

# INFLUENCE AND ATTRACTION

Culture and the race for soft power in the 21st century

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## ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

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# FOREWORD

I strongly welcome this report by the British Council and Demos. It makes an important and timely contribution to the debate about how Britain can make the most of its cultural power and influence in the world.

Foreign policy today is no longer the preserve of governments. There is now a mass of connections between individuals, civil society, businesses, pressure groups and charitable organisations which are also part of the relations between nations. It is more important than ever before to tap into these new human networks around the world, using many more channels to do so including social media, and to seek to carry our arguments in international courts of public opinion as well as around international negotiating tables.

In the United Kingdom we are fortunate to have some immense assets and advantages in this area: the English language, connecting us to billions of people; links to almost every other nation on earth through our history and diverse society; skills in financial services, engineering, science and technology that are second to none; and fine institutions like the British Council, BBC World Service and our historic universities which are beacons for democratic values around the world.

However the world is constantly changing, and the way we engage with other countries and their citizens has to be updated and adapted all the time.

We have to find new ways to connect with public opinion in emerging powers around the world in support of human rights and freedom and to stimulate innovation.

We have to use new means of communicating with and understanding

other countries to make sure our diplomacy remains highly effective in the 21st century.

We have to continue to attract the best and brightest young people to come and travel, study and work in Britain, and form new cultural partnerships with other countries.

And we have to be sure at all times that we use our power and influence in the world as governments to support the rights, security and prosperity of the people of other nations as well as our own, whether through meeting our international development commitments or fighting huge global problems such as rape and sexual violence in conflict.

So we in Government will study this report closely, and I invite others to do the same.

There is nothing to be feared, and much to be gained, from the growing diversity in international centres of culture around the world. This opens up new opportunities for Britain and the British people.

Britain remains a modern day cultural superpower. Staying competitive in 'soft power' for decades to come means nurturing these assets and valuing them as much as our military, economic and diplomatic advantages. We in Government are determined to play our full part in helping to liberate that ingenuity and talent across our national life, and to champion it all over the world.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'William Hague' in a cursive script.

**The Rt Hon. William Hague MP**  
**Secretary of State for Foreign**  
**and Commonwealth Affairs**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The scale of cultural contact between peoples and the exposure that most global citizens have to other cultures have increased exponentially over the last decade. Much of the content of global communications is cultural.

The consequence is a world in which culture and international politics are now in an interdependent relationship, where culture plays both a positive and negative role. In this new global environment, people-to-people cultural contact sets the tone and sometimes the agenda for traditional state-to-state diplomacy. Nations are increasingly seeking to maximise their 'soft power' – a term used to describe their ability to achieve their international objectives through attraction and co-option rather than coercion – in an effort to promote cultural understanding and avoid cultural misunderstanding.<sup>1</sup>

This publication examines the latest data and research in the field of international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy. It provides ways of classifying and understanding this increasingly diverse and growing area of policy making and research. It offers a new rationale for cultural relations activities, examines trends and suggests lessons for countries that wish to enhance their international cultural strategies.

For the purposes of this publication, 'culture' encompasses publicly funded, commercial and individual 'homemade' culture. Among its core expressive activities are language, sport, education, food and religion. 'Cultural relations' refers to the sharing and communication of this culture internationally, typically through education exchanges, language teaching, art performances or museum exhibitions, international broadcasting and a wide variety of other activities.

## **The forces that shape cultural relations activity include:**

- foreign policy interests
- the desire to create a positive image around the world
- the unique history and legacy of each nation
- ideology
- resources
- language
- cultural assets – arts, education and individual expression
- commerce.

## **The main cultural relations actors are:**

- nations, states and cities
- cultural, broadcasting and educational institutions
- NGOs
- businesses
- foundations, trusts and philanthropists
- individuals, particularly artists, sports people and performers.

Cultural relations activities include a range of traditional instrumentalist objectives, but there are trends in many countries to move beyond simple cultural 'projection' and towards mutuality, together with increasing innovation and a recognition of the role of cultural actors as agents of social change.

Cultural relations can build trust between people and that in turn impacts positively upon a wide range of activities, particularly tourism and trade. There is a growing seriousness about, and expenditure on, cultural relations in

1. Nye, JS (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* New York: Public Affairs





BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and more widely across Asia and the Middle East. Western powers face competition from emerging, high-growth economies that are becoming increasingly outward looking. By contrast, in the case of many Western nations, cultural relations have been subject to retrenchment and short-termism, as countries look inwards in a time of intense economic pressures. This is creating an inherent risk to these countries' long-term global influence and their performance in culture, education, tourism and trade.

In future, the role of NGOs and the third sector will increase. New cultural networks will form at different layers of government, particularly between cities. Peer-to-peer cultural contact will continue to grow and individual citizen cultural diplomacy will increase.

The level of resources invested by countries matters, but enabling a genuine and open exchange of culture and ideas will be far more important in staying ahead in the race for soft power. The most successful nations will in future be those that are flexible and open to other cultures, responding quickly to changing dynamics and global trends.

### **The implication for governments is that they should:**

- create conditions for broad and deep cultural exchange to flourish – because peer-to-peer exchange is more likely to generate trust
- work with commercial and third-sector initiatives – because it encourages innovation and decreases reliance on public funds
- adopt a mix of traditional and digital strategies – because it is cost-effective and responds to increasing technological sophistication
- pay as much attention to inward-facing as they do to outward-facing cultural relations – because that will help develop a culturally literate and globally aware population
- support cultural exchange through independent, autonomous agencies – because direct government involvement invites suspicion and hostility
- embrace long-term relationship building instead of short-term transactional and instrumental thinking – because it is more effective.

To make the most of the increasing opportunities for intra-UK and international communication and cultural engagement, UK citizens need to be more globally aware, skilled in languages, comfortable with difference and culturally confident. Culture itself develops through exchange, therefore the UK also needs to stay ahead in 'the commerce of culture' – ensuring a continuing interchange of ideas, research, creativity and artistic practice with others around the world, enriching both the UK's and other countries' cultural and educational sectors.

# SETTING THE SCENE – A UK PERSPECTIVE

On 27 July 2012, a theatre and film director, a writer, and thousands of volunteer musicians, actors and dancers succeeded where politicians had been failing for decades – they finally nailed that elusive thing, ‘British identity’.

The opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games brought the whole of the United Kingdom together, with the rest of the world watching. In the days after the event, a rare consensus emerged that the people of the UK had been given a new sense of who they are. That happened because instead of choosing a handful of cultural symbols that reflected one individual or group’s view of the nations’ collective identities, the opening ceremony was multi-layered. It was possible to see and hear parts of the ceremony and to think: ‘that’s not what I listen to, but it’s part of who we are.’ It showed each of us that we are not mere individuals, but part of something bigger. And it was a cultural event.

The UK can take a justifiable pride in its literature, music, film, dance and all the rest. But the ceremony was more important than just being a chance for the country to affirm and enjoy its cultural variety and richness. The event was a powerful expression of what the UK is and what it does: the ceremony spoke to the nation on behalf of the nation.

Through culture, the UK also showed itself to the world; instead of bowler hats and red buses, the global audience saw a complex picture of a modern nation that has as much contemporary cultural breadth as historical depth. There were elements, such as the references to the NHS, that might have been hard for overseas viewers to understand because they are very specifically British, but also other things, like Mr Bean, that have global appeal. In Tim Berners-Lee, the UK affirmed a particular role in the world: laying claim to the invention of the World Wide Web, but showing its universality – ‘this is for everyone.’

The United Kingdom is completely connected to a multipolar and interdependent world, and just as the people of the UK came together in the Olympic opening ceremony through culture, with everyone recognising their distinctiveness, their commonalities, and the complexity of their differences, so culture must be acknowledged as a fundamental and indispensable means of creating a global dialogue. People comprehend each other through culture. That is why cultural relations matter, and why they hold such promise.







# THE NEED TO RE-EXAMINE CULTURAL RELATIONS

In 2007 Demos published *Cultural Diplomacy*, a pamphlet that examined the ways in which cultural relations were changing – spurred on by technological innovation, migration and mass tourism – and the consequences for politics.<sup>2</sup>

From humankind's earliest beginnings, groups of people, whether tribes or nations, have expressed themselves through cultural forms and have sought to show their values, skills and knowledge to others through cultural display and the exchange of gifts. In the 21st century cultural contact has undergone a step-change. Global citizens, whether they are Australian gap-year students travelling in Europe, or Afghans watching *Rambo* on a battery-powered TV set, encounter a greater range of cultures than ever before. This creates the conditions for different societies both to understand each other better and to misunderstand each other as well.

*Cultural Diplomacy* argued that mass peer-to-peer cultural contact was on the increase and that the phenomenon was adding an extra layer to cultural relations. Cultural contact had originally been elite-to-elite (through royal courts and ambassadors), then additionally elite-to-many (via broadcasting and cinema), and now was entering a phase of people-to-people (through travel, migration and the internet). The pamphlet also noted that different countries approached cultural relations in different ways, and that, where governments did get involved, their role was most effective

when they were hands-off, restricting themselves to facilitating the activities of independent bodies rather than attempting to impose control.

The pamphlet evidently struck a chord. The *Today* programme covered the story and the issue of cultural diplomacy was debated in both Houses of Parliament. The reaction can in part be explained by the particular historical moment – the pamphlet appeared at a time when the war in Iraq was exacting a horrific toll on human lives, was becoming financially unsustainable, and risked undermining long-term relationships between the UK and those countries that had not supported the war. There had to be a better way of doing things and 'soft power', public diplomacy and cultural relations might hold some of the answers.

Six years on, the field of cultural relations remains as full of possibilities, as enigmatic and complex as it was in 2007, but a number of things have changed. The predictions of extensive mass peer-to-peer cultural contact made in the pamphlet have been exceeded beyond anyone's imagination. To give just one example, YouTube was launched in November 2006 – the month that work on writing the pamphlet began. Now, 72 hours of video are uploaded onto that site every minute – with only 30 per cent of traffic from the US – and there are more than one billion unique visitors every month.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, over the past five years interest in cultural relations and cultural diplomacy has prompted the foundation of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, the development of academic courses across the world, and a steady flow of conferences and events. In the US and beyond, a whole body of work has grown around the concept of 'soft power', a phrase invented by Harvard Professor Joseph Nye, used both in his 2004 book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*,<sup>4</sup> and in his more recent work, *The Future of Power*,<sup>5</sup> to describe 'the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce'. During 2012, both the Ditchley Foundation<sup>6</sup> and the Salzburg Global Seminar held gatherings to examine the subject, and the Edinburgh Festival hosted the world's first International Summit of Culture Ministers.

The sustained and growing interest in cultural relations has prompted this new publication – an attempt to gather together some of the strands of enquiry, to examine data and research, to provide both a conceptual framework to aid discussion and to set out some of the emerging lessons for countries seeking to maximise the impact of their cultural relations.

2. Bound, K, Briggs, R, Holden, J and Jones, S (2007) *Cultural Diplomacy* London: Demos [www.demos.co.uk/publications/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/cultural-diplomacy)

3. YouTube (2012) *Statistics* [www.youtube.com/t/press\\_statistics](http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics)

4. Nye, JS (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* New York: Public Affairs.

5. Nye, JS (2011) *The Future of Power* New York: Public Affairs.

6. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

# THE MEANING OF 'CULTURE'

## WHAT IS CULTURE?

'Culture' is a notoriously difficult word to define. At its broadest 'culture' is used to distinguish human activity from the equally problematic 'nature'. 'Culture' is also used as a term to encompass all the activities that distinguish one particular group of people from another, as in a tribal culture, a national culture or an office culture. More narrowly, the word culture is used as a synonym for 'the arts'.

When it comes to cultural relations, in practical terms there are three general categories of activity through which people express themselves. The first is funded culture; that is, cultural activity that is supported either by governments or philanthropists. This includes traditional art forms such as ballet, theatre, visual arts, etc., carried out by professional artists, mediated by publicly funded organisations. Funders define this type of culture pragmatically through their funding decisions. This is an important category for international relations, because government-supported culture and heritage stimulates tourism, which is significant not only in economic terms, but because tourists then return to their homes with an impression of a nation considerably influenced by their cultural experiences. Some 57 per cent of tourists say that culture and heritage are strong influences on their choice of holiday destination; cultural attractions accounted for 18 of the UK's top 20 most visited sites in 2011; and the UK's culture and heritage is estimated to attract £4.5 billion worth of spending by visitors annually.<sup>7</sup>

The next category is commercial culture, where a market for cultural goods supports cultural activity. It is a truism that Hollywood films have global reach and that they promote the American way of life and the consumption of American products. The 'cultural exception' in trade treaties, together with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, recognise that cultural goods and services 'encompass values, identity and meanings that go beyond their strictly commercial value'.<sup>8</sup> As French Senator Jacques Legendre says: 'When we speak of cultural exception, it was clearly a fight that France, among others, led to ensure culture is not seen as a commodity, but there was also the protection of cultural industries of countries who otherwise risk being deprived of the possibility of producing films, of producing music, of being present in contemporary cultural media.'<sup>9</sup>

Commercial culture provides opportunities to make a mark: commercial music has been a defining feature of many Western and Asian perceptions about Mali and Jamaica, and the South Korean singer Psy's *Gangnam Style* – a YouTube phenomenon in 2012 that topped the charts in many countries, including the UK – has thrust Korea into the spotlight. 'K-pop' is becoming a global phenomenon: the Korean boyband U-Kiss's visit to Peru in late 2012 produced scenes reminiscent of Beatlemania. The power of commercial culture is clear, as is its financial value: music is a major UK export, worth around US\$2 billion annually;<sup>10</sup> music fuels other types of innovation – as Cynthia Schneider

of Georgetown University notes: 'You couldn't have someone thinking of the iPod who didn't love music'.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, there is the rapidly expanding field of 'homemade culture'. People have always sung in choirs, created craftworks, danced and made music, but over the past 15 years their ability to create work to professional standards, to communicate and share their work and to find a platform from which to sell it have been transformed by new technologies. This has led to an explosive growth in cultural creativity, much of it of indifferent quality at best, some of it inspiring, but its sheer volume marking it out as significant in terms of how people relate to each other across the planet and how they form their impressions of what other people are like.

These three 'spheres' of culture are intensely inter-related. The connections operate both within nations and between them, through collaboration, touring and cross-border sales. The symbiotic relationship between the three spheres is further evidenced in the UK by the way in which almost all organisations in the 'publicly funded' sphere operate within a mixed economy, where they earn income from sales and garner private support from donors.

Around this complex central core of activities lies a range of other candidates for inclusion in the term 'culture', particularly language, sport and education, but also food and religion. In some parts of the world 'culture' and 'religion' are synonymous, with religion informing every aspect of life, where cultural expression is an outward

7. VisitBritain (2010) *Culture and Heritage Topic Profile Statistics* [www.visitbritain.org/Images/Culture%20&%20Heritage%20Topic%20Profile%20Full\\_tcm29-14711.pdf](http://www.visitbritain.org/Images/Culture%20&%20Heritage%20Topic%20Profile%20Full_tcm29-14711.pdf), p5-6, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions Visitor Statistics <http://alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=423>

8. Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity (2010) *The Campaign for Cultural Diversity: Why it matters to You* [www.cdc-ccd.org/IMG/pdf/CDC\\_LowRez\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cdc-ccd.org/IMG/pdf/CDC_LowRez_EN.pdf)

9. France Diplo TV (2012) *What is Cultural Diplomacy?* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcCvwZtjNw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcCvwZtjNw)

10. UK Trade & Investment (2012) *Music* [www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/item/109992.html](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/item/109992.html)

11. National University of Singapore (2012) *Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy – Cultural Diplomacy for the 21st Century* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4Qgq92bF0E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4Qgq92bF0E)

12. Glenny, M (2012, 2 November) 'Rio: the fight for the favelas' *Financial Times Magazine* [www.ft.com/cms/s/2/27511af8-23b3-11e2-a46b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2MaETP3XU](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/27511af8-23b3-11e2-a46b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2MaETP3XU)

manifestation of religious belief. Food forms a distinctive part of broader culture and plays its part in creating cultural experiences – music and food are inseparable at festivals. Higher education provides one of the principal channels through which young people in particular experience other cultures and other nations. In sport, major competitions such as the World Cup and the Olympic

and Paralympic Games provide a focus for global attention; it may well be the case that ‘Manchester United’ are the two best-known words in the English language.

