

# A Brief Analysis of Turkey–France Relations in Terms of Media Diplomacy: Example of Aujourd’hui La Turquie



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## 1 Introduction

Politics is a social operation. Social functioning has affected political elements and many cultural, technological, economic, and social issues thanks to the increasing volume in international functioning. The size and expansion of this volume lead to revolutionary changes with the contribution of technological developments. Modern communication methods have given states the ability to access information directly without any intermediary institution and create strategies to take the necessary steps by processing this information. Mainly thanks to new and hybrid media technologies, diplomacy applications have reached a wide flow of information, have had the chance to create real-time connections and to operate in an area that any diplomat could not have reached.

Along with the developing new media technologies, traditional mass media such as television, radio, and newspapers are still essential public diplomacy tools. The information and images that these tools regularly convey to individuals and societies in art, politics, economy, entertainment, news, and education shape the emotions and perceptions of societies. In this context, it can be said that those who control the media also have the power to control their minds. It should be noted that the importance of international media in the field of public diplomacy has increased, even more, especially considering the potential of international media to reach large audiences around the world.

The information and images conveyed by the international media to foreign publics also determine what societies think about other societies to a certain extent.

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Political and ideological tendencies of media organizations, non-governmental organizations, lobbies, political groups, and parties with which they are close, people and organizations with which they have economic ties affect the content and news narratives they convey. As a result, information and images created by various media organizations are no longer just content, but turn into content of critical importance for public diplomacy. Foreign publics are informed about what is happening through the media. In this process, media channels carry information and images about foreign societies and play the role of planting various beliefs, thoughts, and ideologies in the minds of societies to a certain extent. As a result of this cultivation process, how individuals or societies are affected by the media content they consume is still up-to-date in the field of communication sciences today. At the point reached today, it is known that there is significant competition between states and international media organizations for the transfer of information and images to foreign societies. In particular, states and media companies that have various international media organizations and can effectively use these organizations get the best of this competition and have an essential role in media diplomacy by reaching foreign societies. In this context, the scope and content of information and images transferred to foreign societies from various mass media directly affect the success of countries in the field of public diplomacy.

It is necessary to establish a series of approaches to examine the link between media and international relations. These approaches, as well as the institutional structure of the media, analysis of the nature of media content, how the image in the media and the perceptions it creates affect the functioning between states and institutions, and how states affect international relations should be revealed. In general, examining the conflicts in terms of objective issues and events in international relations and a subjective dimension that includes elements related to world issues are at the forefront. Nevertheless, hybrid media elements that combine new media structures and old and new communication structures have made images as necessary as problems in subjective dimensions. The images created by the states and the images of the actors in international relations affect the diplomatic processes. In addition, the structures of news contents and the approaches of social structures to this news may become more important than the structure of the information flow coming from the missions of diplomats and internal reports. In addition, the institutional and professional characteristics of institutions and employees in the field of communication have also gained importance. The news gathering behaviors of communication professionals, the outputs arising from the processing of this news, and the communicative structures between communication professionals and institutions are also crucial in this process.

All these changes have changed the structure of international state functioning and brought the functioning of communication professionals and institutions to another dimension. Being in the media is not an adequate concept for political actors and institutions. For communication institutions and professionals, the excess of information formed in line with the image desired to be drawn by political actors and institutions has become demanded and followed. Thus, both the effect of information on all social structures, communication institutions and professionals, and political actors

and institutions, as well as the speed of spread of this effect and the functioning of alternative behavioral structures that may have contributed have been added to its field of activity.

Riordan (2004, p. 123) explains these changes and the contribution of the media to this change as follows: “Within the postmodern world, the breakdown of the division between domestic and foreign policy, the increasing importance of the media (both electronic and interactive), the increasing involvement of people in global NGOs, and the complex network of the new governmental and non-governmental players in international affairs mean that publics matter more than before. They matter in two sense: governments, at whatever level, have to win support and legitimacy from domestic publics for their foreign-policy positions; they must also win over foreign policy publics if they want to secure the agreement to policy positions from their governments. This is not simply a case of engaging in debate on specific policy issues. National image and reputation also matter (we have already seen this in the commercial world).”

