



New Tools of Soft Power: Turkey's Education and Science Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

The international system is going through a radical change process. While this process contributes to the welfare of humanity, it also brings its complex problems and uncertainties. The way to eliminate these problems and uncertainties is the ability to manage change for actors. In this context, countries have focused on solving their problems through soft power instead of hard power. Diplomatic activities have diversified in the fields of health, security, culture, tourism, sports, education and science. The aim of this study is to explain the concepts of education and science diplomacy and to examine the practices carried out by Turkey. In this context, it has been determined that the number of foreign representative offices, educational scholarships, exchange programs, cooperation projects, and the number of foreign students and lecturers have increased in Turkey. The studies prevail that Turkey's multidimensional foreign policy approach also reflects in science and education field. Turkey has been conducting various tools in her science and education diplomacy that would increase Turkey's soft power and diversify its position as an international actor in the international system.

Keywords: Diplomacy, education, science, Turkey, soft power

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1. INTRODUCTION

A time of rapid development and transformation of communication channels, changes in dimensions of space and time, and the disappearance of borders is upon us. This process opens up opportunities for human welfare, but it also entails complex problems and uncertainties that must be taken into account. The unpredictability created by this process has considerably affected the nature of social sciences and humanities. A renowned historian Fernand Braudel, in his explanation of the history of the Mediterranean, highlights how a butterfly's wing breeze blowing in Vera Cruz (Mexico) led to the Janissary Uprising in Topkapı (Braudel, 2015). In a similar vein, Açıklın and Erçetin (2014) describe the social systems we live in as complex systems which create unpredictability and nonlinear world.

During the globalization and even glocalization processes, societies are undergoing a rapid change. The international relations and system have inevitably been affected by this social and technological transformation. Globalization is not only eroding the borders but generating new patterns while glocalization emphasis uniqueness of each actor (Cerny, 2012; Erçetin et al, 2017). If a strong perspective is missing in the background of this rapid change, the actors of the international system are at risk of falling behind. In this context, main concepts in international relations have been transformed which includes power, diplomacy and agent-structure relations. New forms of power, which are soft and smart, became indispensable element of discussion regarding role of power in diplomacy in an unpredictable world. Likewise soft and smart power, the notion of public diplomacy and its newly emerged public diplomacy areas such as health, culture, tourism, sport, education and science now more visible and distinct for scholars and practitioners.

Education and science diplomacy are deemed as one of the innovative tools of soft power and public diplomacy. There is no doubt, technological development played significant role in the emergence of education and science as a distinct diplomatic practice while globalization creates the need for common solutions to global issues with all actors in the international system like pandemic and climate change.

As a regional and global actor, Turkey, broadened its perspective on foreign policy after 2002, and in early 2021 it adopted the principles of entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy. Within entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy three

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main dimensions can be touched upon; a 360-degree foreign policy, the world is bigger than five and human-centered politics (Açıklan, 2020; Guo, 2020). Along with these principals, Turkish foreign policy has diversified its tools and methods. In addition to this, Turkey has been carrying out important diplomatic activities in all areas, particularly in public diplomacy including non-state actors. In other words, Turkey has not been indifferent to newly emerging fields of diplomacy even plays leading role for other actors. Thus, this paper aims to discuss Turkey's efforts in education and science diplomacy since 2002. In this respect, there will be discussion on transformation of power and diplomacy vis á vis public diplomacy and its types. The latter part of this article will be about definition of education and science diplomacy. In the last part, there will be practices of Turkey in education and science diplomacy.

2. TRANSFORMATION OF POWER AND DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy refers to maintaining the relations of the countries in an atmosphere of peace, and resolving disputes within international negotiations by peaceful and humanitarian methods (De Magalhaes, 1988; Klavins, 2011). The concept of diplomacy is intertwined with that of power throughout history (Carr, 1941; Weisbrode, 2018). More simply, power and diplomacy are lasting features of international politics. Therefore, both concepts cannot be grasped without the other's transformation.

