

## Public Diplomacy of Turkey

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Researches regarding Public Diplomacy (PD) policies and practices in Turkey are rapidly increasing in number and evolving in scope over the last decade. Today, one may confidently affirm that PD is firmly grounded in the political and social discourses of Turkey. However, in spite of the progress made in the political and academic spheres, there has been no thorough analysis on the specific function of PD in the Turkish political context. Therefore, this article analyses how PD functions in the relations between the state and the public in Turkey rather than studying the policies and practices of Turkey targeted foreign audiences.

This article argues that a historical overview of the PD policies and practices of major public institutions indicates that PD serves three functions: legitimisation, problem resolution, and institution branding. The first one is the legitimization process of state policies and practices as was seen in the case of training civil servants by the Secretariat General of the National Security Council. Through PD courses, trainees are informed about the official definitions of security threats and foreign policy objectives. A process of internalisation by civil servants runs. The political elite identify their interests as those of the whole nation, and broadening their power base by shaping the identity of likeminded people in bureaucracy. PD policies and practices are designed and executed to inform the Turkish society about the rational of policy preferences of the current government, and gathering public support for its policy choices.

The second function of PD is problem resolution. PD is employed as a communication method to overcome societal deadlocks on foreign policy matters both in Turkey and with the EU. A recent example is a roundtable meeting organized by the Information Department of the Foreign Ministry in November 2012. The Ministry staff and Turkish academics discussed PD activities to raise the public support for Turkey's EU bid in the future. The primary target audience is the Turkish society. Participants discussed how to influence public opinion in favour of the EU membership. In addition, the Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs has organised a wide range of activities targeted at foreign publics within the EU. The objective was to boost support among foreign publics for Turkey's EU bid. In this case, PD is employed when traditional problem-solving methods do not respond to the current challenges the Turkish government faces in foreign policy.

The third function of PD is institution branding. Efforts are exerted to improve the ailing image of the Turkish Foreign Ministry within the Turkish society. The Ministry is rebranded as a "public opinion-sensitive" and "citizen-friendly" institution. PD is the field where this new image is showcased. For instance, the PD Department of the Foreign Ministry organised a meeting in which female diplomats and female Turkish correspondents come together in March 2012. The objective was to communicate the message that the Ministry has long been actively engaging in gender mainstreaming within the man-dominated Ministry by highlighting contributions made by female diplomats in foreign policy. The PD Department has conducted various forms of similar activities such as meetings with universities, key civil society associations and the Turkish business community.

For this study, the following methods have been employed: literature review, content analysis, unstructured discussions/interviews with public officials involved in PD processes, and personal experience of the author as a career diplomat.