In this study, the phenomena mentioned above and processes will be tried to be revealed by examining the functioning of media diplomacy.

## **2 The Differences Between Media Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy**

Media diplomacy is a concept that is often confused with public diplomacy. Media diplomacy differs from public diplomacy in content, timing, and intended purposes. Although there are various definitions of media diplomacy, the definition made by Gilboa forms the basis of this study. Gilboa (1998, p. 62) defines media diplomacy as follows: “The use of the mass media by policymakers in specific cases to send signals and apply pressure on state and non-state actors, to build confidence and advance negotiations, as well as to mobilize public support for agreements.” Gilboa reveals the differences between media diplomacy and public diplomacy as follows: “Media diplomacy is pursued in the context of negotiations, whereas public diplomacy is conducted in the context of ideological confrontation. Usually, media diplomacy aims at short-range results, whereas public diplomacy long-range outcomes. Media diplomacy is more specific than public diplomacy. Whereas the latter is designed to create a friendly climate within foreign society toward fundamental political and social issues, such as capitalism versus communism or human rights, the former is designed to create a favorable climate for a particular diplomatic process at a particular time and in a particular context. Public diplomacy primarily involves the use of propaganda or public relations designed to foster an image and media diplomacy primarily entails a serious appeal for conflict resolution. Finally, public diplomacy is conducted exclusively through the mass media.” (1998, p. 62).

Media diplomacy determines media actions, including press conferences, interviews, leaks, visits of heads of state and discourse of mediators, visits to other countries, or even organized actions over communication channels such as nascent social media is the structure. The aim here is to create a communication channel before reconciliation by mutually revealing the aims through the media and to conduct the relations through this communication channel. The purpose of the said communication channel is to eliminate the existing deadlocks, create an atmosphere of consensus by giving mutual messages, review the practitioner’s strategic structures according to the behavior and reaction structures of the other party, and reconstruct them under the necessary conditions (Ceyhan, 2016, p. 988).

In line with Gilboa’s definition, the necessity for the policy-making processes and media processes to work together in the functioning of media diplomacy emerges. Three significant distinctions are made here between public diplomacy and media diplomacy. The first distinction is the difference in the channels through which the messages are transmitted. While public diplomacy generally acts through the mass media, media diplomacy is in a much broader and multi-channel structure, including the mass media. The second difference is the method difference. Public diplomacy promotes and develops an image that is determined in line with the objectives. Therefore, public relations and sometimes propaganda activities are essential tools for public diplomacy. However, media diplomacy is a conflict resolution tool. It functions in terms of visualizing the solutions and finding a response in society. The third distinction is that of timing due to the second feature. Media diplomacy acts in a shorter timeframe than public diplomacy. The reason for this is the visualization of the resolved conflicts and the short-term transfer of these images to the social mind of media diplomacy. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, operates in larger time intervals. Public diplomacy aims to create a friendly climate between different states and their public opinion in line with the targeted objectives; therefore, there is a need for a longer timeframe and sustainable actions (See; Difference Between Public Diplomacy and Media Diplomacy, Table 1).

Media diplomacy should be designed as an “integrated communication process” (Riley, 2014, p. 234) by anticipating the possible reactions of multiple stakeholders. This should include stakeholders, allies, neutral parties, and opposing views. In addition, the messages of political actors and institutions and analyzes that will determine