The notion of power has been always contested which makes hard to explain and measure. The realist theory gives notable attention to the notion of power which suggests that actors in the international system pursue power (Barnett and Duvall, 2015). States can gain power in three ways. First is the use of force, but international law leaves a very narrow window on this issue, making it ambiguous whether this path is legitimate (Keohane and Nye, 1977). The second way is gaining power by means of economics that is only viable for short- and medium-term objectives (Powell, 1991). The third way is, according to Joseph Nye, states obtain power by shaping people's preferences, perceptions, and even paradigms - without using coercion against other actors, a concept called soft power (Nye, 1990).

Since the end of the Cold War, hard power had lost its importance compared to soft power tools which are advanced by force of globalization (Nye, 1990). In this context, soft power is not only a tool for influence, but also a source and attraction as the key concept. As long as the state is the center of attraction for the culture, political values, and foreign policies of the society it dominates, it has soft power. For soft power generation and indication, symbolic sources are far more important than material sources, which are more commonly associated with hard power (Nye, 2008).

In this respect, it is vital to understand relationship between soft power and public diplomacy requires distinguishing between power measured in behavioral results and power assessed in terms of resources. Nye defined three resources of soft power that are culture, political values and foreign policies (2008). Governments can employ public diplomacy to use these resources in order to engage with and attract the public of other countries, rather than just their own governments. Broadcasting, financing cultural exports, organizing exchanges, and other forms of public diplomacy are used to raise attention to these resources, as a new form of diplomacy while soft power had been increasingly significant for actors in the international system.

2.1 Public Diplomacy and its Types

Traditionally, public diplomacy was regarded as a task only for state-run institutions, but today, this definition has been expanded to include non-state actors, as well. The literature and practices reveals that 'new public diplomacy' has evolved into "relational, networked, and collaborative diplomacy" in recent years that challenges target groups of public diplomacy and its relations with sources of soft power.

There is categorization of targets for public diplomacy into short-medium-long term in this context is an important factor in state and non-state relations (George, 1979). The first is called *Reactive Public Diplomacy* and it covers mostly short-term public diplomacy activities. Reacting to an event or news abroad can be evaluated in this category where not image construction, but image damage prevention is the goal (d'Hooghe, 2014). The second is *Proactive Public Diplomacy* and it refers to medium-term policies. Agenda setting activities can be presented as an example. The last is *Relationship Building* that covers long-term public diplomacy activities. In the course of time, mutual trust and understanding develop between the two states-societies (Cull, 2009). Later years, thanks to changing understanding of public diplomacy Nye renames this tri-category classification as "Routine communication, strategic communication and establishing networks of multiplayers" respectively (2004). It is noteworthy that determining what public diplomacy instrument the states will or should use is highly related to the duration of their public diplomacy efforts within the relevant issue (Cull, 2009; Gonesh and Melissen, 2005).

On the other hand, public diplomacy and soft power interact bidirectional that means they are both means and end. Public diplomacy activities are conducted through various instruments and means feed the soft power capacity of the actor. Likewise, the soft power the states currently have affects the process of public diplomacy. Thus, the relationship between public diplomacy and soft power is horizontal and interrelated rather than hierarchical. Considering all these definitions, we can draw the conclusion that public diplomacy is the act of making a policy within a strategy in a way and approach that adds value to soft power, and then instrumenting it to be put into practice in various ways.

Along with the discussions on soft power, complex international system triggered existence of diversification of actors in international relations (Tomé and Açıklın, 2017). As expected, networked public diplomacy as a result of these changing dynamics and debates on power and actors which brings new elements from various fields such as communication studies, PR, and marketing (Melissen, 2005; Gilboa, 2008). In other words, the sources of attraction owned by the actors are used for *Marketing* and *Nation Branding* through public diplomacy. A wide range of actors from diverse scales may be involved in these processes, including non-governmental organizations, multinational companies, media outlets towards current issues. In this regard, the new concept of public diplomacy can be categorized according to its area of study or activity like education, tourism, health, human rights, science diplomacy and climate diplomacy etc.