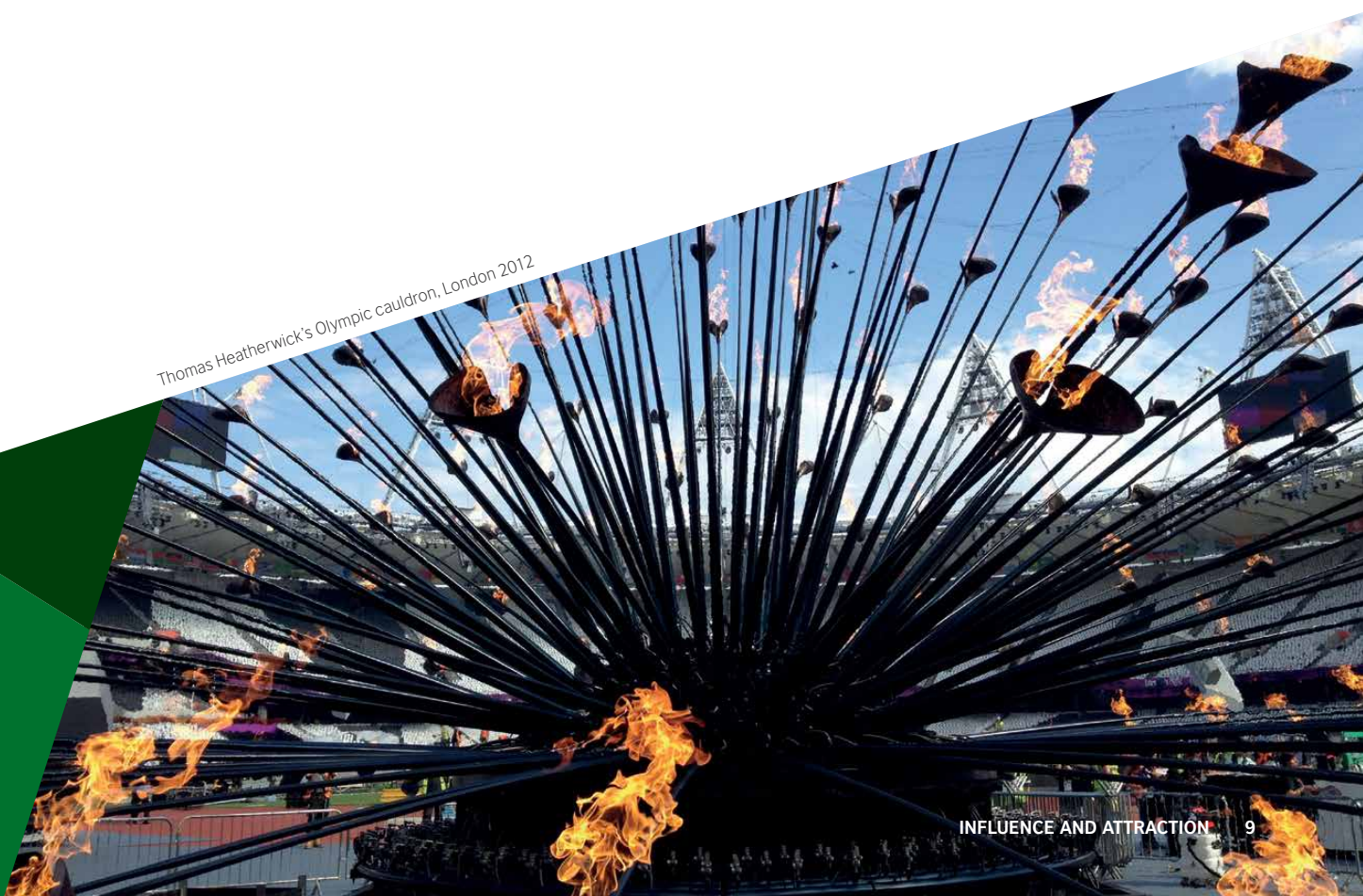
Countries compete to top the Olympic medal table and to host major sporting events, from the Commonwealth Games to Formula One. Such events are clearly

seen as providing opportunities both to ‘showcase’ and to schmooze. As the *Financial Times* recently explained: ‘2014 and 2016 are opportunities for Rio and Brazil to use cultural and sporting diplomacy to project itself for what it is: a big, big player on the 21st-century stage’.<sup>12</sup>

#### Summer Olympics, top five medal-winning countries, 1988–2012

	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
1	USSR	USSR	US	US	US	China	US
2	East Germany	US	Russia	Russia	China	US	China
3	US	Germany	Germany	China	Russia	Russia	UK
4	South Korea	China	China	Australia	Australia	UK	Russia
5	West Germany	Cuba	France	Germany	Japan	Germany	South Korea

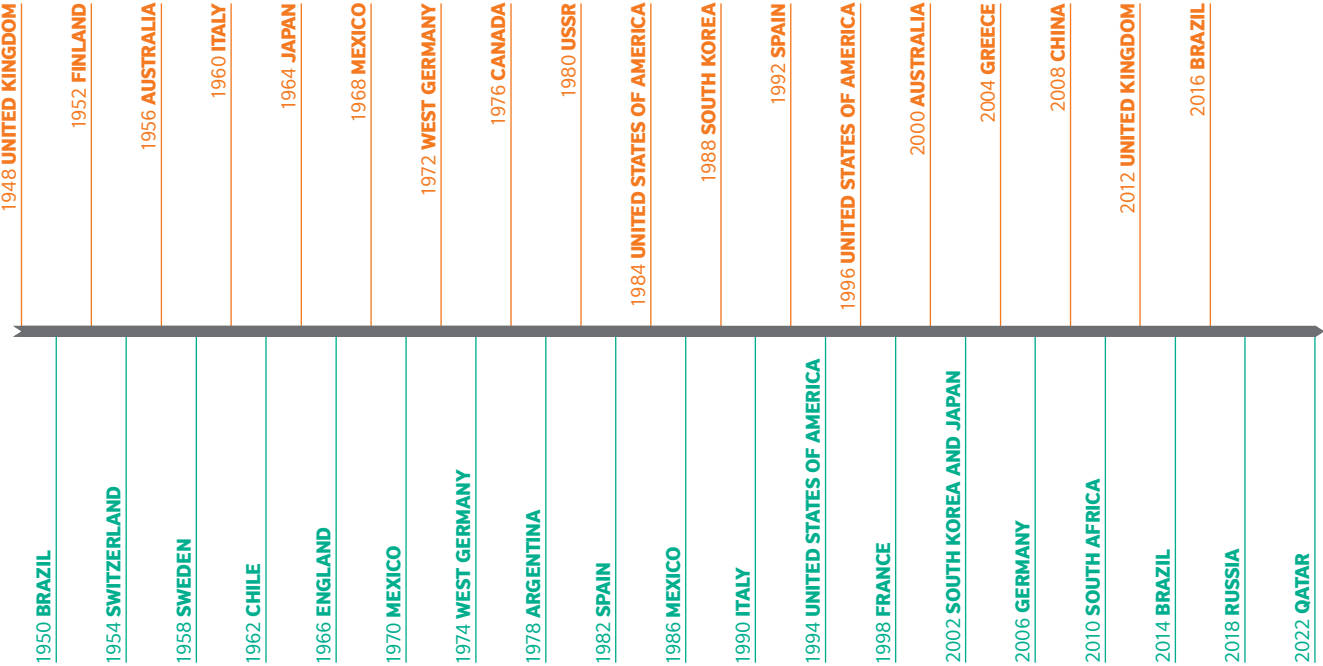
Thomas Heatherwick's Olympic cauldron, London 2012



Timeline: host countries of the Summer Olympic Games and football World Cup, 1948–2022

KEY

- Summer Olympic Games host countries: 1948–2016
- Football World Cup host countries: 1950–2022





## GOVERNMENTS AND CULTURE

The meaning of culture in the context of cultural relations is, as we have seen, somewhat fuzzy and is shifting: that is humankind's contemporary condition. But while strict definition is elusive, a characterisation of the field is not. There will always be argument about what should or should not be included – and this becomes particularly pertinent where it relates to issues of measurement, statistics and 'impact' – but agonising over definitions can obscure the central point that the scale of cultural contact between peoples, and the exposure that most global citizens have to other cultures, is vastly different to what it was even a decade ago.

That is an important fact for governments to take note of. The speed and frequency of global communication – both physical and virtual – is growing exponentially, and the content of that communication is often cultural.

But what is most vital for governments to grasp is not the mere existence of increased cultural communication but its consequence: it has produced a world in which culture and politics are now in an interdependent relationship where each creates the operating context for the other. On the one hand national governments come together in the context of multilateral UN, EU and WTO

agreements to determine the legal frameworks and structures within which cultural actors can operate; but in turn, cultural activities determine the limits of political action, expose the gaps between the rhetoric and reality of foreign policy statements, and can support or derail political priorities.

One example is the way in which Gordon Brown's trip to India in January 2007 for trade talks was overshadowed by widespread anger in India caused by the Shilpa Shetty/Jade Goody incident in the *Big Brother* house.<sup>13</sup> Cultural conflict sets the political agenda; instead of talking about commerce, the then Prime Minister found himself having to answer questions about television. There are many other examples, including the ways in which the film *Braveheart* has affected Scottish politics and the reception of the film *Borat* in Kazakhstan. These are all specific cases, but there is a more general sense in which cultural currents – what we read, watch and listen to – create the environment in which politics operate.

Another, increasingly significant, aspect of the relationship between culture and politics can be seen in the important role that artists have played in civil society across the world, from theatre directors animating protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square, to Ai Weiwei's social-media activism in China, shown in the prizewinning film *Never Sorry*.<sup>14</sup>

The rationale for governments to take note of the role of culture in international relations has therefore changed. We have moved from a world where cultural diplomacy was primarily about display, saying to other countries: 'this is who we are, this is what we stand for, and by the way aren't we wonderful?', to one where culture is much messier, and peer-to-peer contact much more frequent – where people listen to global music, take exception to cartoons published thousands of miles away and support petitions for the release of an artist imprisoned on the other side of the planet.

In a world where people need to learn about others far more than they need to project themselves, governments around the world need a fresh understanding and a revised agenda for cultural relations. Such an agenda would take account of the new reality of mass peer-to-peer global cultural contact.

13. Tryhorn, C (2007, 17 January) 'Big Brother Row goes global' *The Guardian* [www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/jan/17/bigbrother.politicsandthemedia](http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/jan/17/bigbrother.politicsandthemedia)

14. Klayman, A (Director) (2012) *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry* United Expression Media.

# MAKING SENSE OF CULTURAL RELATIONS

As we have seen, understanding contemporary cultural relations rests on the realisation that interpersonal communications have undergone a revolutionary change of scale over the past decade, and that much of the content of global communications is cultural.

Political and corporate elites tend not to realise the extent of the change. They continue to employ 20th-century media and ways of doing business, and their professional use of new technology is restricted to the pursuit of traditional aims. But a new layer of cultural exchange has been added on top of the older methods, one that has transformed the ability of citizens to produce and consume their own culture and enabled them to use culture of all types for their own purposes.

Radio and TV are still powerful forces, politicians conduct affairs through embassies and summits and business titans regularly meet at Davos. Alongside all of that, activists mash-up political speeches, orchestral players in the Divan Orchestra provide a bridge between Israelis and Palestinians, and Iranian citizens undermine Hollywood's crude portrayal of the ancient Persians by hijacking the web address for the film 300.

How can we make sense of this rapidly changing world? In particular, how can we understand the role of governments in cultural relations? Is culture an area that governments should leave well alone? Should they see themselves as powerless in relation to culture, or can they play a constructive role? In order to answer those questions, we must first look at the forces that shape cultural relations, the players that are involved and the different typologies of cultural relations activity.

Tunisian activists, Carthage Byrsa, 2011



## THE FORCES THAT SHAPE CULTURAL RELATIONS ACTIVITY

The differing models of cultural relations that individual countries adopt result from the complex interaction of many factors, but the following drivers operate to a greater or lesser extent in each case:

### Foreign policy objectives

It is widely thought that state control of cultural activities undermines their effectiveness. The participants at the Ditchley Conference in 2012, drawn from many countries, concluded that it was 'imperative that governments kept their distance and maintained the lightest possible footprint.'<sup>15</sup> In the UK, Lord Carter, who led a 2005 review of public diplomacy,<sup>16</sup> put it this way to a Select Committee hearing: 'If the BBC World Service were to carry a byline stating "Working in a manner consistent with governmental medium- and long-term goals" then its international credibility would be fatally undermined.'<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, implicit links between foreign policy, domestic policy and culture are clearly apparent when the priorities of Western cultural relations programmes change, for instance when budgets are focused away from one geographic area and targeted at another, as has happened with most European countries' cultural agencies, reducing their European coverage and directing their attention to BRIC countries and the Middle East.

Elsewhere, more explicit and directive links between policy and activity are

visible. For example, in May 2011 the *China Daily* said that 'the newly released 12th Five-Year Plan of the Communist Party of China (CPC) made it clear that the cultural industry should be developed into a pillar industry in the next five years, meaning the cultural sector should take up at least five per cent of the total GDP by 2015, whereas it currently accounts for less than 2.5 per cent... China's cultural brands and products will compete in the international cultural market.'<sup>18</sup>

### The desire to create a good impression

Many countries use culture as a way of creating an impression, or communicating what they believe to be their values. Norway, for example, uses cultural references to create 'mood music' – an image of itself as an honest broker in international relations, with a clean environment and an adventurous spirit.<sup>19</sup> Many governments deploy resources based on the belief that culture can make people in other countries more favourably disposed towards them: increased cultural relations activity in the Middle East on the part of many Western governments is driven by a wish to undermine fundamentalism, while many trade missions contain a cultural element.

### History

Most EU nations' cultural relations presence on the ground and broadcasting reach reflects their colonial history. This is not surprising as the legacy of imperialism provides a shared language, trading links, migrant communities and

to some degree a shared culture. History has also resulted in different nations having different stores of cultural assets and cultural capital at their disposal. China, for example, has a deep well of historic artefacts to lend in its international-relations efforts, while Brazil has to look to other cultural assets such as music and dance.

### Ideology

In spite of the US being the intellectual home of the 'soft-power' thesis, and in spite of the historic involvement of the CIA and the US army in cultural diplomacy,<sup>20</sup> and in spite of attempts by the State Department in the mid-2000s to become more active in this field,<sup>21</sup> there is great ideological resistance in the US body politic to the involvement of government in anything cultural. The result is that America is known throughout the world for its commercial, rather than state-sponsored, culture. By contrast, most Asian and European governments, who support public funding of the arts and heritage, see a role for the state in cultural relations as perfectly legitimate.

### Resources

The resources that governments are prepared to devote to cultural activity and cultural diplomacy are clearly a major factor, as discussed later in the report.

15. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

16. Carter, P (2005) *Public Diplomacy Review* [www.britishcouncil.org/home-carter-report](http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-carter-report)

17. BBC Charter Review Committee (2006) 'Chapter 5: The BBC World Service' *BBC Charter Review – Second Report* [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldbbc/128/12808.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldbbc/128/12808.htm)

18. Zhenyu, L (2011, 5 December) 'China's cultural industry to develop speedily' *China Daily* [www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-05/12/content\\_12754102.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-05/12/content_12754102.htm)

19. Batora, J (2005) 'Public Diplomacy in Small and Medium Sized States: Norway and Canada' *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' pp16–20

20. Valero, RE (2010, 15 November) 'National Security, Cultural Diplomacy and Art' *The Pink Line Project* <http://pinklineproject.com/article/national-security-cultural-diplomacy-and-art>

21. Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (2005) *Cultural Diplomacy: the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy* Washington: State Department [www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf)

## Language

Cultural relations are directly related to questions of language. The frequent linkage of language teaching with formal cultural relations activity shows how important language is as a gateway to cultural connections and influence. The British Council's *Trust Pays* report shows that the strongest predictor of trust in the UK on the part of foreign interviewees was their ability to speak English.<sup>22</sup> The number of people around the world who learn the basics of English or French informally by listening to pop music or watching YouTube clips must be substantial.