**Table 1** Difference Between Public Diplomacy and Media Diplomacy (Gilboa, 1998, p. 62)

Public diplomacy and media diplomacy		
Features	Public diplomacy	Media diplomacy
Context	Ideological confrontation	Negotiations
Time Frame	Long range	Short range
Goals	General/fundamental	Specific
Method	To promote	To appeal for conflict resolution
Medium	Multiple channels	Mass media only

the structures and effects of policies should be used in this process. The materials of media diplomacy can be social media messages, journalist interviews, conferences, various openings, visits, and memorial visits, sporting events, talk show programs, fashion shoots, etc. In addition, media diplomacy: “permits those who are engaged in complex negotiations to send signals that are multidirectional and can be interpreted and understood differently by different audiences” (Riley & Hollihan, 2012, p. 62). Media diplomacy not only uses the media ecosystem, but also highlights technological developments. While new digital media platforms, mobile phones, and, social networking sites created great opportunities for the messages to reach wider audiences by political actors and institutions, they also offered new messages for consumption to the society. However, these structures have forced political actors and institutions that have complete control over the stories created within traditional diplomacy. This challenge allows political actors and institutions to form new stakeholders, develop media diplomacy strategies to lead different lives, participate in other cultures, and are based on their understanding of national identity and its moral foundations. “In short, media recognize the engagement in diplomacy, and media diplomacy is spontaneously established” (Lim, 2017, p. 16).

Cohen (1986) stated that the functioning of media diplomacy is examined according to a series of approaches between the media and international relations. Cohen explains it this way (1986, p. 3): “The relationship between the media and international affairs has been examined using a number of approaches. One is to analyse the nature of news content. This is particularly relevant to a study of international affairs given that distorted images and perceptions compound conflicts of interest between states. Accordingly, within the study of international relations, there is a trend away from examining disputes in terms of objective issues and events towards a subjective dimension of asking why and how the image of world affairs held by other nations may differ from our own. The analysis of news content is valid in considering the formation of attitudes of the wider public, most of whose information about international affairs is drawn from the media, but it is less relevant in the case of ministers and officials most of whose information is in the form of the flow of messages from the diplomatic missions and internal reports.”

In addition, Cohen focuses on the differences in news-gathering behavior and outputs of communication professionals and institutions. This difference in business and news-gathering methods, interpersonal communication, and hierarchical interactions among communication professionals also affect media diplomacy.

The concept of media diplomacy should also be examined in terms of the relationship between communication institutions and professionals and political actors and institutions. The pressure on communication institutions and professionals to transmit the information in the fastest and most accurate way may have to transmit the information they receive from political actors and institutions without checking or having the chance to control it. At the same time, political actors and institutions, communication professionals, and institutions tend to share information that has been manipulated for targeted purposes. These approaches of the parties will lead to the formation of international conflicts. Media diplomacy, which is used as a tool to

solve foreign policy problems, becomes dysfunctional under these conditions. In this context, it would be helpful to look at the functional structure of media diplomacy.

### 3 The Functioning of Media Diplomacy

The first thing to be mentioned about the media is that the media creates a discussion environment where social events can be discussed and its results can be revealed by penetrating every individual and every institution of the society. Secondly, starting from this whole discussion environment, it is to ensure that ideas and thoughts are associated with each other in the political process, or that these ideas and thoughts come into conflict in a democratic environment and lead to processes that will eventually lead to reconciliation. At this point, especially between the society and the political power, they should be able to understand each other, present their ideas, and control the existing political structure and thoughts. As a result, it emerges as an essential factor in the influence of society on political processes. Thirdly, the media's control over political power as a tool of society creates an environment of trust between the society and the political power/institution in public affairs or taking public decisions (Ceyhan, 2016, p. 982).

Jönsson (1996) defines media diplomacy as a method that has been used for many years. When political actors and institutions realize the importance of the global problem and shape public opinion according to the purpose, they tend to create an agenda with a series of follow-up news through communication professionals and institutions. This process creates space for political actors and institutions to take urgent action. Media diplomacy starts at this point. Lim (2017, p. 18) describes this process as follows: “(...) the media issue to grow at national and international level, and then to be resolved, two communication processes are recognized after media reporting. One is by government officials, who decide to create foreign policy and implement it through diplomatic channels, the other is by opinion leaders who persuade the public to side with their stance if the issue is worthy of pursuing as part of their opinionated media career.”