3. EDUCATION DIPLOMACY

Education diplomacy is one of the emerging fields of public diplomacy that has exploded in popularity in the last two decades. It acknowledges that individuals and groups are becoming more involved in global issues and are impacting interactions between countries, sectors, and stakeholders. In other words, education diplomacy refers to solving local and global education problems, and establishing effective partnerships and collaborations among sectors and various actors to advance transformational agendas for education (Kyvliuk et al, 2018). Educational exchange through education diplomacy is distinct from other types of public diplomacy because of its long-term character and the delicate balance it must strike between favorably influencing public diplomacy and avoiding negative consequences.

Education diplomacy consists of information, diplomatic skills and critical thinking. It can be said that executing education management strategies in multi-actor and multidimensional diplomatic processes, addressing local, regional, and global education problems with diplomatic skills, and solving them in the light of scientific data are the basic features of educational diplomacy (Murphy, 2018). A few education diplomacy practices can be discussed within this context:

- Establishing an international partner institution, and coordinating programs (courses, credits, equivalencies, etc.),
- Carrying out student and academic staff exchange programs,
- Providing scholarship and funding opportunities, including those to foreign students,
- Providing courses and language schools in the country of education for the teaching of the native language
- Organizing international and multidisciplinary conferences

Furthermore, education diplomacy could be regarded as a crossroads of diplomats and education professionals. Because of this, unique set of skill should be obtained by the practitioners. Communication, cooperation, initiative research, social and cultural skills, as well as foreign language development are among the diplomatic skills that education leaders need to develop so that they can contribute education diplomacy. In this regard, Figure 1 illustrates the main categories of skills an education diplomat needs to possess.

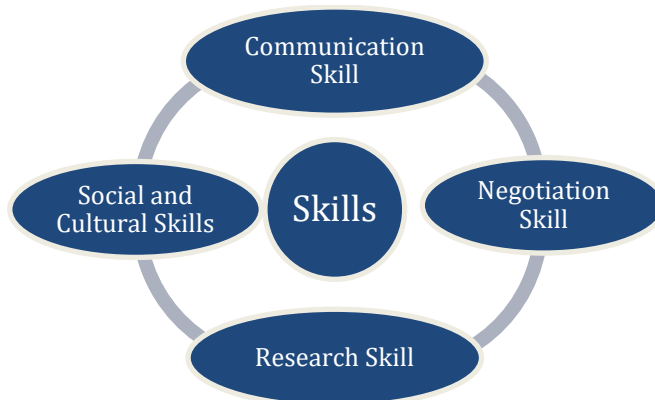


Figure 1. Skills of an education diplomat (CED, 2021).

The field of education should be evaluated very carefully for a country to improve its image in the outside world where education diplomacy aims to build connections and communication with different cultures through educational activities. In the light of this reality, educational diplomacy became more complicated for those on the receiving end where governments are not the prime actors. That's why, management, planning and policies of education diplomacy should take on a multidimensional and multi-actor approach. With the current advancement of communication technologies, it is crucial that education diplomacy be evaluated in a wide range, including higher education as well as other levels. Therefore, it is vital that administrators, teachers, and academic staff at all levels of education to be trained as education diplomats with enhanced diplomatic leadership skills in order to improve the competitiveness and institutional quality of education in the international arena.

4. SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

Science appears to be one of the avenues taken by the power of influence. Science may assist a country in establishing its international reputation and gaining a favorable image. In the era of global problems such as climate change and pandemic; science diplomacy has been emerged as another field of public diplomacy that intersects with education diplomacy. Science diplomacy has come into prominence over the past several years, as modern technology and communication advancements have accelerated.

Scientifically and technologically superior countries have a stronger image in the eyes of other nations that brings international cooperation and sustainable partnerships, increasing employment, gaining the trust of consumers and investors, providing access to research that enables a competitive advantage, and increasing employment are some of the advantages (Echeverria King et al, 2021). In this respect, science diplomacy, one of the new types of diplomacy that brings social sciences and natural sciences together, has two aspects. The first is making scientists to science diplomats, and the second is increasing mutual communication between countries by promoting technology transfers. This complicated structure of science diplomacy makes it more tough to define that's why there are three dimensions which are component of science diplomacy that visualized in Figure 2.

