

The field of Gastrodiplomacy has made incredible leaps and strides in the fifteen years or so since the concepts were laid out in a humble graduate school class on “Cultural Diplomacy” at the University of Southern California. Since those days, the field has emerged as one of the newest and most innovative aspects of diplomacy and public diplomacy.

The field of Gastrodiplomacy’s burgeoning popularity is seen in research centers on the subject in places as far-flung as Peru and Indonesia. New case studies have emerged and new best practices have come to the fore. The term *gastrodiplomacy* has become solidified in the lexicon, with both [encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com) and [Cambridge Dictionary](https://www.cambridge.org/core) taking note. Undergraduate and Graduate students the world over have been exploring the subject with academic vigor.

As one of the founders of the field of Gastrodiplomacy, I was pleased to receive an invitation to write the intro to the *Territories* edition on the emerging topic.

I was honored to have previously taken part in the Donostia Community of Public Diplomacy virtual program on “Dialogue on the Emergence of Gastrodiplomacy” in relation to Basque Country. At that program, I outlined theories on gastrodiplomacy and how it related to gastrodiplomacy strategies both for *Pais Vasco* and the Basque diaspora worldwide. As I highlighted then, the role for *paradiplomacy* (sub-state or regional diplomacy) and diasporic empowerment as cultural ambassadorship offered strong paradigms for Basque gastrodiplomacy.

The prospect of trans-cultural engagement around gastrodiplomacy is always something I value. The *Territories* issue on Gastrodiplomacy examines some relevant subjects in a growing field, and breaks new ground in a variety of areas on the topic. With any new subject like gastrodiplomacy, it is fascinating to see the new directions that new scholars take.

As in any new subject, it is always worthwhile for a brief refresher on the contours before diving in on the topics at hand. Gastrodiplomacy is a technique of public and cultural diplomacy to enhance a nation’s soft power through sharing its history, culture and heritage through its cuisine. Within the field of

Gastrodiplomacy, there are three branches:

Culinary Diplomacy: Culinary Diplomacy is how nations use cuisine to enhance diplomatic relations and further diplomacy.

Gastrodiplomacy: The practice of Gastrodiplomacy is how nations use cuisine in pursuit of cultural diplomacy and soft power to broaden the culinary nation brand status with broad swaths of foreign publics. Often this is

a multi-stakeholder campaign between the Foreign Ministry, Trade Ministry and/or Tourism Ministry. The best gastrodiploamacy campaigns are a public-private hybrid partnership between the government ministries and the culinary sector.

Social Gastronomy: Social Gastronomy, also known as people-to-people gastrodiploamacy, is how cuisine is used in civil society to address social issues, such as the use of food to break down barriers and enhance cultural integration.

A hallmark of gastrodiploamacy projection centers around soft power. Soft power is about the force of influence, and the power of persuasion. Public diploamacy, and the essence of soft power, understands that we don't reach audiences through rational information but emotional, transrational connections that come through music, food, art, dance and culture.

In the articles included in the *Territories* edition, the authors apply different concepts with the field itself to new case studies that help broaden the field.

In author Yanli He's article "Korean War POWs' Individual Gastrodiploamacy: Comparing Morris R. Wills and Clarence Adams' Odyssey," the author takes the newer lens of the field of Gastrodiploamacy and applies it backwards. The author analyzes a novel case study on the use of social gastronomy among Korean POWs. It is interesting to see the gastrodiploamacy/social gastronomy lens reflected back on the experience of two American POWs, and their cultural integration and reintegration around cuisine and culture. The article takes a novel new look at the subset topic of *conflict cuisine*, as well as adeptly identifying the emotional, transrational role that cuisine can play in connection, dislocation and other aspects of social gastronomy in its essence as people-to-people gastrodiploamacy.

Meanwhile, author Keiko Goto's submission, "Food as a vehicle for successful inter-cultural communication among college students: Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) in food and nutrition courses" delves into post-COVID Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) techniques of social gastronomy in a university setting. This social gastronomy connection between students taking a semester-long nutrition course at a university in California and students in a culinary art course in Ecuador worked to break down barriers across continents in a real-time application of online cultural exchange. The project's unique culinary focus on Ecuadorian food products, and the use of COIL activities in people-to-people gastrodiploamacy examination of food marks a cutting-edge take on culinary cultural exchange.

Finally, in Dennis Dorransoro article, "Thinking gastrodiploamacy through a gastrological reading of conflict," the author takes a deeper dive into the role of gastrodiploamacy in a number of prominent conflicts. The

article addresses relevant theories around conflict cuisine and gastronationalism as it looks into the culinary diplomacy angle in peace processes ranging cases around Basque Country, Northern Ireland and even that of Corsica. The author's examination of the role of gastrodiploamacy and the role of regional gastronationalism amid conflict and theories of conflict cuisine is quite new.

As the field of Gastrodiploamacy emerges further, it is gratifying to see new lenses applied to both new case studies, and also the framing of historical examples in redefined language. Furthermore, the space for trans-cultural engagement around gastrodiploamacy is something diplomats, chefs and academics can all equally enjoy.

Paul Rockover is the Executive Director of Levantine Public Diplomacy, an independent public diplomacy organization. Rockover has managed the U.S. Department of State's American Music Abroad and Next Level programs in dozens of countries. He has partnered with U.S. diplomatic posts to run cultural diplomacy programs in numerous other countries--ranging from Algeria to Iraq to Venezuela to Zimbabwe. Rockover has worked with a variety of Foreign Ministries around the world. He holds a Master's of Public Diplomacy from the University of Southern California.