In this direction, Lim also shapes the media diplomacy operating model, which he calls the “quadruple triangle model” (2017, p. 18). According to this model, there are two ways of communication for media diplomacy. In this communication process, political actors and institutions, and social elites enter the policy-making process to solve the international conflict or problem in the media. The example given from the foreign policy of the United States is quoted by Lim as follows: “According to the model, government officials or social elites go through policy-making to direct U.S. diplomats stationed in the troubled country in which the media highlighted the issue of the country. The U.S. government and the foreign government, after going through the diplomatic channel to reach an agreement of talk, is slated to set a table for cooperation, which is expected to bring the best result for maintaining both nations' interests. Once the two parties decide to take action against the issues, they give a heads-up to their allies and call for support of their action. On the other part, the

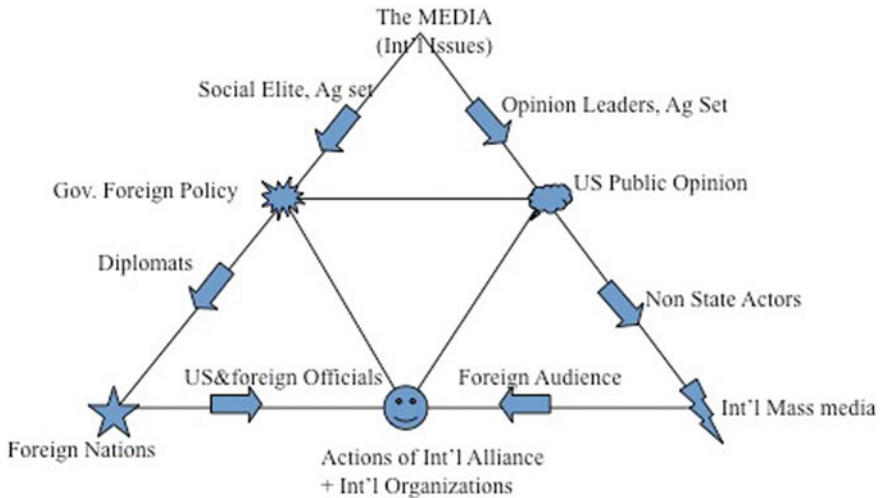
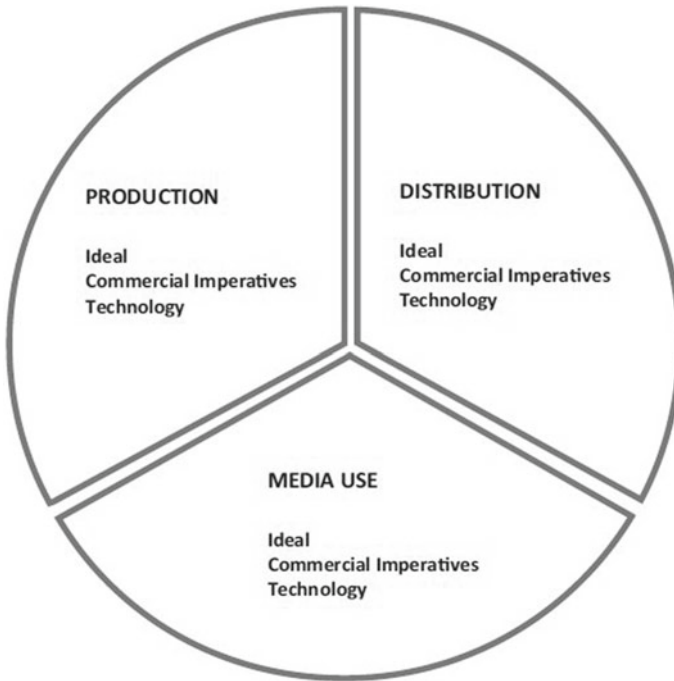


Fig. 1 Quadruple triangle model (Lim, 2017, p. 18)

public opinion in the United States encourages non-state actors, such as NGOs and international organizations, to engage in the issue by taking a humanitarian approach. In the end, the issue spotlighted by the media, considered a threat to national interest by the government and public, and resolved by state and non-state actors’ cooperation comes to the end whether or not, the result is in favor of the U.S. government.” (2017, p. 18) (Fig. 1).