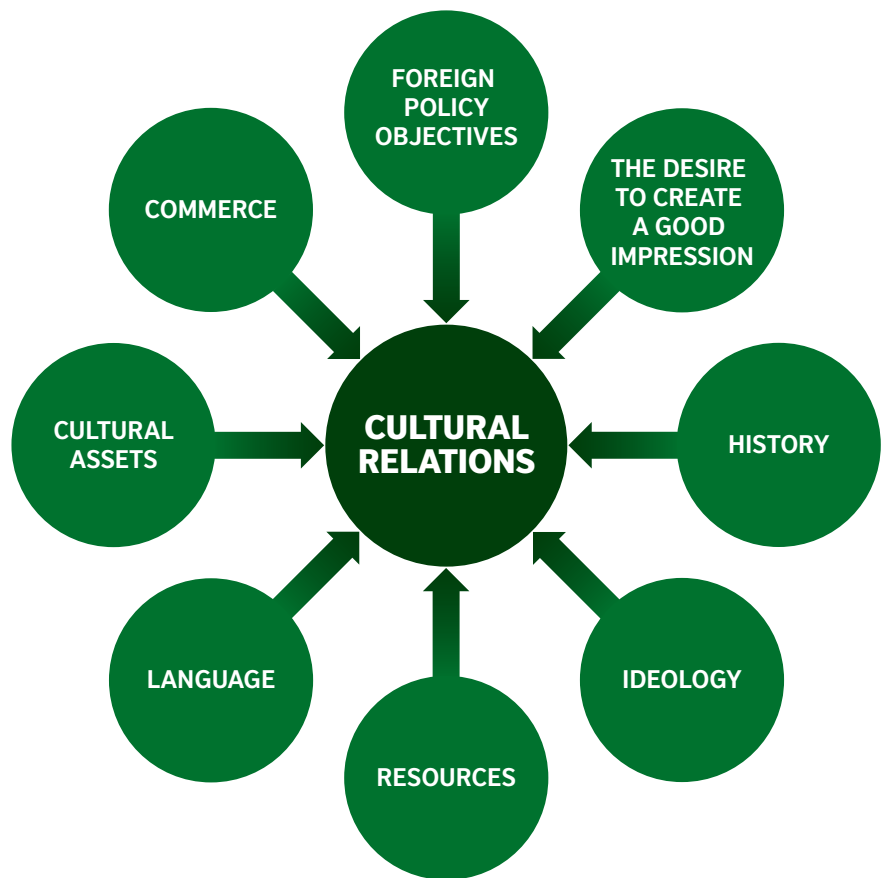
## Cultural assets

Cultural relations are guided by the strength and attractiveness of a country's available assets. These include its education systems and scientific achievements, the arts and cultural scene, civil society more widely as well as individual expression.

## Commerce

Non-state actors continue to proliferate in the field of cultural relations as commercial and third sector cultural cross-border traffic increases. Governments seek both to maximise the reach of their own commercial cultures (demonstrated both in US Presidential support for Hollywood – chronicled in David Puttnam's book *The Undeclared War: the struggle for control of the world's film industry*<sup>23</sup> – and China's Five-Year Plan) and also to protect their own commercial cultures from dominant foreign cultures (the French Government's protection of its cinema being the classic example).

## The forces that shape countries' cultural relations activity





## CULTURAL RELATIONS ACTORS

In different countries, the various actors in cultural relations have differing roles and significance, but everywhere, a mix of the following needs to be taken into account:

### Nations and cities

Motivated by political advantage and the national interest, states have the organisational structures and resources to influence and in some cases control cultural relations. At the very least they enter into treaties and join international bodies that govern the operating context for some cultural activities. They also control physical and virtual access to culture through things like visa policies and electronic blocking, and their diplomatic presence in other countries often includes a cultural attaché. Democratic states are accountable through the ballot box, and their role in cultural relations is ultimately determined by public opinion. The direct involvement of states in cultural activity can be counterproductive, and their influence over cultural relations is restricted and relatively small. Nonetheless, their role in setting legal and commercial regimes, and in providing funding for parts of the cultural world, is crucial.

In 2008, in a historic development, the proportion of the world's population living in towns and cities exceeded 50 per cent. Over the past two decades, cities have become increasingly involved in cultural relations activity. The Agenda 21 for Culture initiative developed out of a 1992 United Nations conference on sustainable development in the 21st century, bringing together

cities and local governments 'to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace.'<sup>24</sup> The European Capital of Culture programme provides further evidence of the growth of interest in the culture of cities. There is an increasing tendency for cities to collaborate among themselves and for cities to promote their own interests abroad, bypassing to some degree their national governments. This can be seen in the visits of successive London mayors, with Ken Livingstone, accompanied by Girls Aloud, visiting Shanghai in 2006, and Boris Johnson playing cricket with schoolchildren on his visit to India in 2012. It is likely that the role of cities in international cultural relations will become increasingly important.

### Independent cultural, broadcasting and educational institutions

These actors are the most visible and important in terms of formal cultural relations. Arm's-length cultural agencies such as Spain's Cervantes Institute, Germany's Goethe-Institut and the UK's British Council are paradigmatic examples of cultural agencies involved in this field. Major museums and universities are inherently internationalist, none of them could function as they do without having deep and longstanding relations with their counterparts in other countries. These cultural ties can last through periods when the diplomatic relationships between states are strained or non-existent, so are extremely valuable. In many ways these institutions are the

most effective formal players in cultural relations, especially when they are independent of government and direct political control, but accountable to the public through funding agreements and governance structures. They are by definition motivated by cultural concerns and believe in the inherent value of the arts and culture, which is not always true of governments.

Other public bodies and government agencies also engage directly in cultural relations. Examples include the Arts and Humanities Research Council's research partnership with India<sup>25</sup> and UK Trade and Investment's involvement with the cultural activities of Qatar.<sup>26</sup>

### Cultural NGOs

Hundreds of third sector cultural organisations, both large and small, sell, perform, tour or carry out their work in countries other than their home base. They are usually distant from government priorities, though sometimes reliant on public funding.

### Businesses

Businesses act in three ways in the cultural arena. Some companies, such as publishers, film studios and music-recording companies are significant producers of cultural content and their products can be immensely influential in shaping attitudes. Other companies provide sponsorship for cultural activities, sometimes involving substantial amounts of money, with relationships lasting for many years (for example, Ernst & Young's relationship with the Victoria & Albert Museum), or on a case by case basis (such as American Airlines' support for

22. British Council (2012) *Trust Pays* [www.britishcouncil.org/trustresearch2012.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/trustresearch2012.pdf)

23. Puttnam, D (1997) *The Undeclared War: the Struggle for Control of the World's Film Industry* London: HarperCollins

24. The Agenda 21 for Culture [www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=88&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=88&lang=en)

25. Arts & Humanities Research Council *Celebrating UK-India Arts and Humanities Research* [www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/Watch-and-Listen/Pages/Celebrating-UK-India-arts-and-Humanities-Research.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/Watch-and-Listen/Pages/Celebrating-UK-India-arts-and-Humanities-Research.aspx)

26. UKTI (2012) *Brand Qatar: Culture* [www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/premiumcontent/323360.html](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/premiumcontent/323360.html)

the Edward Hopper exhibition at Tate Modern). Occasionally, companies provide more direct assistance than simply funding the work of others. One example is Coca-Cola setting up Coke Studio Pakistan to help local musicians record and broadcast their work.<sup>27</sup> Corporations, which can command large resources, are driven by profit not public service, and they are not directly accountable to the public through any democratic process. Their scale and geographical range makes them, in a sense, cultural actors in their own right. The way in which they conduct themselves can increase or decrease the soft power of their home country (for example BP's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico led to a wave of anti-British feeling in the US), and their practices

and policies can help or hinder cultural understanding among their diverse employees.

### Foundations, trusts and philanthropists

There are many private and third-sector funders that promote artist and educational exchanges, as well as supporting touring and other types of cultural relations. Examples include the Doris Duke and Ford foundations supporting the artist exchange programme run by Philadelphia's Asian Arts Initiative.<sup>28</sup>

### Individuals

There are many individual artists, sportspeople and others who travel, collaborate and work internationally. Motivated by creative or sporting

imperatives and practical considerations like making a living, they are important independent actors in this field. So are individual tourists and citizens who both reflect their own cultures and learn about other cultures when they interact either on their travels or through their cultural consumption.

One approach to a better understanding of cultural relations could be to map activities against actors. The problem that arises is that in some countries it is difficult to differentiate between the state and major institutions. The relationship can vary from complete control (China Radio) to an arm's-length arrangement that is subject to informal influence and varying degrees of direction exercised through funding agreements (European cultural agencies):

### Cultural relations actors and their major activities

ACTIVITY	NATIONS AND CITIES	INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS	NGOS	BUSINESSES	FOUNDATIONS, TRUSTS AND PHILANTHROPISTS	INDIVIDUALS
Language Teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Higher Education	✓	✓		✓		
Broadcasting	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Arts and Museums	✓	✓			✓	✓
Entertainment				✓		✓
Ancillary	✓		✓	✓		✓



## TYPOLOGIES OF CULTURAL RELATIONS

To develop a more rounded view of cultural relations activity we need to create multiple ways of looking at the issues. The following typologies can be used to help understand the field:

### Countries' profiles

Looking at examples from around the world, the cultural relations activities of different countries fall into four main groups:

**1. Large countries with well-known cultures:** this group have a long history of government-influenced cultural relations operating through established institutions and structures. Such places as the UK, France, the US, Japan and Spain fall into this category. As a general rule, their budgets for cultural relations are under pressure, if not falling, and they are questioning whether their activities need to be as extensive as they are – cuts to the BBC World Service announced in January 2011 provide an example. Budget reductions are, as the Ditchley Conference put it: 'unfortunately closely linked with the fraught issues of measuring... impact'.<sup>29</sup>

**2. Large countries with fast emerging cultural profiles:** this group consists of the BRIC countries and some other growing economies like South Korea and Taiwan. These are nations, again with well-recognised cultures, that are expanding their cultural relations activities, opening new institutions around the world and increasing budgets. The proliferation of Confucius institutes<sup>30</sup> – from nothing to a presence in 104 countries seven years later – provides the clearest example, but equally telling is the investment in broadcasting by Gulf states following the success of Al-Jazeera. The countries in this category see culture as an important aspect of making their presence felt on the world stage, as well as a way of helping foreigners to understand who they are.

The rising budgets in Asia and Latin America, contrasting with the shrinking budgets in Europe and North America, are a clear marker of the growing confidence of the former, and the economic difficulties and declining global strength of the latter.

**3. Smaller countries with established cultural profiles:** these are smaller nations, such as Norway and Portugal, with well-established cultural profiles and institutions, and those such as Jamaica and Thailand with a strong cultural identity that is widely known on the global stage.

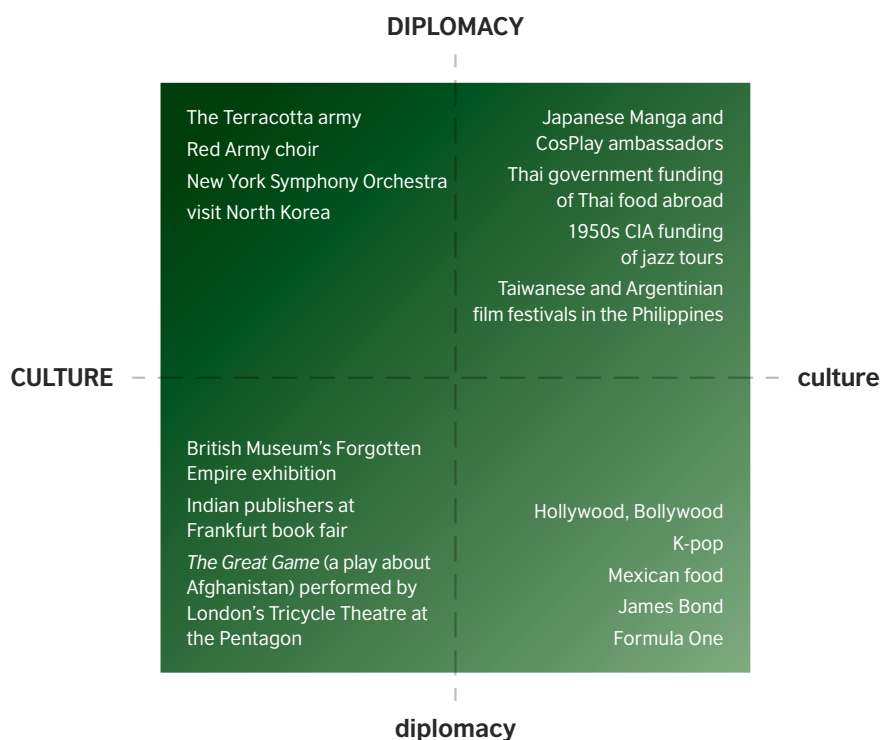
**4. Smaller countries with emerging cultural profiles:** these are by far the majority. They are smaller countries whose cultures struggle to make their mark on global consciousness. These cultures can be immensely rich in themselves, but they are not widely known (Madagascan music provides one example). These cultures

can also be fragile in the face of dominant cultures and subject to the homogenising effects of foreign commercial culture.

### Formal vs. informal activities

Another typology is to categorise activities according to their level of formality, creating a distinction between big-C culture (high art and 'formal' culture such as museums and the performing arts) on the one hand, and small-c culture (entertainment, film and TV, etc.) on the other. Equally a distinction can be seen between capital-D diplomacy (the formal activities of foreign relations and national interests) and small-d diplomacy (the cross-border interaction of independent actors). Again, the dividing lines between these categories are necessarily fuzzy; nevertheless this conceptual model can promote an understanding of the range of cultural relations activity.

### Formal versus informal activities



27. Coke Studio [www.cokestudio.com.pk/season5/](http://www.cokestudio.com.pk/season5/)

28. National Performance Network *Asian-American Artist Exchange* <https://nnpweb.org/whatwedo/project-profiles/cmf-profiles/artists-exchange>

29. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

30. China's Confucius Institutes have been promoting Chinese language and culture in foreign countries since 2004. They provide a platform for cultural exchanges between China and other countries, and often operate from within host countries' institutions. Source: [http://english.hanban.org/node\\_10971.htm](http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm)







### Inward versus outward facing activities

The traditional view of cultural relations is that it is concerned with displaying one nation's culture to another; in other words it is outwardly directed. Examples of this abound. For example, whenever an EU country takes over the presidency, there is a cultural programme to show that country's cultural wares to the rest of Europe. The notion of soft power implies that cultural relations are concerned with projection, making a statement about what a country stands for through its culture. As the academic Weihong Zhang says, commenting on

China's cultural future: 'Soft power as strategies meant using power softly in seeking normal economic and political advantages abroad. Soft power as outcomes meant the rise of China and its cultural renaissance'.<sup>31</sup>

However, cultural relations are increasingly being conceived, not as 'power', but as a space of mutual activity, where receiving the culture of others is as important as showing one's own culture to the rest of the world: 'a world in which listening is at least as important as talking, and relationships are deliberately geared to mutual benefit'.<sup>32</sup> The British Museum's recent series of

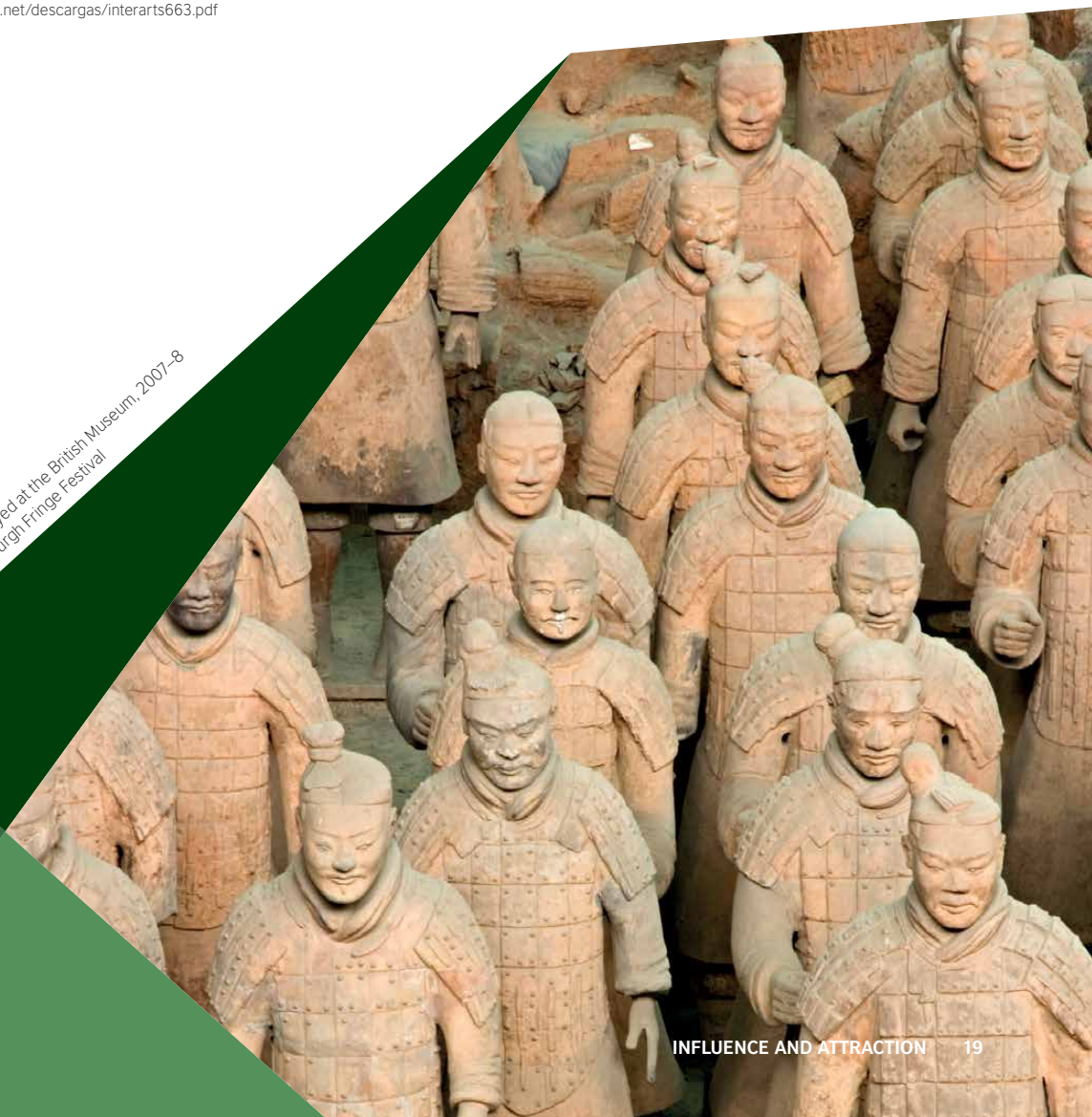
exhibitions that help explain Iran, Mexico, India and China to people in the UK provides a good example, but China has also been keen to welcome museum exhibits and performing artists from other countries.