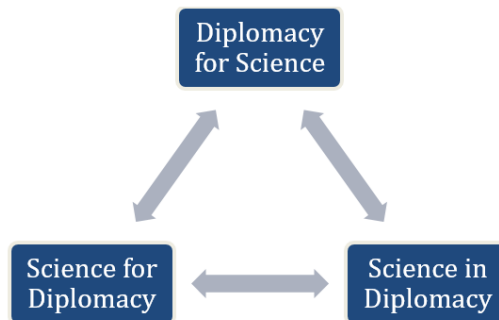


Figure 2. Components of science diplomacy

Diplomacy for Science: Conducting international scientific cooperation studies and developing science technology and R&D activities. By using embassies to house experts and diplomats in the fields of science, technology, and innovation-governments both follow scientific and technological developments in foreign countries and allow their cultures to spread.

Science for Diplomacy: Using science cooperation to improve mutual relations between states.

Science in Diplomacy: Informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice.

Scientists and researchers can be considered the most effective agents along with diplomats for science diplomacy from this perspective. Considering the above definition of science diplomacy, it is obvious that countries, as well as international and supranational institutions have expressed interest in its content and played an active role in implementing it in the recent years. This recent interest in science diplomacy has given rise to new views on how policies and practices can be implemented in the state-people-civil society components. In this context, the following are some activities regarding science diplomacy that can be summarized:

- Scientific cooperation agreements,
- Joint degree programs between universities and institutes,
- Scholarships, science camps, exhibitions and festivals,
- Capacity building in the scientific and technological fields,
- An international budget and research initiative for global projects (Ruffini, 2017; Kaltufen and Acuto, 2019).

Considering the broad approach of science diplomacy and its activities in the field, it can be said that science diplomacy is concrete soft power tool and generator as well. Also, it should be stressed that science diplomacy and its tools are often a win-win situation, with corporate sector or civil society partners working together to generate solutions for global problems. While individual efforts may contribute to science diplomacy, it frequently entails a state-led endeavor in the field of scientific collaboration.

4.1. Education Diplomacy Practices of Turkey

With its strong history and geography, Turkey is able to make time and space a strategic value by rejecting the one-dimensional reductionist thinking associated with the Cold War era. With its entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy practices, Turkey conducts a pioneering and guiding diplomacy in line with the requirements of the age. 163 missions of Turkey in 2002 was increased to 252 by 2021 which makes Turkey as world's fifth biggest diplomatic network (Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, 2021). Not only numbers of missions have been increased but also particularly soft power elements have increased and been diversified as a result of this change (Kiran, 2020).

In this respect, education diplomacy can be considered as an emergent tool in Turkish foreign policy through developments in the form of institutions, organizations and projects. To begin with, Turkey is one of the regions' top countries with regards to double degree applications. Participation of Turkey in the Socrates Program on April 1, 2004 contributed a great deal to the growth of joint and dual degree programs in Turkey. Based on the numbers, it can be said that Turkish universities have signed protocol with universities in the U.S. and Europe mostly, but their cooperation with universities in the Balkans and other regions has grown in the past few years as well. Among countries that offer exchange programs, Turkey is among the leading ones both for academic and student exchanges. More than 700,000 Turkish university students have benefitted from the Erasmus exchange program that has been running for 17 years (EU's student exchange program Erasmus in huge demand in Turkey, 2021). Besides the Erasmus, Turkish students and academics have also been participating in the Mevlana exchange program which covers different continents of the world.