Klinger and Svensson talk about “three different dimensions” in the operation of media diplomacy; these are “production, distribution, and media use” (2018, p. 28) (Fig. 2).

Klinger and Svensson talk about the effects of professional ideals, commercial difficulties, and technological developments on the production side of communication professionals and their corporate structures. It is stated that especially professional norms and criteria determine the news value. These ideals, norms, and professional values determine the direction and value of information and media operation. In addition, communication institutions operate as commercial activities. To reach out to society, every communication institution has to create its technological infrastructure and include professionals who can find, process, and present information. This is a factor that affects information processing. Klinger and Svensson explain it this way: “Media platforms have to compete for attention, subscriptions, and advertising while keeping the costs of production and dissemination low in order to generate profits. Historically, the commercial pressures of mass media corporations have often been seen as being in opposition to Professional ideals. With the rise of neo-liberalism, the commercial imperatives have become even more salient, which has given political news a distinct flavour of entertainment, speculation, and personalisation This raises the question of what kinds of commercial imperatives can be discerned on social media platforms.” (2018, p. 27).



**Fig. 2** Dimensions of media logic (Klinger & Svensson, 2018, p. 28)

Technology is the third dimension of news and content production (Klinger & Svensson, 2018, p. 28). While technology provides the production of news and content, it also plays a significant role in effectively reaching society. This vital role also appears as a restriction. This restriction also gains importance with features such as the inclination and knowledge of individuals using technology, the power to buy technology, and the ability to use technology. However, this is not a sufficient explanation. As McLuhan (1964) stated, the message is the content, but it is not the only element in this process. Media use and distribution are as crucial as the content production of the media.

The dissemination of information takes place in a network. The “network society” put forward by Castells (2000) and Van Dijk (2006) is also active in media diplomacy. Van Dijk defines the network society as follows: “The network society concept emphasizes the form and organization of information processing and exchange. An infrastructure of social and media networks takes care of this. So the network society can be defined as a social formation with an infrastructure of social and media networks enabling its prime mode of organization at all levels (individual, group/organizational and societal). Increasingly, these networks link all units or parts of this formation (individuals, groups and organizations). In western societies, the individual linked by networks is becoming the basic unit of the network society. In

eastern societies, this might still be the group (family, community, work team) linked by networks.” (2006, p. 20).

Castells (2009), on the other hand, summarizes the activities within the network society as follows: “In sum: in the network society, the battle of images and frames, at the source of the battle for minds and souls, takes place in multimedia communication networks. These networks are programmed by the power relationships embedded within the networks. (...) Therefore, the process of social change requires the reprogramming of the communication networks in terms of their cultural codes and in terms of the implicit social and political values and interests that they convey. It is not an easy task. Precisely because they are multimodal, diversified, and pervasive, communication networks are able to include and enclose cultural diversity and a multiplicity of messages to a much greater extent than any other public space in history. Thus, the public mind is captured in programmed communication networks, limiting the impact of autonomous expressions outside the networks. But in a world marked by the rise of mass self-communication, social movements and insurgent politics have the chance to enter the public space from multiple sources. By using both horizontal communication networks and mainstream media to convey their images and messages, they increase their chances of enacting social and political change—even if they start from a subordinate position in institutional power, financial resources, or symbolic legitimacy. However, their accrued power as alternative messengers comes with a servitude: they must adapt to the language of the media and to the formats of interaction in the communication networks. On balance, the rise of networks of mass self-communication offers greater chances for autonomy. However, for this autonomy to exist, social actors must assert the right to mass self-communication by preserving freedom and fairness in the deployment and management of the networked infrastructure of communication and in the practice of the multimedia industries.” (2009, p. 302).