A different way of looking at the outward/inward typology is to consider the difference in strategies between creating attractors (places where foreign visitors come to your country, such as the Bilbao Guggenheim, or the many examples of culture-based tourist attractions being built in the Gulf), and promoting cultural exports such as orchestral tours or the loan of museum objects.

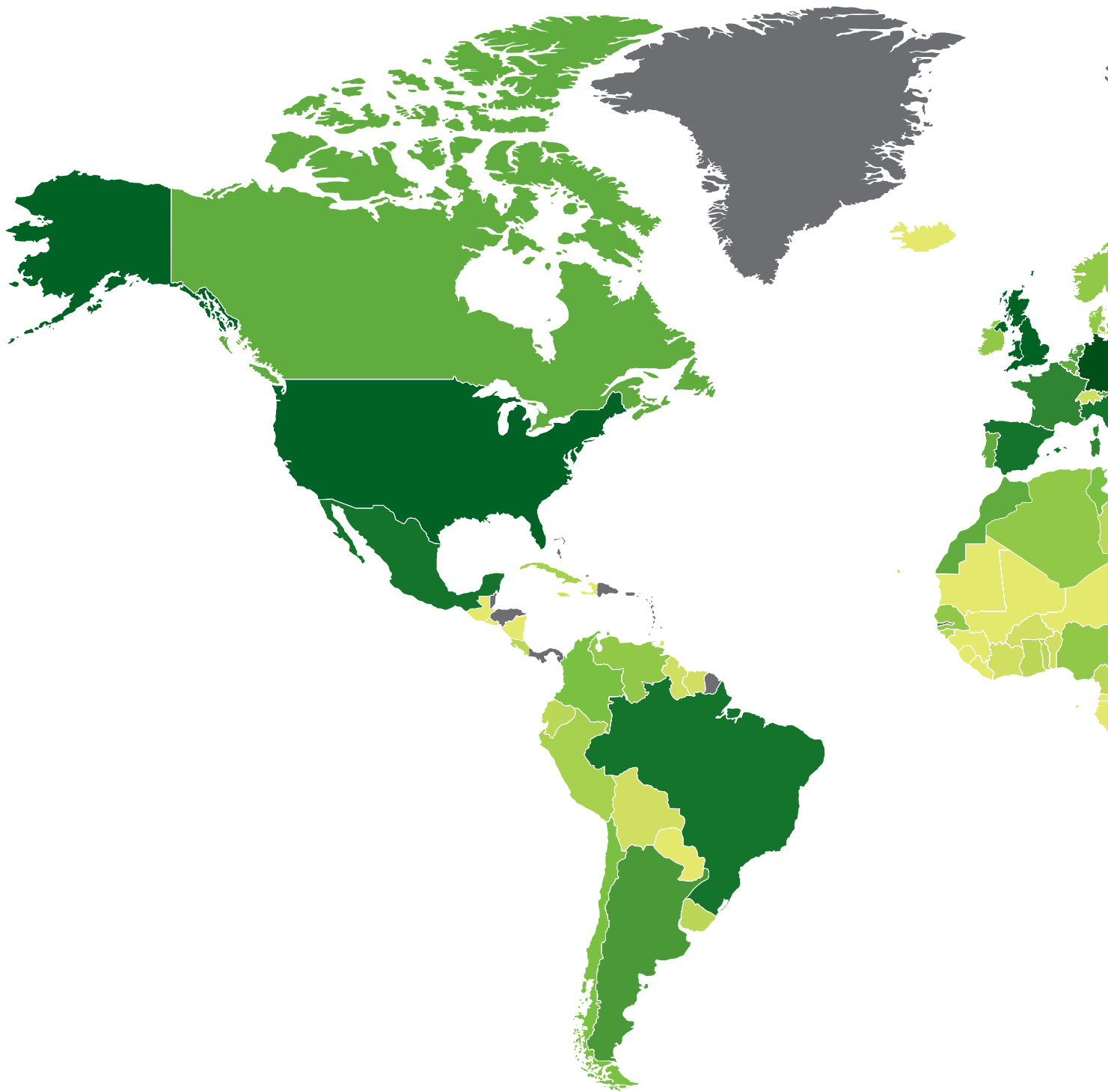
31. Zhang, W (2010) *Abstract: China's cultural future: from soft power to comprehensive national power* [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10286630903134300](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10286630903134300)

32. Aspden, P (2004) *Selling Democracy? The past and future of western cultural relations and public diplomacy* London: British Council [www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts663.pdf](http://www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts663.pdf)

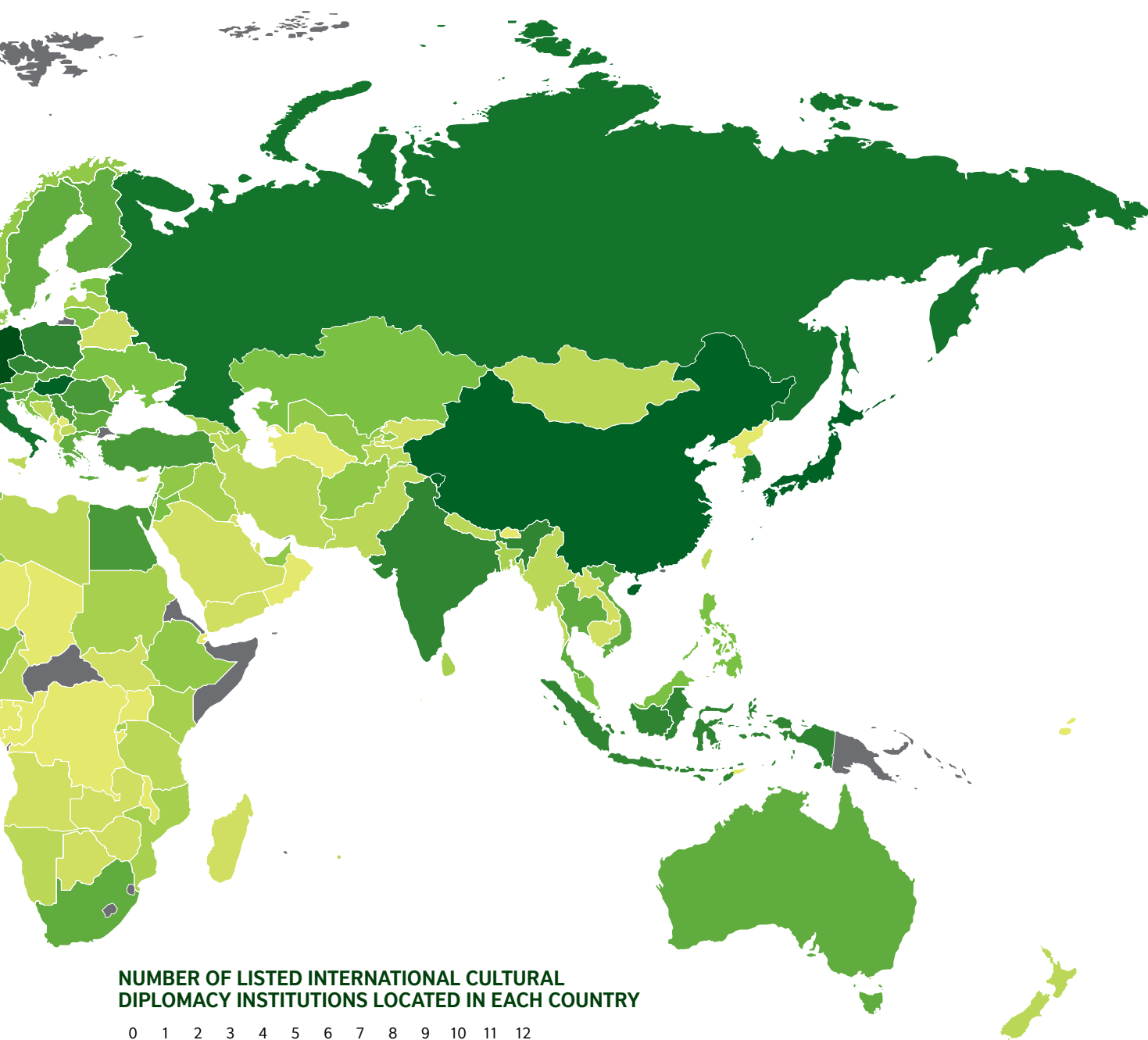
China's Terracotta Army, displayed at the British Museum, 2007-8  
On page opposite, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival



# WHERE ARE COUNTRIES FOCUSING THEIR CULTURAL RELATIONS ACTIVITY GLOBALLY?



See page 39 for sources.



**UK:** British Council  
**France:** Institut Français  
**Germany:** Goethe-Institut  
**Italy:** Italian Cultural Institute

**Spain:** Cervantes Institute  
**Portugal:** Camões Institute  
**South Korea:** Korean Cultural Centre  
**Japan:** Japan Foundation

**China:** Confucius Institute  
**India:** Indian Cultural Institute  
**Brazil:** Brazilian Cultural Institute  
**Russia:** Russkiy Mir Foundation

# GLOBAL TRENDS AND NEW APPROACHES

## TRADITIONAL MOTIVATIONS

The basic principles that underpin governmental approaches to cultural relations and to broader public diplomacy are clear. As the foreign policy specialist Mark Leonard wrote in 2002, the strategic aims are directed at:

- increasing familiarity – making people think about your country and updating their image of it
- increasing appreciation – creating positive perceptions of your country and getting others to see issues from your perspective
- engaging people – encouraging people to see your country as an attractive destination for tourism and study and encouraging them to buy its products and subscribe to its values
- influencing people's behaviour – getting companies to invest, encouraging public support for your country's positions and convincing politicians to turn to it as an ally.<sup>33</sup>

Those principles remain valid, but new understandings have emerged to supplement them.

## MUTUALITY

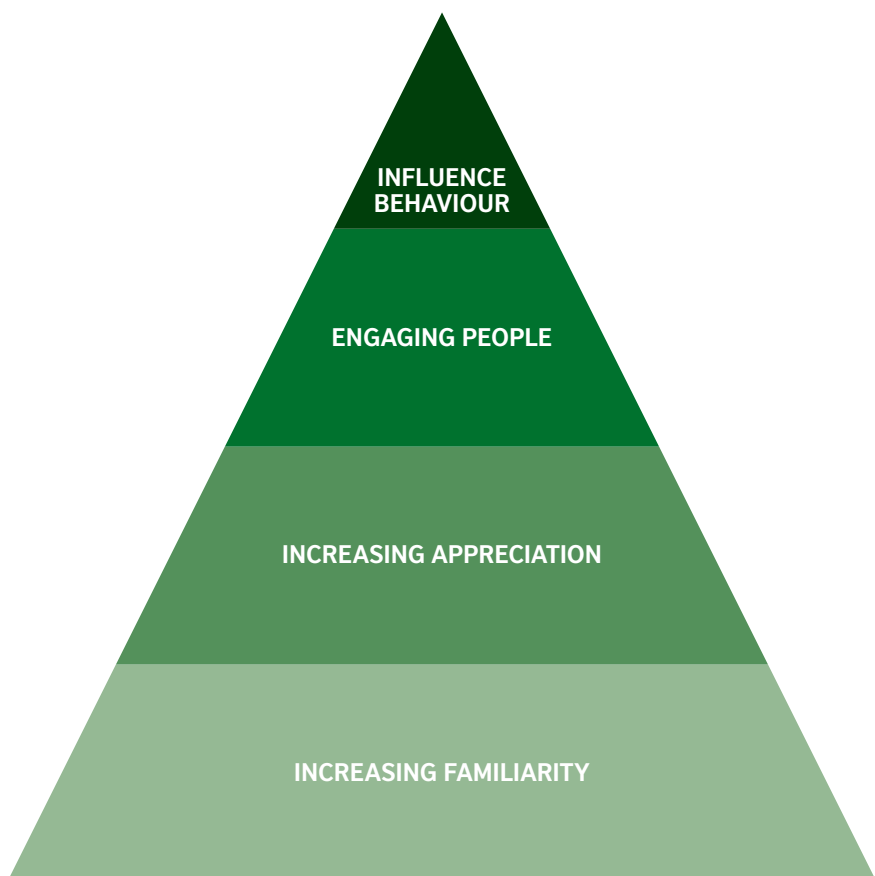
The first of these is that the traditional view of cultural relations being about countries showing their wares in acts of display has shifted to the realisation that cultural relations are increasingly a matter of mutuality. One now frequently cited definition of cultural diplomacy, coined by the American political scientist Milton C Cummings Jr, sees it as 'the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations

and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.'<sup>34</sup> In today's world, where everyone has the potential to connect globally, it is just as important, if not more important, that UK citizens learn about Iranian and Chinese culture as it is that the UK gives Iranian and Chinese citizens opportunities to interact with the culture of the UK. Collaboration, understanding, authenticity and learning are the new keywords in the field, adding to the established list of showing, sending, influencing and persuading.

## CULTURAL ACTORS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The second emerging new understanding about cultural relations is that cultural actors such as artists, theatre directors and film makers are at the forefront of change around the world. From the Tunisian hip-hop singer El General to the Burmese artist Htein Lin and the Egyptian novelist Alaa Al-Aswany, artists of one sort or another not only critique governments, but organise positive and constructive opposition. One reason that the demonstrations in Tahrir Square

### Hierarchy of engagement





during 2011 were relatively peaceful was because the space was animated and organised by theatre people, who knew how to organise discussion and create a space for peaceful dialogue. In the US and the UK, the Occupy protests of 2012 had a strong cultural element and the same is true to an even greater extent in the case of the Indignados movement in Spain, which continues to be animated by performances and learning workshops. The British Council's recent publication *Voices of the People*<sup>35</sup> explores this phenomenon in more detail.

This new understanding of the role of cultural actors in social change has led the American academic Cynthia Schneider to comment that: 'a new way of doing cultural diplomacy is to leverage local voices'.<sup>36</sup> Support for dissident voices translates into giving them a standing that they would not otherwise enjoy. The Franco-Cambodian film maker Rithy Panh puts it like this: 'For those of us who live and campaign in difficult countries, if you're selected for Cannes and get support from *Fonds Sud*, you can actually tackle difficult, complex subjects.'<sup>37</sup>

## THE ATTITUDES OF THE BRIC COUNTRIES AND BEYOND

The third new element is that there is a growing seriousness about cultural relations in Asia, the Middle East and among the BRIC countries. Taiwan, Brunei and Singapore have been hosting cultural conferences, Korea has been opening cultural centres around the world, many Gulf States are investing heavily in new cultural infrastructure, and Israel recently decided to spend

£400 million over the next five years on 'a major investment to promote Jewish and Israeli culture around the world as part of a strategic shift in its relationship with the Jewish diaspora.'<sup>38</sup> But the clearest examples of BRIC countries' interest in this field are Brazil hosting the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games and China's rapid expansion of Confucius institutes.