As touched upon, one of the most significant components of education diplomacy is language schools. Several studies have been conducted on education in mother tongue in European countries with a high concentration of Turkish citizens, including Germany, France, and Austria. Efforts are made in order to ensure that the children of these citizens are integrated into the society in which they live without losing their mother tongue, nationality, and moral values (Kiran, 2021). Turkish education in schools abroad are conducted in collaboration with the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities and the Yunus Emre Institute. Since 2007, Yunus Emre Institute provides service with 60 cultural centers in 50 countries. Around 150 thousand students are taught Turkish language and Turkish culture by approximately 1,600 teachers and 194 lecturers abroad (Yunus Emre Institute Annual Report, 2020). Conferences, workshops, and symposiums play a critical role in education diplomacy, particularly in mobilizing academics and knowledge. Using data prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Turkey is one of the biggest host country for international meetings and congresses are listed as medicine, engineering, communication, technology, social sciences, music, contemporary art, and sports (Kongre Turizmi 2020'ye kilitlendi, 2020).

Lastly, Turkey's one of the main educational diplomacy activity is, of course, its international work with the Maarif Foundation. It has a great role not only contributing in public diplomacy but also in the fight against FETO terrorism. In 41 countries, schools affiliated with FETO were closed; and the Maarif Foundation took over the schools in 20 of them. In addition, the Maarif Foundation is increasing the number of schools in countries with high numbers of Turkish immigrants and especially in Africa in order to contribute to the need for education there. In 44 countries, educational activities continue with almost 42 thousand students in 356 schools and education centers (Turkey Maarif Foundation, 2019).

4.2. Science Diplomacy Practices of Turkey

Firstly, activities in science diplomacy can be deemed as complementary in education diplomacy has been mentioned previously in this study. In this respect, bilateral scientific cooperation agreements, as the foundation of legal frameworks and long-term cooperation, are the most important element of science diplomacy. The Turkish government signed 82 agreements in the fields of science and technology between 2002 and 2020, and 42 agreements in the area of education with 100 countries during that period (Kiran, 2020).

Secondly, the establishment of joint universities is also a crucial step for the institutionalization of science diplomacy. It is possible to say that Turkey is the leading country in this regard both within Turkey and abroad. Kazakhstan's Akhmet Yassawi University and Krygyz-Turkish Manas University are tangible steps are being taken in science diplomacy in Turkic Republics which are leading higher education in their region. Furthermore, in 2010, the Turkish-German University officially established and in 2013 university began teaching in Turkey. In 2020, President Erdoğan and Chancellor Merkel inaugurated its new campus in İstanbul (Çam, 2020). Also, with the joint initiative of the leaders, the Turkish-Japanese Science and Technology University was established in 2013 (Many Japanese-Turkish projects underway says Erdogan, 2014).

Thirdly, international students and scholarship opportunities are playing a key role in science diplomacy. Since 2002, Turkey has become a center of attraction for higher education (Erçetin et al., 2020). Having 207 universities and over 8 million students, it is the second largest higher education network in Europe with approximately 170,000 faculty members and is in top ten countries in the world for foreign students. (Yükseköğretim Kurulu, 2021). Over 3000 foreign students from Europe to the Far East, Asia to Africa received Türkiye Scholarships in 2021 (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2021). Many students benefitting from Türkiye Scholarships in different countries are now natural ambassadors in their countries. Among the most concrete examples are the President of Zanzibar and Minister of Justice of Somalia, both graduated from universities in Turkey (Kiran, 2021).

All mentioned soft power elements such as hosting a large number of foreign students, having cultural centers as a major tool of soft power, appointing science attachés and education attachés in foreign representations, and making advancements in fields of science, technology, and education play a pivotal role in Turkey's entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy. As mentioned in the beginning, science has become a vital tool for international cooperation and addressing of global problems. Using scientific activities for diplomatic purposes increases a country's prestige and influence in the eyes of the public.