This information flow creates an individual, effective, and reflexive distribution network (Klinger & Svensson, 2018, p. 33). While communication professionals and institutions convey news content to the society in a top-down structure, platforms that provide social communication space, particularly, transmit these top-down contents within the network on a horizontal plane. This act of transmitting leads to the third dimension of media functioning: media use. Media use is constantly and alternately shared through social networks. While this continuity and transformation expand the dissemination of information, it also benefits from the commercial imperatives of communication professionals and institutions. While individuals shape the information processing in the network according to their behaviors, thoughts, and interests, communication professionals and institutions continue to create institutional networks and produce informative content for these behaviors, thoughts, and interests.

From all these perspectives, media diplomacy acts as a conflict resolution integrated into the international functioning, not in the international arena that requires great power and economic investment such as military or economic interventions in a country’s national interests. As Gilboa (2001) states, “media diplomacy refers to officials’ uses of the media to communicate with state and nonstate actors, to

build confidence and advance negotiations, and to mobilize public support for agreements". In this context, media diplomacy uses the media to mobilize public support for policy-makers to exert pressure on other political actors and reach an agreement. Especially with technological developments, the scope of media diplomacy has expanded. Media diplomacy is not only the relationship and cooperation of political actors and institutions with communication professionals, but also the effort to get the support of the internal public; it is a peaceful action designed to build trust with the foreign public and foreign societies through actions related to conflicts. It is not an action that can be used alone to fulfill its function and it is beneficial when traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy, and media diplomacy are combined.

In the next section, *L'Aujourd'hui la Turquie*, an individual, commercial communication institution that operates in French and does not receive financial support from either of these countries, will be examined in terms of media diplomacy to examine Turkey–France relations.

#### **4 Turkey–France Relations and Media Diplomacy: The Example of *L'Aujourd'hui La Turquie* Newspaper**

The field of media diplomacy and public diplomacy are two fields that feed off each other. Therefore, when evaluating the relations between Turkey and France, it is necessary to consider diplomatic relations and the media, which act as a catalyst in relations. The history of the Francophone press in Turkey is ancient and it is known that there is a French publishing tradition in the field of newspaper and magazine publishing. The first newspapers published in the Ottoman period were those published by the French Embassy. The first is *Bulletin des Nouvelles*, which is published as 6–8 pages two days a month (Topuz, 2012, pp. 34–35). After it was published for about a year, the publication of the newspaper was stopped and after this newspaper, *Gazette Française de Constantinople* started its publication life (Topuz, 2012, p. 35). After these newspapers, many French-language newspapers appeared, especially in Izmir, the port gate of the Ottoman Empire opening to the West. Before the foundation of the Republic, a political newspaper named *Le Spectateur de l'Orient*, which was first published in 1825 and later renamed *Courrier de Smyrne* was published in French. This newspaper is the first newspaper to be published in Turkey without being affiliated with the French Embassy (Topuz, 2012, p. 36). Around 150 French newspapers were published within the Ottoman borders until 1908 (Koloğlu, 2006, p. 36). The last French-language newspaper of the 20th century published in Turkey is *Le Journal d'Orient*, published incessantly from 1918 to 1971. Today, *L'Aujourd'hui la Turquie* newspaper, the first issue of which was published on April 1, 2005, is the only newspaper published in French in Turkey. The decrease in the number of French newspapers in the new period that started with the establishment of the Republic, starting from the Ottoman period, also mirrors the relations between Turkey and France. In this study, the role of *Aujourd'hui la Turquie*

newspaper, which is the only French-language newspaper in Turkey, in the field of media diplomacy is discussed through the relations between Turkey and France.