China is investing in culture more than any other nation<sup>39</sup>. As Joseph Nye noted: 'China's president, Hu Jintao, greeted 2012 with an important essay warning that China was being battered by Western culture: "We must clearly see that international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China, and ideological and cultural fields are the focal areas of their long-term infiltration," he wrote, adding that "the international culture of the West is strong while we are weak."<sup>40</sup>

## THE WEST IN RETREAT

In contrast to the BRIC nations' increasing efforts to gain cultural influence, many Western governments appear to be travelling in the opposite direction, reducing budgets, cutting back on foreign language broadcasting and making it difficult for foreign tourists and students to get visas. This is surprising, given the fact that, as the Ditchley Conference puts it 'cultural activity is a fundamental part of the human condition and an indispensable medium of dialogue and understanding with others, within or between countries.'<sup>41</sup>

Western governments have tended to view cultural relations as a cost and have even treated spending on culture itself

as 'an expendable luxury'.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the widespread use of the term 'soft power' can have the unfortunate consequence of demoting cultural relations. Shakespeare and the Beatles are certainly softer than tanks and aircraft, but the word 'soft' implies 'less effective' and 'less important.' That is not the reality, and is certainly not how cultural relations are seen in the East.

Another reason for reduced Western investment in cultural relations – apart from the obvious fact that Western economies are in trouble – is that it is difficult to measure the impact of government spending on cultural relations. Culture is inherently unpredictable and the effects of spending are uncertain and operate over the long term. This does not sit well with a Western paradigm in politics and business that focuses on quick results and the fulfilment of short-term targets.

But short-termism in cultural relations is short sighted. As we have seen, China does not agonise over the minutiae of cost-effectiveness, as it understands the importance of cultural influence. On top of that, the costs of promoting cultural relations are relatively modest: the annual budget for the US State Department's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs is almost the same as the cost of two days' military involvement in Afghanistan.<sup>43</sup> As the ancient Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu said: 'To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.'<sup>44</sup>

33. Bound, K, Briggs, R, Holden, J and Jones, S (2007) *Cultural Diplomacy* London: Demos [www.demos.co.uk/publications/culturaldiplomacy](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/culturaldiplomacy)

34. Cummings, MC (2003) *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey* Washington D.C.: Center for Arts and Culture

35. British Council (2012) *Voices of the People* [www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/documents/Voices-of-the-people-v9\\_0.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/documents/Voices-of-the-people-v9_0.pdf)

36. National University of Singapore (2012) *2012 Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy – Cultural Diplomacy for the 21st Century* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4Qgq92bF0E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4Qgq92bF0E)

37. France Diplo TV (2012) *What is Cultural Diplomacy?* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcCvwZtjNw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcCvwZtjNw)

38. Pfeffer, A (2012, 9 November) 'Israeli government to invest in promoting the country to the world' *The Jewish Chronicle* [www.thejc.com/news/israel-news/89996/israeli-government-invest-promoting-country-world](http://www.thejc.com/news/israel-news/89996/israeli-government-invest-promoting-country-world)

39. Jung HJ and Young NC (2009) 'China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects' *Asian Survey* 48:3 pp458-61

40. Nye, JS (2012, 17 January) 'Why China Is Weak on Soft Power' *The New York Times* [www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/opinion/why-china-is-weak-on-soft-power.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/opinion/why-china-is-weak-on-soft-power.html?_r=0)

41. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

42. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

43. The budget of the US' educational and cultural exchange programs was \$600m in 2011: Department of State, United States of America (2012) *Executive Budget Summary* [www.state.gov/documents/organization/183755.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/183755.pdf), p9. The cost of the Afghanistan campaign in the year ending September 2011 was \$7.8 billion a month, i.e. about \$260m a day, according to the US Defense Department's controller's office: Capaccio, T. (2012, 8 February) 'Pentagon Says Afghanistan War Costs Dip as Surge Troops Leave' *Bloomberg Businessweek* [www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-08/pentagon-says-afghanistan-war-costs-dip-as-surge-troops-leave.html](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-08/pentagon-says-afghanistan-war-costs-dip-as-surge-troops-leave.html)

44. Sun, T *The Art of War* Good Read [www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1771.Sun\\_Tzu](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1771.Sun_Tzu)

# WHO IS DOING WHAT?

## FINDING INFORMATION AND USING IT

Research in the area of cultural relations faces three major difficulties. The first concerns definitions, the second the gathering of information from individual nations and the third lies in making comparisons between them.

### Definitional issues

As has been noted, 'culture' itself is a slippery concept and neither 'cultural relations', nor 'cultural diplomacy', have fixed, agreed meanings either in common parlance or in more formal discourse.

### Information on individual nations

It is impossible to provide a completely reliable figure for the amounts that governments spend on international cultural activity. Uncovering direct expenditure on agencies such as the British Council or the Goethe-Institut is relatively straightforward, but beyond that it gets difficult. First, because the international component of grants to individual institutions cannot be

disentangled from their overall grant (which part of the Louvre's income should be treated as spent on cultural relations?), and second because there are hundreds of arts and cultural organisations that do at least some international work, aggregating them would be an impossible task.

Another challenge is where to place boundaries on the scope of the overall enquiry – should money spent on attracting international tourists be counted? If so, what methodology should be employed? For example, in the case of the UK, around 57 per cent of international tourists state culture and heritage as one reason for their visit, so should 57 per cent of the sum spent on tourism promotion be counted as supporting cultural relations? If so, each country would need a different percentage because the figure would be different for, say, the Netherlands or Japan.

### Making comparisons

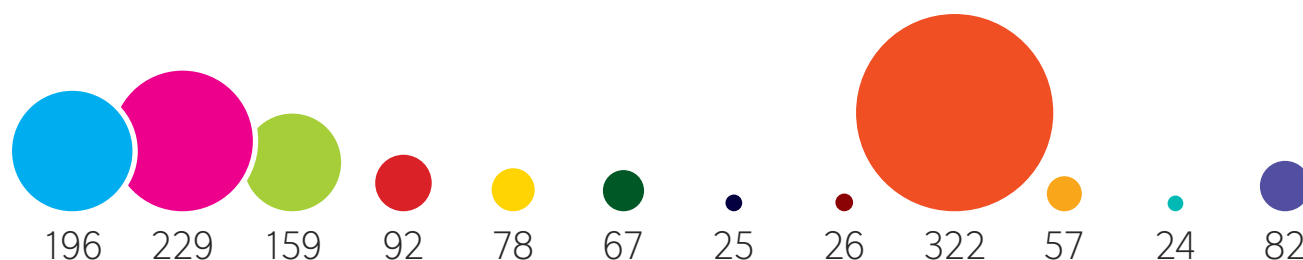
It is difficult to draw comparisons between different countries because they use

different statistical methods for collecting data, have different levels of disclosure and have different cultural structures. It is often more helpful to adopt a discursive and descriptive approach to comparisons rather than trying to draw conclusions from financial data, which can rarely be compared on a like-for-like basis.

However, data has been collected on office numbers and locations for 12 international cultural relations organisations globally. The map on pages 20 and 21 shows which countries around the world attract the largest number of these international cultural relations organisations. The charts below and on page 26 give a global overview and regional breakdown of the number of offices these 12 international cultural relations organisations have around the world. A country-level breakdown of international cultural relations organisations' offices can be seen in the appendix on pages 36–38 of this report.

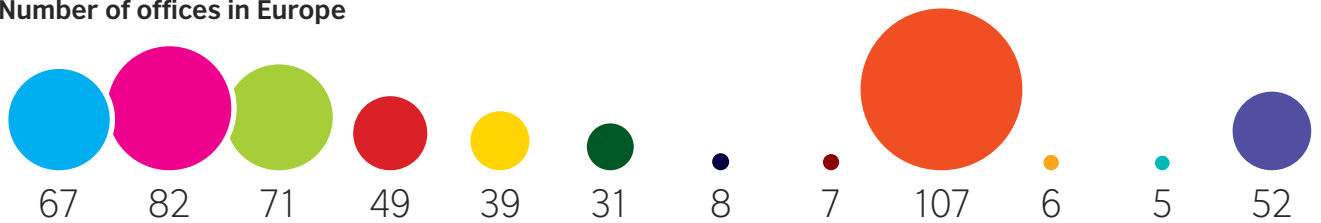
## Global breakdown of international cultural relations institutions

### Number of offices worldwide

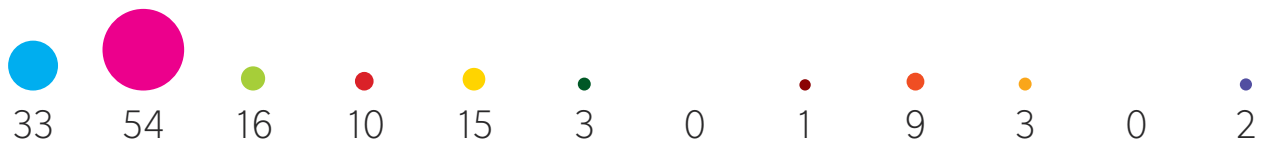


## Regional breakdown of international cultural relations institutions

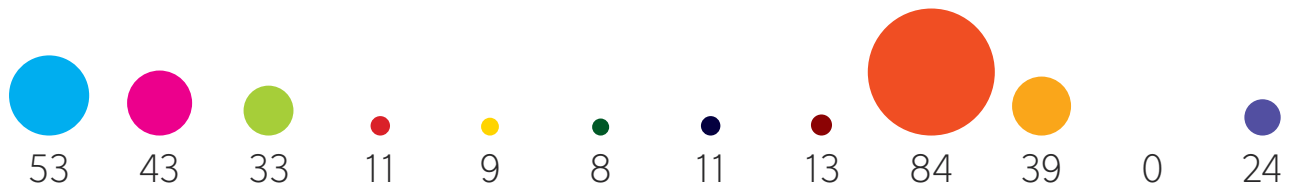
### Number of offices in Europe



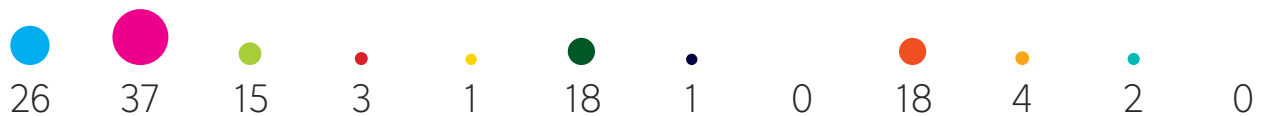
### Number of offices in the Middle East and North Africa



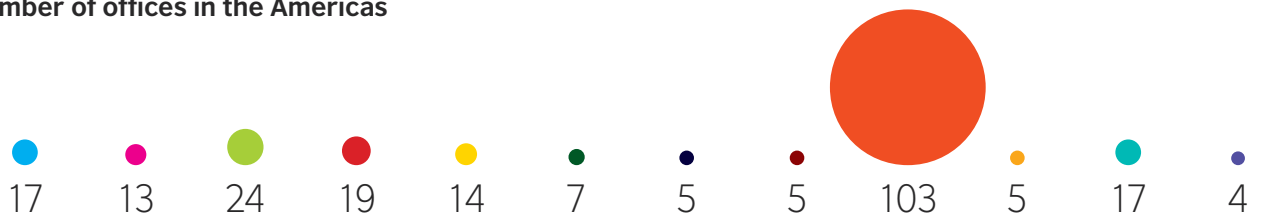
### Number of offices in Asia and Oceania



### Number of offices in Sub-Saharan Africa



### Number of offices in the Americas



#### KEY

● UK: British Council  
 ● France: Institut Français  
 ● Germany: Goethe-Institut  
 ● Italy: Italian Cultural Institute

● Spain: Cervantes Institute  
 ● Portugal: Camões Institute  
 ● South Korea: Korean Cultural Centre  
 ● Japan: Japan Foundation

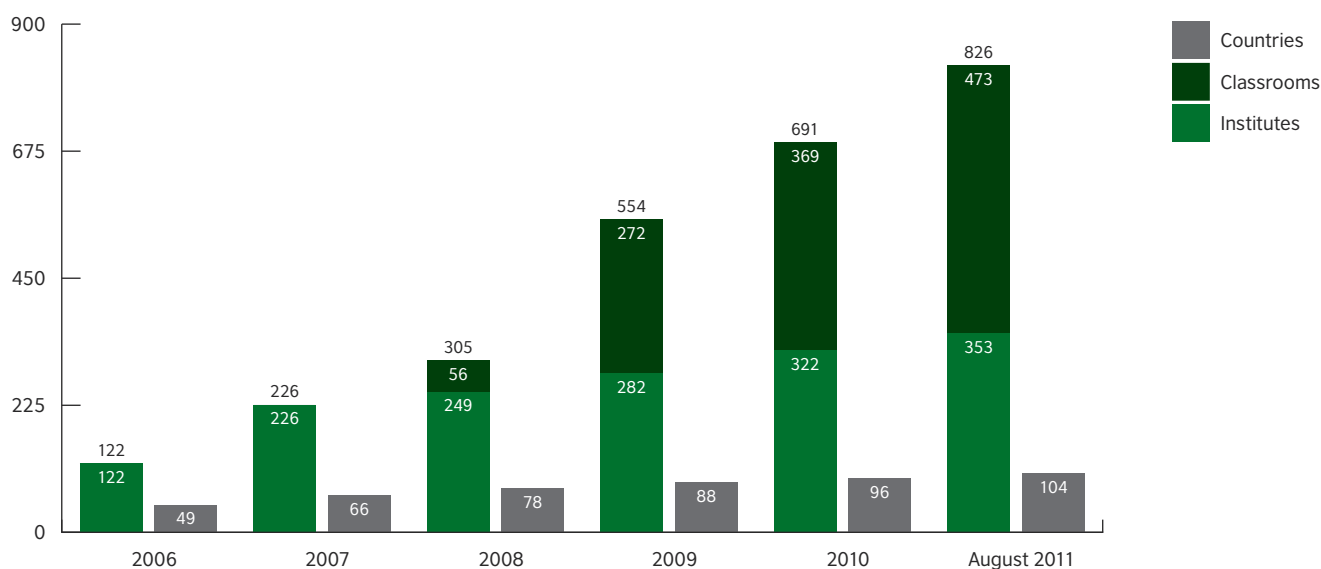
● China: Confucius Institute  
 ● India: Indian Cultural Institute  
 ● Brazil: Brazilian Cultural Institute  
 ● Russia: Russkiy Mir Foundation

See page 39 for sources.

## CULTURAL RELATIONS INSTITUTIONS

As the world's emerging economies have developed and grown more assertive over the past decade, they have looked to broaden their influence internationally. The most spectacular example of this trend is China's rapid roll out of Confucius Institutes across the world. The total number of Confucius Institutes and classrooms has grown from 122 in 2006, to 826 in August 2011.<sup>45</sup>

### Confucius Institute global presence 2006–11



Source: Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters) Annual Reports 2006–2010 to be found at [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2006\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2006_final.pdf), [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2007\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2007_final.pdf), [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2008\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2008_final.pdf), [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2009\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2009_final.pdf) and [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2010\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2010_final.pdf), and Confucius Institute Headquarters *About Us* [http://english.hanban.org/node\\_7716.htm](http://english.hanban.org/node_7716.htm)

While the offices of European agencies are in major cities, these Chinese-language teaching offices partner with local universities and schools and hence are more widely dispersed and arguably more deeply embedded. Confucius Institutes can now be found in the UK in 13 locations including the universities of Liverpool, Sheffield and Nottingham, where collectively there are 57 classrooms. The US hosts 72 institutes at universities such as Stanford and UCLA, with a further 215 classrooms spread across the country.<sup>46</sup>

China's efforts in this area are far from unique. Both South Korea and Taiwan have also made significant efforts to increase their international cultural activity over the past decade.

In 2007, Russia formed the Russkiy Mir Foundation to promote the Russian language and the country's literature, focusing particularly on former Soviet republics and other parts of the old Eastern Bloc. It now has 82 offices across the world. India is expanding its network of cultural centres, explicitly to 'promote India's "soft power" abroad',<sup>47</sup> while Brazil has a growing network of cultural centres, mainly in Latin America.