Professor Aziz Sancar brought the Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Turkey in 2015 for the first time and his work has gotten more attention than many other promotional activities. Besides, Turkey cooperates both bilaterally and multilaterally with other nations on many issues, such as joint technology development and exchange of experts in the fields of medicine, energy and engineering. Turkish Academic and Scientific Cooperation Project (TABİP), which is implemented under the auspices of Yunus Emre Institute in order to consolidate these bilateral co-operations under a common roof, is also a highly exemplary project of science diplomacy. The purpose of this project is to bring together foreign academics in different countries with Turkish academics. It gives the opportunity to foreign academics to benefit from Turkey's scientific and academic research capacity (TABİP Projesi Kapsamında Bilim Diplomasisi Konuşuldu, 2019).

The issue of science diplomacy is on the agendas of multilateral as well as bilateral organizations. As the sole organization in the UN system to protect science, UNESCO is unique in this regard. Being a founding member, Turkey holds an active role in. The concept of artificial intelligence, which has been on the agenda recently and has been in the spotlight of technological developments, is one of the UNESCO's focus areas. Particular to science for diplomacy and science in diplomacy components of science diplomacy; The 'Big Data' and 'Artificial Intelligence' Departments were established under the Presidency's Digital Transformation Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Technology, TÜBİTAK and the UNESCO Turkish National Commission which play a leading role in these studies (Kıran,2021). It should be noted that Turkey's Digital Diplomacy initiative, announced in 2019, is also among the current tools it uses for its foreign policy.

Bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology has also increased in the Covid-19 period. As we are passing through this epidemic period, not only diplomats, but also scientists and doctors are taking part in international meetings and discussions about measures taken against the epidemic. Turkish scientists developed especially the respiratory devices that were vital to cope with the pandemic, and the states in need were provided with these devices in a very short time. In the first six months of 2021, approximately 50 % of these devices were exported to more than 30 countries including Brazil, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Romania, and some respirators were sent to Africa for aid purposes (Yanık, 2021). In addition, Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci, the Biontech Company founders who discovered the Covid-19 vaccine, contributed significantly to humanity; more importantly by integrating citizens of Turkish origin, it is a lesson to many countries that suffer from Islamophobia and racism.

5. CONCLUSION

Evidently, international system became chaotic day by day where it is not possible to solve the current problems with conventional diplomacy methods. Not only to solve the problems but the desire for nations to make a positive impression, to nurture human relations, to reach economic success, and to be among countries obeyed has given rise to varied diplomatic practices. In this context, the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy have revisited that evolved to more networked and multifaceted approach. Simultaneously, science and education are gaining traction as agents of collaboration and both source and tool of soft power especially in the face of adversity. That's why, education and science diplomacy are two areas of attention in recent years.

Although education and science diplomacy have identical differences regarding definition and practices, they are complementary with each other. Establishing communication and cooperation at a global level by education and science in academic and scientific sphere plays vital role to facilitate bilateral and multilateral relations between actors. In addition to this, science in diplomacy and science for diplomacy are also undeniable part the notion of science diplomacy. Regarding broad definition of the notions and education and science diplomacy as a source of soft power of the country brings professionals who have various backgrounds and expertise that requires specific sets of skills.

Turkey's changing foreign policy since 2002 also reflected in soft power practices in the field of science and education diplomacy as well through various governmental and non-governmental actors. As discussed above, Turkey's practices of science and education diplomacy can be summarized as follow;

- Expanding foreign representations and strengthening the diplomatic network,
- Increasing scholarships, exchange programs and cooperation projects,
- Increasing the number of students and academics exchange,
- Conducting Turkish language in schools abroad,
- Initiate scientific international cooperation to address global issues
- Taking a leadership role in international organizations such as the UN and UNESCO.

The activities Turkey has conducted in the area of education and science diplomacy also illuminate that Turkey advanced its tools and strategies in soft power. Also, it is clear that Turkey's education and science diplomacy initiatives successfully emerged as also new sources of Turkey's soft power. Turkey with its strong and institutionalized background in education and science perfectly matched with its entrepreneurial foreign policy approach. Thus, Turkey plays pioneer role in addressing the global and humanitarian issues through education and science diplomacy in line with entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

All information in this paper has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical concerns.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The authors equally contributed for the article.

Statement of Interest

We have no conflict of interest to declare.

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