

Chapter 14

Application of Public Diplomacy in New Media Platforms: The Case of TIKA

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ABSTRACT

Public diplomacy practices carried out by states and non-state actors are instantly presented to the public of other countries thanks to the new media. This makes it easy to determine the level of influence of a public diplomacy practice on the public opinion of countries and helps states to produce new public diplomacy policies and to improve existing policies. In addition, new media allows one state to spy on public diplomacy practices conducted by another state and provides tips for taking action against it. This study aims to answer the question of how the practices of public diplomacy are shaped in new media environments. For this purpose, the Twitter account of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was chosen as a case study and a netnographic study was conducted.

INTRODUCTION

Regarding etymological origins, the concept of diplomacy, which comes from the ancient Greek language and derives from the verb “*diplo*,” meaning “*folded in two*,” over time came to be used as *diplōma* (noun). Diploma, which means a document granting certain privileges to the bearer, had a function similar to that of modern passports. In the following period it was used to describe any document granting a privilege (Costantinou, 1996). Diplomacy, whose sphere of influence in the historical process is constantly expanding, has become a conduit for new actors, subjects and forms of interaction. It is now associated not only with interstate relations, but also with supranational organizations, multinational companies and even insurgent groups (Leira, 2016).

The concept of diplomacy represents all activities involving the conduct of relations between sovereign states through officials at home or abroad. It is seen as the communication system of the international society, as it is a tool that allows states to communicate with each other. The concept of diplomacy in

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5822-8.ch014

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its current meaning was first used by British statesman Edmund Burke in 1796. According to Burke, based on the French word for “diplomat,” diplomacy allows for the development and implementation of foreign policy (Berridge & James, 2003). Public diplomacy, on the other hand, has a meaning beyond traditional methods in politics and international relations. It is a multidimensional communication process that includes cultural interaction studies, public management activities, habit and behavior formation, perception-image management processes along with political information (Bostancı, 2012).

A Brief Overview of the Historical Development of Diplomacy

The emergence of structured diplomacy dates back long before the concept in consideration began to be used along with the state and politics. It is known that even before written record history there were negotiations to end wars and to negotiate peace in order to help the wounded. The practice of sending mutual envoys to conduct these negotiations is considered the first example of diplomacy (Nicolson, 1941). Thus *ad hoc* (*concerned with a particular purpose*) diplomacy emerged the first method of diplomacy in history. In *ad hoc* diplomacy, it is aimed at finding a solution to a problem, and representatives (ambassadors) are temporarily sent abroad to achieve a specific goal or task (Artunç, 2021). Within the scope of this practice, the messengers started to carry some introductory signs, and the relations between societies, especially trade and marriage, also improved (İskit, 2007).

In the 15th century the method of continuous diplomacy emerged and was first used by the Italian city-states. These city-states adopted the method of continuous diplomacy to eliminate possible risks of war. The method of continuous diplomacy was adopted throughout Europe in the following period, and a model method of diplomacy was developed (Tuncer, 2009). “*With the method of continuous diplomacy, defined as “the presence of diplomatic representatives in another country for a significant period of time to carry out diplomatic activities on behalf of their country, to obtain information about the country they are in, and to report to their country”* (Anderson, 1993), diplomatic relations became institutionalized and permanent. Thus, *ad hoc* diplomacy was replaced by time- and subject-independent embassies, and diplomatic representation became important instead of diplomatic representation (Watson, 1982). In the 17th and 18th centuries, French understanding of diplomacy had influence in the field of diplomacy, and continental Europe was influenced by French diplomacy until the French Revolution of 1789 (Tören, 2021). In the 19th century, England was at the forefront of diplomacy. Taking advantage of the Industrial Revolution, this country became a rising power and achieved significant world domination on the international stage (Kennedy, 2001). When we look at the historical development of diplomacy prior to the 18th century, we can say that the form of diplomatic communication was bilateral and of limited quality. However, this situation began to change from the 19th and especially from the 20th century. It turned into multilateral communication through international organizations, which not only multiplied, but also diversified their interests. Thus, the traditional understanding of diplomacy lost its meaning and the concept of public opinion gained importance (Gönlübol, 1993). Eventually, the concept of public diplomacy emerged, which expanded the boundaries of diplomacy and diversified the actors and subject.

Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

The concept of “soft power” refers to the ability of a country to influence the public opinion of another country and persuade the people of another country to act according to their will without using elements of pressure and without resorting to money. According to Joseph Nye, who introduced the concept of

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