These initiatives have required considerable investment: the Chinese government's expenditure on 'major projects' associated with the Confucius Institutes rose from ¥350 million in 2006 to ¥1.23 billion in 2009.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, in the West, budgets have come under pressure as governments

deal with the continuing economic crisis. Whilst government funding for the British Council is reducing significantly, it is increasing income from services such as English language teaching.<sup>49</sup> Its government grant from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was £201 million in 2009–10, 28 per cent of total turnover, and is set to fall to £154 million in 2014–15, less than 20 per cent of turnover.<sup>50</sup> In Spain, the Cervantes Institute has had its government grant cut from €80 million to €50 million for 2013 and is closing three offices and axing 200 jobs.<sup>51</sup> However, Germany has continued to increase its support for the Goethe-Institut, with the government's contribution to the budget rising from €211 million in 2008–09 (66 per cent of total budget) to €232 million in 2011–12 (63 per cent of total budget).<sup>52</sup> Alongside



changes in budgets, European countries have been shifting their strategic focus by reducing their activities in other European countries and strengthening their presence in the Middle East and Asia.

## EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE AND STUDENT NUMBERS

Educational exchanges are generally acknowledged to be one of the most powerful and long-lasting influences on attitudes. The US strong commitment to welcoming overseas students correlates with the continued high standing of the US in surveys by the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index<sup>53</sup> and the Pew Global Attitudes survey.<sup>54</sup> At the Ditchley Conference, the US Fulbright scholarships<sup>55</sup> 'were identified as a particularly effective long-term campaign. Student and academic

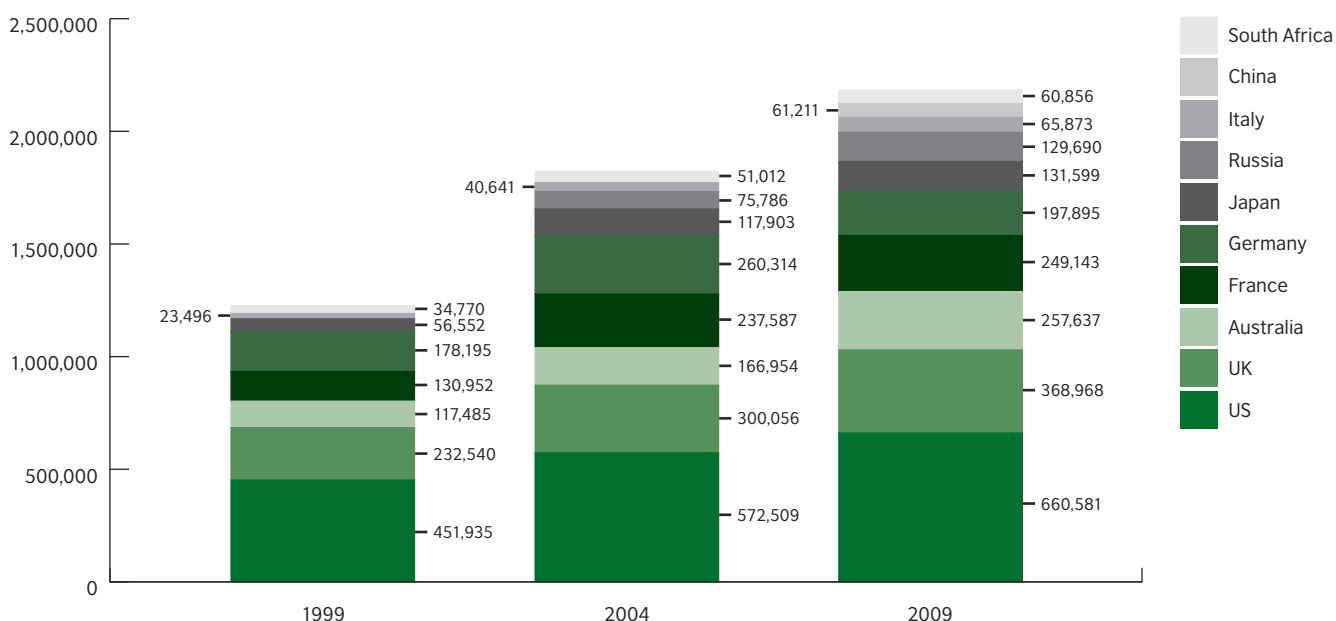
exchanges in general were seen as good investments from every point of view'.<sup>56</sup> The Brazilian government's Science Without Borders programme has set itself the goal of getting 100,000 Brazilian students qualified at universities in the US, UK, France, Germany and Italy by 2014.<sup>57</sup> More than 1,000 of these students have been placed at UK institutions in the current academic year.<sup>58</sup>

The Scottish government has recently extended its Saltire scholarships into a two-way scheme, offering grants to Scottish students to study abroad (targeted at China, India, Canada and the US) as well as funding overseas students to come and study in Scotland.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the UK Foreign Office cut its total funding on scholarships from £31.3 million in 2008–09 to £16.9 million in 2011–12 (although this has increased to

£19 million for the 2012–13 year). The Foreign Office's Chevening scholarship scheme, which allows foreign students to study in the UK, saw its budget cut from £22.9 million in 2008–09, when 977 students came to the UK, to £14.5 million in 2010–11, which paid for 598 students (this has since increased to £17 million and 712 students in 2012–13).<sup>60</sup> At its peak in 2002, the programme cost £32 million and brought 2,400 scholars to the UK.<sup>61</sup>

Worldwide, the numbers of students travelling abroad for higher education has risen sharply over the past decade. The UK and the US still enjoy leading positions, but over the decade 1999–2009 they have been adding to student numbers more slowly than many other countries.

### Total number of students from overseas, by host country, 1999–2009, ranked according to the top ten host countries in 2009



Source: Unesco Institute for Statistics

45. Confucius Institute Headquarters *About Us* [http://english.hanban.org/node\\_7716.htm](http://english.hanban.org/node_7716.htm)

46. Figures correct for December 2010: Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters) *Annual Report 2010* [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2010\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2010_final.pdf)

47. Indian Council for Cultural Relations *ICCR's Global Presence, Indian Cultural Centres Abroad* [www.iccrindia.net/foreigncentres.html](http://www.iccrindia.net/foreigncentres.html)

48. Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters) *Annual Report 2006* [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2006\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2006_final.pdf)

49. Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters) *Annual Report 2009* [www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2009\\_final.pdf](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/report/pdf/2009_final.pdf)

50. British Council (2012) *Corporate Plan 2012–2015* [www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/2012-15%20Corporate%20Plan.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/2012-15%20Corporate%20Plan.pdf)

51. British Council (2010) *Annual Report 2009–2010* [www.britishcouncil.org/new/Global/BC%20Annual%20Report%202009-10\\_reupload.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/Global/BC%20Annual%20Report%202009-10_reupload.pdf)

52. El País (2012, 11 October) *El Instituto Cervantes prepara un nuevo curso con un 37% menos de presupuesto*

[http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/10/11/actualidad/1349958069\\_285119.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/10/11/actualidad/1349958069_285119.html)

53. Information supplied by Goethe-Institut.

54. GfK Custom Research North America *The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index* [www.gfkamerica.com/practice\\_areas/roper\\_pam/placebranding/nbi/index.en.html](http://www.gfkamerica.com/practice_areas/roper_pam/placebranding/nbi/index.en.html)

55. [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org)

56. United States Department of State: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs *The Fulbright Program* <http://fulbright.state.gov>

57. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

58. Science Without Borders *FAQ* [www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/faq](http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/faq)

59. Science Without Borders *Good tidings we bring: Science without Borders UK celebrates successful first term* <http://sciencewithoutborders.international.ac.uk/about/news.aspx>

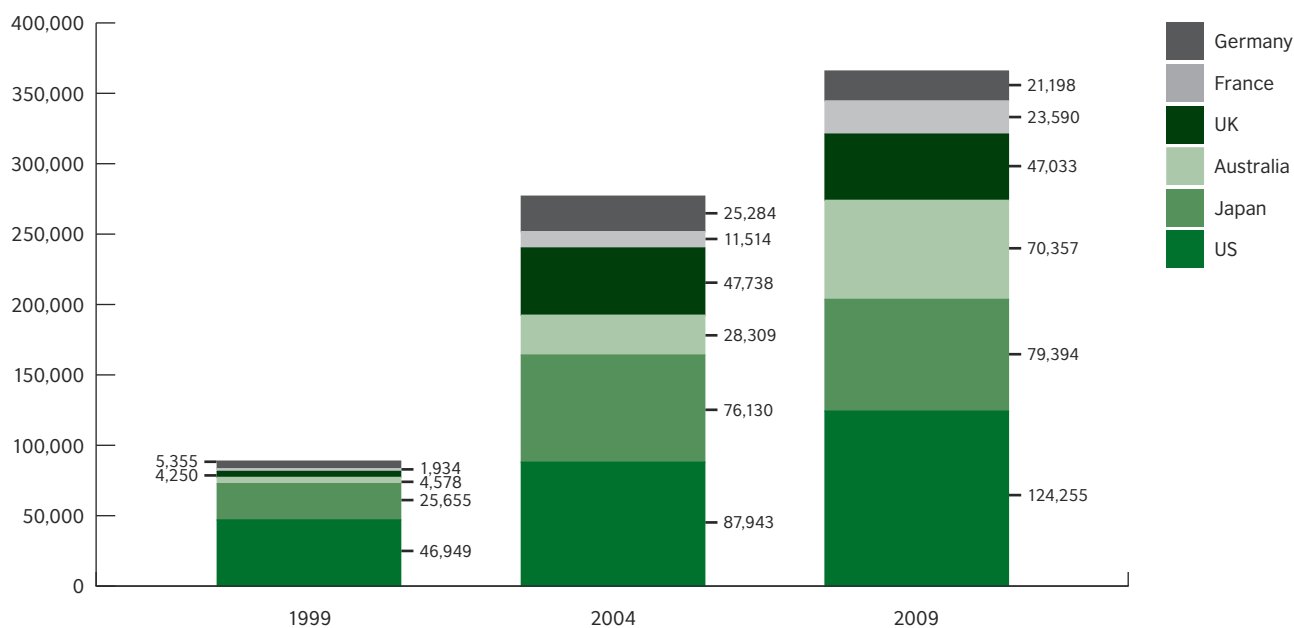
60. TalentScotland *Saltire Scholarships* [www.talentscotland.com/Students/Study/Scholarships/Saltire-Scholarships.aspx](http://www.talentscotland.com/Students/Study/Scholarships/Saltire-Scholarships.aspx)

61. Information supplied by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

62. [www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/scholarships/chevening/facts-figures](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/scholarships/chevening/facts-figures)

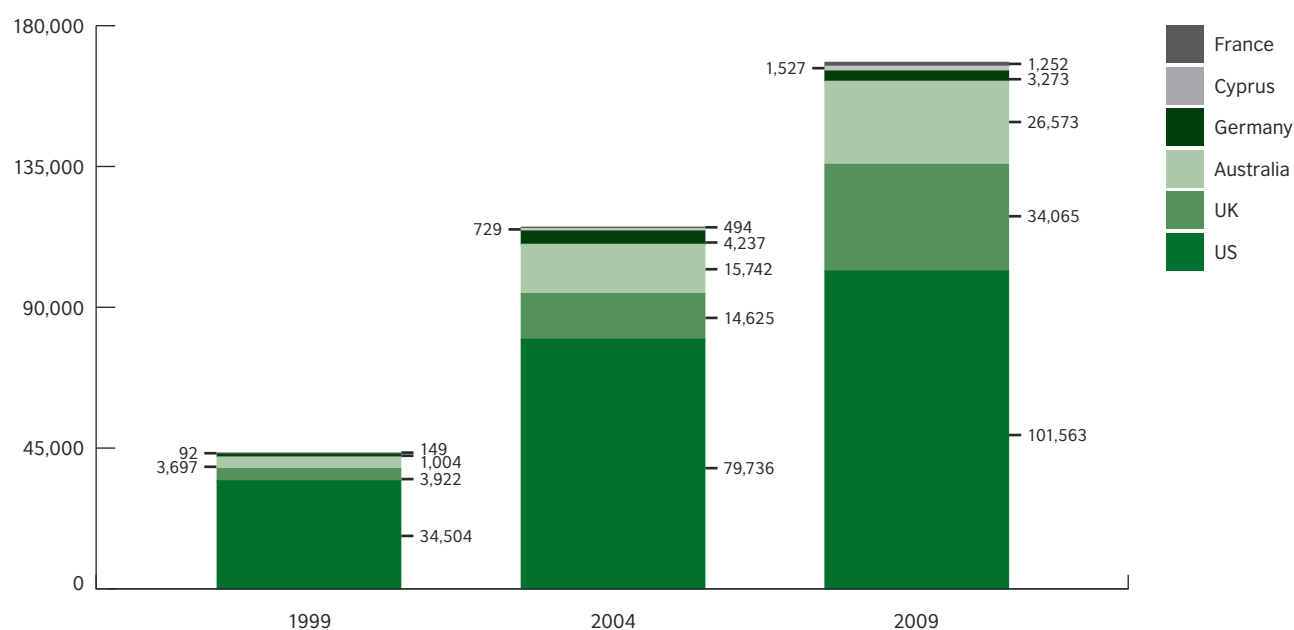
Chinese and Indian overseas students show markedly different patterns, with the Chinese looking to Japan and Australia in significant numbers, and the Indians proportionately more to the UK.

**Total number of Chinese overseas students, by host country, 1999–2009, ranked according to the top six host countries in 2009**



Source: Unesco Institute for Statistics

**Total number of Indian overseas students, by host country, 1999–2009, ranked according to the top six host countries in 2009**



Source: Unesco Institute for Statistics

## BROADCASTING

Broadcasting has been part of the way that states attempt to project influence for many decades; the BBC World Service dates back to 1932, Voice of Russia to three years before that. Until recently, radio was the dominant medium, but the development of cable and satellite television, offering far greater capacity and better opportunities for cross-border transmission, has changed the picture. State-sponsored international television channels have proliferated over the past decade. Qatar's Al Jazeera has become the biggest news brand of the Arab world and has spawned an English-language channel, while China, Russia and Iran have all developed foreign language television services offering foreigners, not least Westerners, an alternative take on the world. China's typically ambitious drive to expand state media has reportedly cost £4 billion.<sup>62</sup> The internet has also provided a new platform to reach foreign audiences.

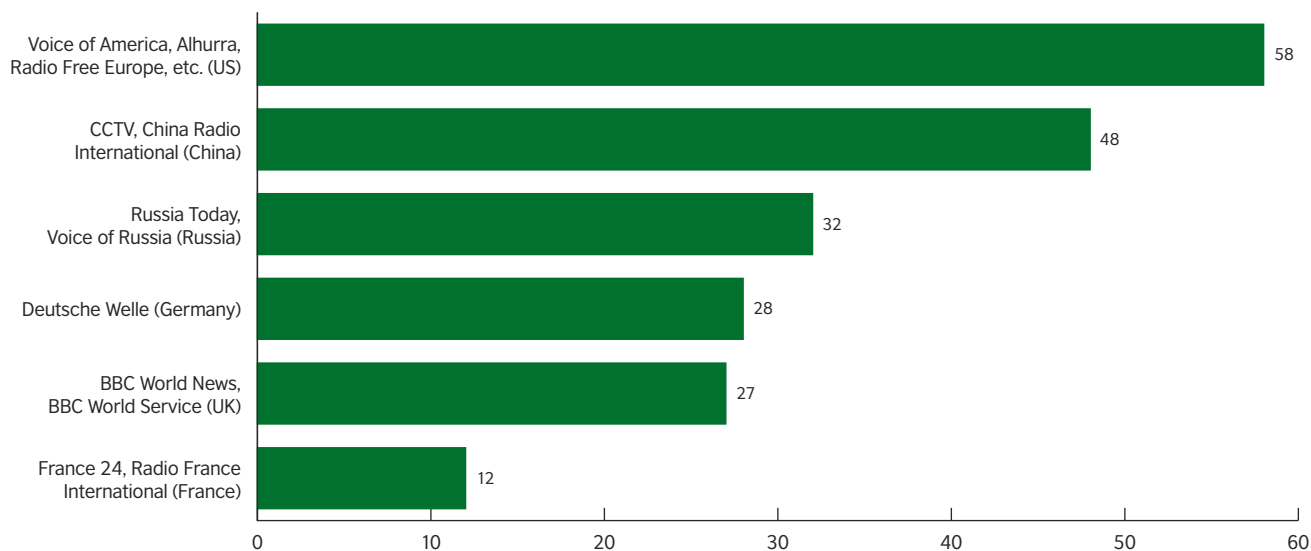
Amid this escalation of broadcasting activity by emerging powers eager to speak from a global platform, long-established players have reprioritised. The BBC World Service cut ten language services to fund the creation of the BBC Arabic and BBC Persian television channels in 2008 and 2009. It then faced an effective budget cut of 16 per cent under the 2010 government spending review, which caused it to shed another five services. It no longer has any foreign language services targeting EU Europe, nor the Balkans.<sup>63</sup> Its government grant peaked at £268 million in 2009–10, and has been falling each year since then.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless the BBC remains the world's largest international broadcaster by reach, with 180 million people using the World Service each week in 2011–12 and a total of 239 million tuning in if the commercially funded BBC World News channel is included.<sup>65</sup> The US suite of state-backed international radio and television services, such as Voice of

America and the Alhurra Arabic TV service, drew 187 million viewers or listeners in 2011 at a cost of almost US\$750 million.<sup>66</sup>

A great game of the airwaves is now playing out across some of the most politically contested parts of the world. In the Middle East, Al Jazeera may have blazed a trail on the 'Arab street', but that hasn't stopped other Arab countries from launching services, such as Saudi Arabia's Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia, a joint venture between BSkyB and Abu Dhabi Media Investment Corporation, owned by Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of the Abu Dhabi Emirate ruling family. Among the international broadcasters, BBC Arabic and Alhurra are joined by Arabic-language channels from France 24, Deutsche Welle, Russia Today and China's CCTV.

