Chapter 11
Reading Turkey's EU Accession Process Through Progress Reports in the Context of Public Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

Public diplomacy, which is defined as an effort to influence the attitude and perception of the public in order to shape and implement the foreign policy in the desired direction, can also be evaluated as an effort to shape the public opinion of different countries in a positive and desired way. One of Turkey's most important goals in the international arena has been determined as membership to the European Union, and many governments have carried out activities in various dimensions in line with this policy for many years. The activities carried out by Turkey in the EU membership process are closely monitored by the EU and regularly reported since 1998. While evaluating the breakthroughs Turkey has made in terms of foreign policy in these reports, it is also possible to determine how the international community and the public perceive these efforts. Based on this foresight, in this chapter, Turkey's progress reports in the EU membership process will be evaluated in the context of public diplomacy, and a descriptive and analytical framework will be created in this context.

INTRODUCTION

Public perception, which affects foreign policy in international relations, is becoming more important for political actors day by day, and studies are being carried out on it in order to influence public opinion and the agenda. Understanding the importance of perception management, governments develop their policies by taking into account domestic and foreign public opinion. In this context, the policies developed are about creating a positive image on the target audience and influencing the target audience in the desired direction. Influencing the target audience without any pressure to support the foreign policy

brings the concept of public diplomacy to us. Although the classical diplomacy understanding is dominant in international relations, public diplomacy is gaining importance and becoming one of the effective factors in the position of countries in the international arena. Bringing new approaches in foreign policy, public diplomacy plays an active role in the field of international relations and it mostly does this with soft power. Contrary to the classical understanding of diplomacy such as international diplomatic relations, diplomatic declarations and negotiations between delegations, it is the aim of public diplomacy to influence the target audience with activities such as culture and art. Along with the transition to the digital world, public diplomacy activities increase its diversity and effectiveness in the political arena depending on the developments in the field of communication. Contrary to the classical understanding of diplomacy in international relations, in public diplomacy, countries try to influence and persuade not only the governments of other countries but also the citizens of the country, and determine their priorities in this direction. Considering the interests of national interests, it is not enough to persuade governments and officials of international organizations alone. States or governments have to directly inform the foreign public, thereby positively influencing their perceptions. With the development of technology, the classical understanding of diplomacy is not sufficient in the international arena, and political actors cannot get the results they want. For this reason, influencing foreign societies by winning their hearts has brought a new dimension to international relations and demonstrated the importance of public diplomacy. Governments are starting to no longer communicate with foreign societies without public diplomacy. In summary, public diplomacy has become the most active and strategic method used by developed states to create a positive image on foreign countries. In this chapter, progress reports that play an important role in EU and Turkey relations will be evaluated in the context of public diplomacy.

BACKGROUND

When the literature on public diplomacy is reviewed, it is possible to see many definitions related to the subject. The first of these is that Mark (2002:8) states that public diplomacy aims to establish deep-rooted relations, to understand the culture and people of other countries, to identify their needs, to share their perspectives, to create a positive perception, and to create a positive environment for the image and awareness of a country. It is the definition that expresses power. Manheim (2002:75), on the other hand, defines public diplomacy as the art of managing perceptions and directing foreign institutions in line with targets. According to Nye (2005: 14), who is one of the most important people who caused public diplomacy to be known and used frequently in the context of international relations, public diplomacy is a field of use of soft power. Although the relations in countries that have adopted democracy are carried out through political actors, the important target audience is the foreign public opinion. Influencing political leaders doesn't make sense if governments can't positively influence the foreign population. When we look at the concept of diplomacy, it is defined as all of the intergovernmental relations and the methods used in establishing these relations (Riggins, 1998: 4). Before the Second World War, diplomacy targeted only the states that are the actors of the international system, but after the war, especially with the development of technology, international organizations and non-governmental organizations started to play an active role in the political arena. Due to these innovations, the public has started to be seen as an important actor in diplomacy (Akçadağ, 2010: 3). While military and economic power are the most effective power elements used in diplomacy, with the globalization after the Cold War, the world has begun to move to a multipolar power system and the ability to direct and persuade the public

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