Assessing the extent to which all this broadcasting activity is being consumed is difficult. There is no internationally standardised measuring system

### Number of foreign language services broadcast by state-backed international broadcasters



Source: US Broadcasting Board of Governors – [www.bbg.gov/about-the-agency/history/faqs/#q9](http://www.bbg.gov/about-the-agency/history/faqs/#q9); China Radio International – <http://english.cri.cn/11114/2012/09/21/1261s723419.htm>, (see link on right hand side); 'Choose A Language' Voice of Russia – <http://english.ruvr.ru>, (see link at top of page); 'Choose language' Deutsche Welle – [www.dw.de](http://www.dw.de), (see link on right hand side); 'dw.de in 30 languages' BBC World Service – [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/languages/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/languages/index.shtml); Radio France International – [www.english.rfi.fr](http://www.english.rfi.fr)

Note: We are counting only **foreign** languages. So Chinese, Tibetan languages and Uighur do not count as foreign for China. The China total also includes Esperanto. Voice of Russia counts English twice (because there is a separate service focused on India); we have counted it only once. Deutsche Welle counts Brazilian and African Portuguese as different languages; we have counted Portuguese only once.

62. Branigan, T (2011, 8 December) 'Chinese state TV unveils global expansion plan' *The Guardian* [www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/08/china-state-television-global-expansion](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/08/china-state-television-global-expansion)

63. BBC Press Office (2011, 26 January) *BBC World Service cuts language services and radio broadcasts to meet tough Spending Review settlement* [www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2011/01\\_january/26/worldservice.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2011/01_january/26/worldservice.shtml)

64. BBC World Service Annual Review (2009/10) [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/pdf/bbc\\_world\\_service\\_annual\\_review\\_0910.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/pdf/bbc_world_service_annual_review_0910.pdf), BBC World Service Annual Review (2011/12) [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/annual\\_review/bbc\\_world\\_service\\_annual\\_review\\_2011\\_12.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/annual_review/bbc_world_service_annual_review_2011_12.pdf)

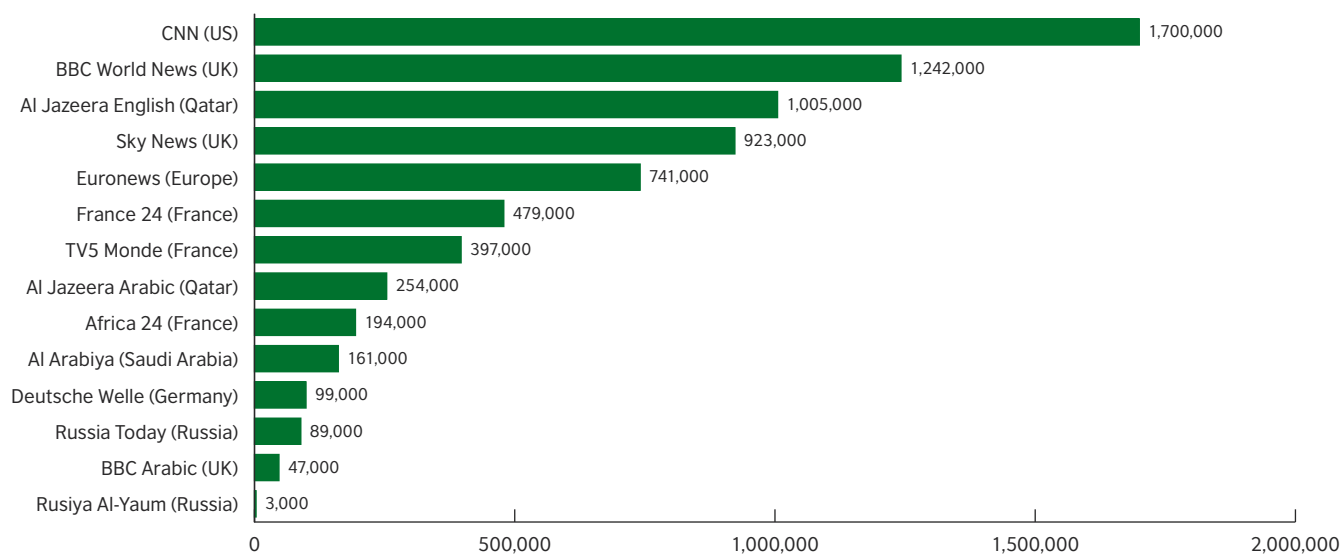
65. Horrocks, P (2012, 27 June) 'New audience figures for BBC Global News' *BBC News* [www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2012/06/new\\_audience\\_figures\\_for\\_bbc\\_g.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2012/06/new_audience_figures_for_bbc_g.html)

66. Broadcasting Board of Governors (2011) *Annual Report: U.S. International Broadcasting, Impact through Innovation and Integration* [www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2012/04/BBGAnnualReport\\_LoRes\\_Part1.pdf](http://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2012/04/BBGAnnualReport_LoRes_Part1.pdf), p.6



for international broadcasters, so broadcasters' own estimates have to be relied upon. One snapshot of audience reach is provided by the Ipsos EMS survey (see below), which records how many of the 'most affluent consumers and top business decision makers' are aware of or actively consume different TV services in their region.

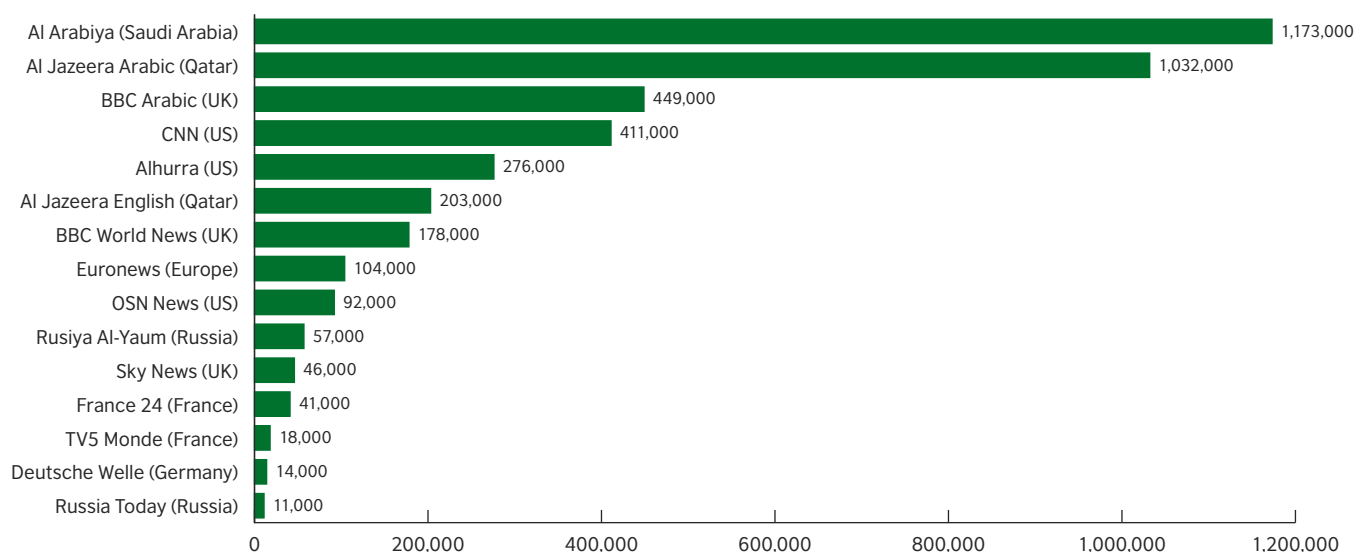
#### Estimated weekly reach of a selection of international broadcasters among top 15 per cent of population in Africa



Source: EMS Africa 2012, Ipsos. Published July 2012

Survey of 2,473 people in the main metropolitan cities of Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, representing potential audience of 3.3 million. Weekly reach is calculated on a probability basis.

#### Estimated weekly reach of a selection of international broadcasters among top 13 per cent of population in Middle East



Source: EMS Middle East 2012, Ipsos. Published June 2012

Survey of 3,002 people in the main metropolitan cities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, representing potential audience of 1.9 million. Weekly reach is calculated on a probability basis.

# MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Traditionally, the cultural relations activities supported by governments have been self-interested. This is neither surprising nor objectionable. We have seen that the most effective way for governments to act in relation to culture is to be hands-off. Yet, in losing control, they gain direct and indirect advantages that serve the national interest.

The Demos pamphlet *Cultural Diplomacy* cited many examples of cultural relations helping diplomatic efforts, whether by providing a forum for unofficial political relationship building, keeping doors open in difficult times or helping to renegotiate political relationships in changing times. It also acknowledged that cultural conflicts and misunderstandings could undermine political efforts. The pursuit of the direct positive effects and the avoidance of the negative effects provide a rationale for supporting cultural relations, but indirect benefits gained from cultural relations are equally important.

## CULTURE AND COMMERCE

Cultural relations has an impact on a wide range of activities, particularly tourism and trade. Maintaining and increasing levels of trust is vital for the UK's long-term future; 'when people of different countries trust each other more, they trade and invest in each other more'.<sup>67</sup> There is evidence that participation in one or more cultural relations activities with the UK is associated with an increase in the average level of trust in people in the UK, of between seven and 26 percentage points in ten countries surveyed.<sup>68</sup>

At present, UK exports to the BRIC countries are abysmally low. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer has noted,

we export more to the Republic of Ireland than we do to China (in 2011, the UK exported goods worth €9.8 billion to China, and goods worth €19.9 billion to Ireland) so we need to build trusting relationships on which trading relationships can flourish.<sup>69</sup> The Swedish Institute, using a methodology developed by Copenhagen Economics, are currently seeking to establish an economic value for trust between countries and resulting increased foreign direct investment, exports and imports. Their work indicates that countries with higher degrees of trust between them invest and trade with each other more in both directions.

UK citizens, both at home and abroad, need to be globally aware, skilled in languages, comfortable with difference and culturally confident. As the Ditchley Conference noted: 'closed, exclusive societies [are] particularly unlikely to be the most successful in the future. Reaching out to and including other cultures and encouraging collaboration [is] a very effective way of making the necessary connections'.<sup>70</sup> We might think of South and North Korea as a controlled experiment in open and closed cultural relations.

The UK also needs to stay ahead in 'the commerce of culture'. Being at the forefront of all types of cultural expertise,

from conservation to digital art, is vital for a country that relies on the creative industries for six per cent of its GDP; cultural relations are an important part of maintaining that position.

## CULTURE AND GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Trust is also important at a time when the problems we face are global in nature, and where multilateral solutions are the only answer. Issues ranging from climate change to viral epidemics can only be solved through international agreements, and those are only effective when based on trust. Again this is a two-way street, trust is reciprocal and we need to learn about other cultures in order to build our trust in them. As the retired diplomat Lord Wilson of Tillyorn noted in *The Power of Culture to Change Lives*: 'Culture can and should play a role in bringing people together, even those with very different world views... it can help to solve intractable social and economic problems; to raise understanding between people and nations; and to encourage solutions to some of the major international challenges we all face'.<sup>71</sup> The British Museum's loan of the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Museum of Iran in 2010, and its return in 2011, provides a good example of building trust through culture.<sup>72</sup>

67. Knack, S and Keefer, P (1997) 'Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation' *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112:4 pp.1251–1288, Dekker, P, Ederveen, S, de Groot, H, Van der Horst, A, Lejour, A, Straathof, B, Vinken, H and Wennekers, C (2007) 'Diverse Europe – Public opinion on the European Union & cultural diversity, economics and policy' *European Outlook* 4. The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis and the Social and Cultural Planning Office

68. British Council (2012) *Trust Pays* [www.britishcouncil.org/trustresearch2012.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/trustresearch2012.pdf)

69. European Commission: eurostat Your key to European statistics *International Trade detailed data, EU27 trade since 1988 by CN8* [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database)

70. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

71. British Council (2012) *The Power of Culture to Change Lives* [www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Power%20of%20Culture.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Power%20of%20Culture.pdf)

72. The British Museum *Cyrus Cylinder* [www.britishmuseum.org/about\\_us/news\\_and\\_press/statements/cyrus\\_cylinder.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/statements/cyrus_cylinder.aspx)

The long-established European cultural agencies and institutions have developed relationships of trust over the course of their existence, and one of their most useful roles is in bringing people together through the creation and facilitation of new networks.

Culture additionally provides an international arena where the economically and politically weak can have an equal status – where Bob Dylan and Bob Marley could meet in a way that the US and Jamaica could not. This provides opportunities to ‘bring out hidden voices’<sup>73</sup> and challenge conventional wisdom.

### THE CULTURAL EFFECTS OF EXCHANGE

One of the most important aspects of cultural exchange – yet one that, curiously, is often overlooked – is the way that culture itself develops through exchange. Culture is a ‘good’ in its own right, regardless of its political or economic effects, and develops through dialogue, either with past or contemporary practice. Artistic and technical experiments are spurred on by contact with ‘the other’, as any student of Cubism or the Silk Road knows.

Culture itself mutates through exchange, but cultural exchange also provokes new modes of thinking, doing, learning

and sharing; in short, cultural exchange helps us to innovate. As transnational and global problems proliferate, so we need more innovation to meet the challenges. Seeing problems through other cultures and asking questions prompted by different cultural practices and perspectives will help provide answers. International cultural relations create the right conditions for innovation to flourish. It is well established that multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary teams are more creative and innovative.<sup>74</sup> Creativity happens where difference meets and contact between cultures is characterised by flux, stimulation, plurality and diversity.



Namdaemun Gate, Seoul, 2005



# A NEW RATIONALE FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

It is a truism that culture both reflects and shapes society and has always done so, but we live at a time when the ability of ordinary citizens both to make culture and to communicate it to others is undergoing a revolutionary change.

In spite of the fact that government-sponsored activities now play a relatively small role in international cultural relations, compared to what is going on in commercial and 'homemade' culture, governments nevertheless have a powerful role to play. Through tax regimes, international trade agreements, education policies, visa arrangements and censorship they set the terms for much of what happens in commercial culture and homemade culture; they can promote or limit cultural activity.

But why should governments act at all? What is the rationale for them to play a role, given their relative powerlessness and the perception that the more governments are seen to be involved in culture, the less authentic and credible it becomes? As we have seen, there is an intrinsic value to culture as a means of expression, communication and exchange; but cultural activity has effects as well as affects, and both should be of interest to governments.

A mix of short- and medium-term utilitarian factors, together with longer-term, broader propositions, provide justification for why cultural relations should be supported by government:

## Utilitarian factors

- Understanding reduces conflict. Castigo Langa, the former Minister for Energy in Mozambique, has put this very clearly: 'The basic thing is that countries should know each other, because sometimes there's suspicion because people don't know each other'.<sup>75</sup> The subject is examined in detail in the Japanese academic publication *Fostering Peace through Cultural Initiatives*.<sup>76</sup>
- Culture is a major driver of tourism, which creates jobs and income.
- The creative industries have a cultural component and are increasingly important economically.
- Cultural relations, including educational exchanges and language teaching, promote trust, which in turn promotes trade.
- Employers need culturally literate employees, able to work with international partners and colleagues.
- Employers need employees with better skills, including languages.

## Broader factors

- Cultural exchange helps culture itself to innovate and develop.
- It helps reduce 'hostility deriving from difference'.<sup>77</sup>
- Cultural co-operation supports social and economic development and political change.
- It creates open, dynamic societies.
- Cultural exchange encourages wider innovation, learning and enquiry.

The best way for governments to act is as facilitators, creating the conditions for cultural exchange to flourish. Artists must be completely independent, arts organisations and institutions must also operate at arm's length, autonomously and free from political control. The UK has a good model in the national museums, which are funded by a grant directly voted by Parliament, and only then administered by a government department.

73. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

74. Capozzi, MM, Dye, R and Howe, A (2011) 'Sparking creativity in teams: An executive's guide' *McKinsey Quarterly* [www.mckinseyquarterly.com/Sparking\\_creativity\\_in\\_teams\\_An\\_executives\\_guide\\_2786](http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/Sparking_creativity_in_teams_An_executives_guide_2786)

75. Bader TV (2009) *Cultural Diplomacy* <http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-309837>

76. Fukushima, A (2010) *Culture, Conflict and Peace: Fostering Peace through Cultural Initiatives* Tokyo: AoyamaGaku

77. Ditchley Foundation (2012) *Cultural Diplomacy: does it work?* [www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy](http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2012/cultural-diplomacy)

# CONCLUSION: WHERE NEXT?

A new era of international cultural relations is dawning, where in the West, the old model of cultural display is giving way to a more nuanced understanding of culture as an arena of exchange and mutual learning. As the rationale shifts, and the technological capabilities change, we can expect to see innovation in cultural relations.

## THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS WILL CHANGE

The inexorable rise in peer-to-peer cultural contact, the ever increasing economic importance of commercial culture and the realisation that governments gain a 'licence to operate' in the international arena partly through their nation's cultural credibility and cultural credentials, will combine to force cultural relations up the political agenda. There is likely to be more investment in attempting to measure the benefits of getting cultural relations right – however long-term and diffuse those benefits may be – and the costs of getting them wrong.

As the BRIC countries play a larger role in the world, their cultural influence will increase and their governments will pay great attention to it, because, as the Chinese writer Shan Sa says: 'Culture is not only a form of entertainment, it is an economic asset, and a political asset.'<sup>78</sup> In the West, cultural breadth and depth will provide one way of compensating for waning military, commercial and political influence. Other countries will innovate to exploit particular cultural niches. For example, in Thailand: 'The Government will promote the opening of more Thai restaurants overseas and the developing of Thailand into the "Kitchen of the World".'<sup>79</sup> In Taiwan: 'President Ma Ying-jeou has ordered his envoys to start talking the language of food by launching a £20 million 'gastro-diplomacy campaign' in the UK and elsewhere.'<sup>80</sup>

When governments become more aware of the importance of cultural relations and begin to treat them more seriously, they will want to clarify the rationale for their role, to understand what works and what doesn't and to make their cultural relations efforts more effective and efficient.

### Governments need to:

- create the conditions for cultural exchange to flourish: by allowing freedom of expression and enabling artists and tourists to travel and visit – because deep peer-to-peer cultural exchange at an individual level is more likely to generate trust
- work with commercial and third sector initiatives in the cultural relations arena, because heterogeneity encourages innovation and decreases reliance on public funding
- encourage traditional and digital networking and adopt a mix of approaches that bring people together physically for meetings, performances and exhibitions, together with digital strategies that make full use of modern communications technologies – because this strategy is cost-effective and responds to growing technological sophistication
- pay as much attention to inward facing cultural relations (i.e. receiving and learning about other cultures) as they do to externally facing relations (promoting their own culture to others) because that will help

produce a culturally literate and globally aware population

- support cultural exchange through independent, autonomous agencies, – because direct government involvement invites suspicion and, ultimately, hostility
- think longer-term: move from short-term transactional and instrumental thinking to long-term relationship building – because ultimately that is a more effective approach.

## THE ROLE OF NGOS AND THE THIRD SECTOR WILL INCREASE

Over the next decade there will be ever-increasing peer-to-peer cultural contact but, in addition, we will see more non-governmental initiatives. Third sector organisations have always had a small role in promoting particular cultures – for example the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in London has been promoting Portuguese culture in the UK for 50 years, through publications and events. They do so 'to help improve people's perceptions of each other by providing opportunities for interaction through culture and between cultures.'<sup>81</sup>

As the number and size of diasporic communities increase around the world, there will be more examples of this type, such as Brazilality in London, 'a non-profit organization that promotes Brazilian artists and international artists inspired by Brazil, creating a 360 degree view of the influence of contemporary Brazilian art and culture worldwide.'<sup>82</sup>

## NEW CULTURAL NETWORKS WILL FORM AT DIFFERENT LAYERS OF GOVERNMENT

Different levels of government will develop their own specialist forms of cultural exchange. Town twinning will revive. A network of mayors of global cities has existed since 2005, and in 2012 London hosted the first World Cities Culture Summit. A report was published to coincide with the summit that 'collected an unprecedented amount of data on the scope and impact of the cultural assets and activities that are produced and consumed in 12 major cities: Berlin, Istanbul, Johannesburg, London, Mumbai, New York, Paris, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney and Tokyo. Using 60 indicators and reports from each of the participating cities, the report shows that culture is seen as being as important as finance and trade and sits at the heart of public policy.'<sup>83</sup>

Things are changing at supranational level too, with the European Commission developing an interest in its own cultural representation and seeking a better understanding of what individual EU members are doing: 'Enhancing the role of culture in the external relations of the EU represents one of the three pillars of the European Agenda for Culture issued in 2007.'<sup>84</sup>

## PEER-TO-PEER CULTURAL CONTACT WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE

There is every reason to suppose that innovation in internet and mobile technology will continue and that an ever greater proportion of the global population will have access to those technologies. The result will be more 'pop-up' cultural phenomena with both positive and negative consequences. The positive consequences will include unheard voices being able to reach a wide audience, artists finding a paying audience to support their work and authority being held to account; the negatives might be more riots against cartoons and films, and the dominance of over-mighty cultural corporations stifling local cultures. Peer-to-peer contact between members of diasporic communities and people in their countries of origin will offer rich opportunities for cultural development.

## INDIVIDUALS WILL PLAY A GREATER ROLE

In 1996, a former British diplomat, Sir Peter Wakefield, led a group that set up Asia House, a non-profit, non-political Pan-Asian organisation in the UK. More private initiatives will spring up in the field of cultural relations. Some of them will be started by philanthropists, such

as East-West: The Art of Dialogue, a cultural exchange programme funded by the Egyptian industrialist and art collector Shafik Gabr. Others will emerge from the street. The concept of citizen diplomacy, 'one handshake at a time', has existed since the 1950s, but has taken on a new sophistication, exemplified by the American student Brendan Hamilton, who made a feature film about Iran (*Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*).<sup>85</sup> In the 21st century, everyone is a potential citizen diplomat.<sup>86</sup>

International cultural relations are entering a new age of seriousness, not only because BRIC countries and other emergent economies have realised their importance, but also because cultural understanding is a precondition to solving pressing global problems. Cultural relations are also entering a new age of democratisation, where individuals can enrich their lives and their understanding of the world through direct cultural contact. In this fast-developing field, governments cannot and should not seek to control culture or cultural contact. But they can nonetheless play a constructive role, and serve the best interests of their citizens, by developing their understanding of the facts on the ground and facilitating the cultural work of other actors in civil society.

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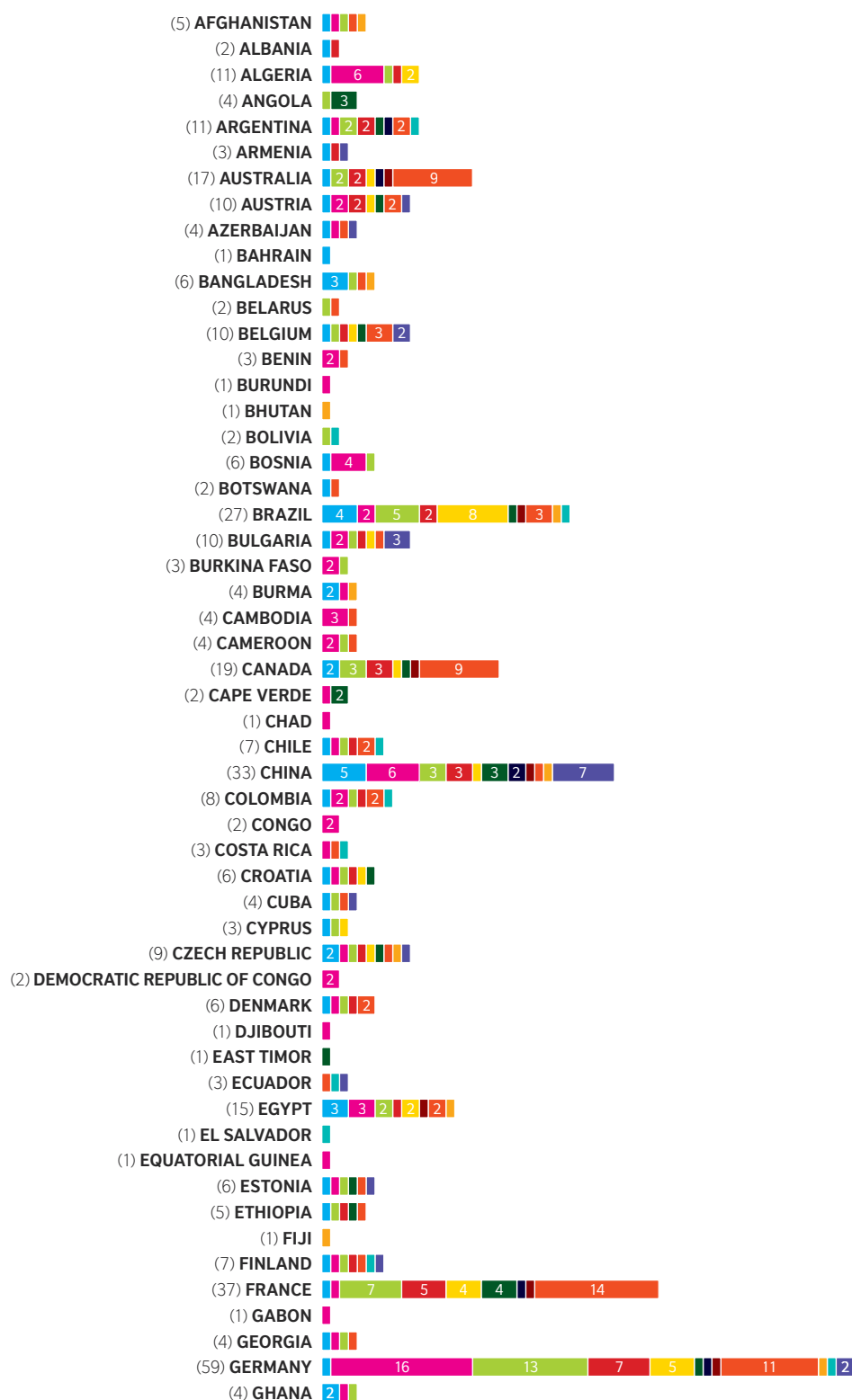
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# APPENDIX

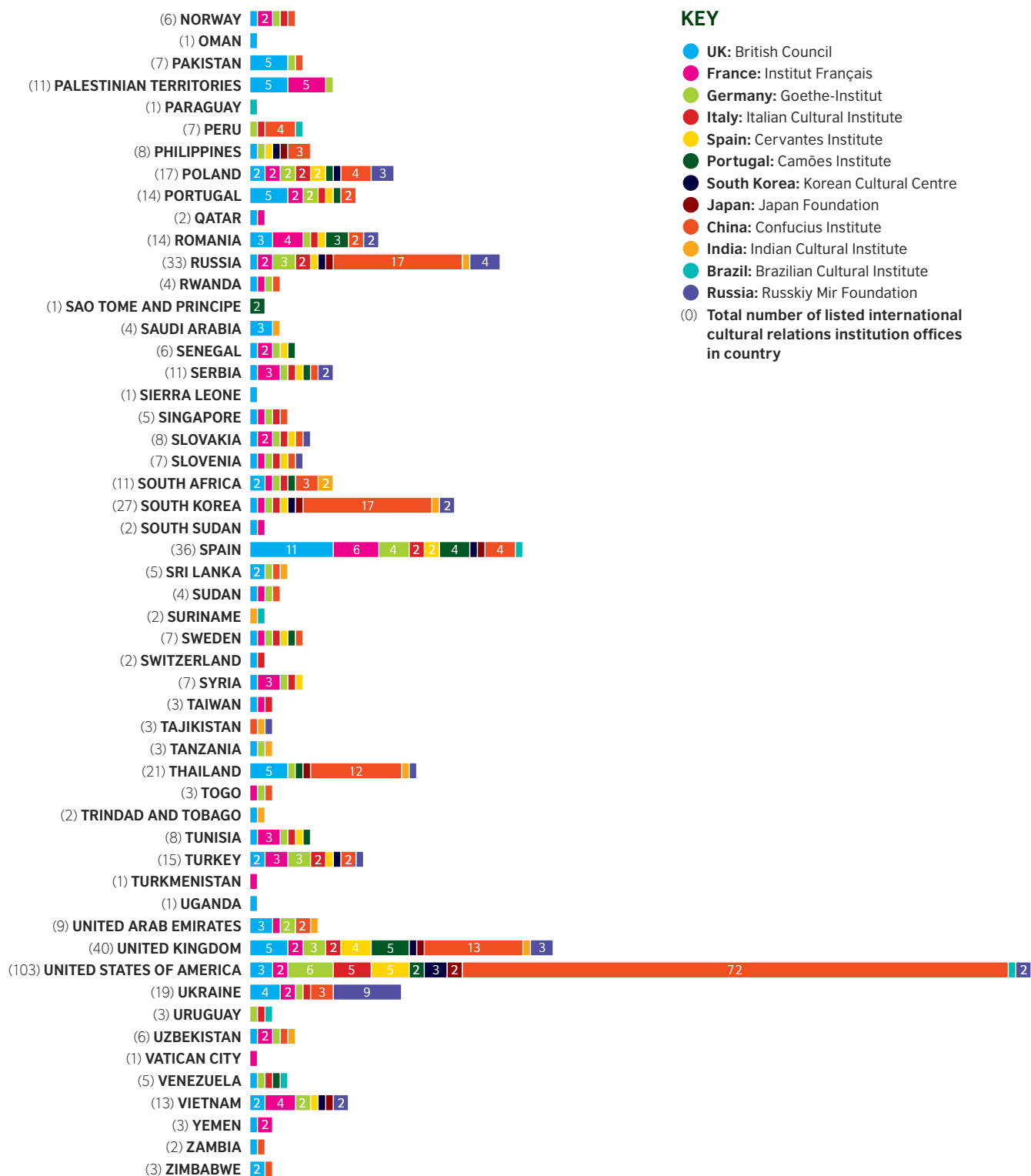
## INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS INSTITUTIONS BY COUNTRY/TERRITORY AND NUMBER OF OFFICES PRESENT







## INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS INSTITUTIONS BY COUNTRY/TERRITORY AND NUMBER OF OFFICES PRESENT (CONTINUED)





#### Pages 24–25, 36–38 sources:

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Institut Français – taken from world map on the Institut Français website, [www.institutfrancais.com](http://www.institutfrancais.com)

Goethe-Institut – Goethe-Institut Jahrbuch 2011/2012, [www.goethe.de/uun/pro/jb12/jahrbuch\\_2012.pdf](http://www.goethe.de/uun/pro/jb12/jahrbuch_2012.pdf), p88. Liaison offices have been included in the total.

Italian Cultural Institute – taken from alphabetical index at [www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Ministero/LaReteDiplomatica/Istituti\\_Cultura/default.htm](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Ministero/LaReteDiplomatica/Istituti_Cultura/default.htm)

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Korean Cultural Centre – [www.kocis.go.kr/eng/main.do#a](http://www.kocis.go.kr/eng/main.do#a). Only cultural centres have been counted; offices with only culture and information officers listed have not been included.

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Art exhibition in Beijing







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