More than 200 employees have contributed to the newspaper *L’Aujourd’hui la Turquie*, which has been published in color and tabloid format for more than 15 years and approximately 40 people are currently working in the printing process of the newspaper. Half of the newspaper staff, which has 15 expert columnists, lawyers, politicians, and political scientists, live in Paris, while the rest of the team lives in various parts of the world. The newspaper has brought the views of many artists, government officials, educators, company executives, business people, and diplomats from different countries to its pages. When evaluated in terms of media diplomacy, it is considered that the newspaper has a vital role in terms of relations between Turkey and France, as it addresses a sizeable French-speaking audience in Turkey and around the world. *L’Aujourd’hui la Turquie* reaches its readers in Turkey with a monthly newspaper distributed by subscription and reaches its French-speaking readers around the world through daily publications on its official website and mobile application. The mobile application, which provides free access to the issues of the newspaper, is viewed by more than 10,000 monthly and the website is viewed by 25,000 monthly (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). While the viewership rate of the newspaper on Facebook is more than 50,000, it has more than 3,400 followers on Instagram (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). In addition to contributing to the spread of Francophonie in Turkey and the world, the newspaper also introduces Turkey to French-speaking countries politically, economically, socially, and culturally. *L’Aujourd’hui la Turquie*, which has nearly 3,500 subscribers in Turkey, is distributed in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, and Turkey (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). 650 of 3,500 subscribers are in France. The relevant readership consists of people from academia, senior executives, deputies, senators, libraries of municipalities, members of the Turkish-French friendship association, and people who have gone to France from Turkey or have received postgraduate education. Half of the 650 people are Turks living in France and the other half are French (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). The almanac of *L’Aujourd’hui la Turquie*, which includes the first page of the first 155 issues, was also published, and the French Ambassador in Turkey wrote the Foreword of the said publication. Hüseyin Latif, editor-in-chief of the newspaper, states the following regarding the audience the newspaper is addressing: “Germans, Moroccans, and Swiss are very interested in our newspaper. All international diplomatic circles follow our newspaper because we have expert staff. We have employees who have PhDs in international relations and are professors on the editorial board. They find their views interesting. They want to read. And there is only one international newspaper in Turkey. There are a few English-language newspapers in Turkey, but ours is the only international newspaper you can find in France and Europe. The current Ambassador, the former Ambassadors, they all follow our newspaper. I say this for the French, but so do the others.” (Latif, 2018).

In his statement, Latif also emphasizes that they are trying to prepare an interview or an editorial on the agenda, which stands out in Turkey in every issue (Latif, 2018, September 28). The fact that *Aujourd’hui la Turquie* is the only newspaper

published in French in Turkey also mirrors the relations between Turkey and France. The only French newspaper that reaches French-speaking readers both at home and abroad. Bringing Turkey's agenda items together with French-speaking audiences is extremely important in its role in public diplomacy. In addition to reaching the French-speaking masses, the fact that the newspaper is followed closely by French diplomats also reveals its importance in media diplomacy. Latif describes the newspaper's readership as follows (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021): "French diplomats follow the newspaper very closely, but the French living in Turkey do not. French diplomacy is trying to prevent the newspaper from spreading. (...) They do not want the French to recognize the newspaper. For example, let's say a minister comes from France. A senior bureaucrat arrives. They do not tell the diplomats that a French newspaper is published here. They say it doesn't matter even if it is revealed. Frankly, they don't want us to gain importance to a certain degree because they think that we can obtain a certain power and become a possible threat against them. That is what I think. Diplomats, Ankara Embassy, buy a certain number of newspapers. Senior diplomats read it. Again, they do not spread it to common diplomats. They do not do it just because anyone can buy it and read it. People in the embassy and consulate have worked here for years and are not aware of the newspaper. There are the French who came in the same way. They have their central broadcasting media against them. There is a thing called 'Le Petit Journal'. It categorizes the French here, who they are. That makes it easier for them to e-mail with them and Turks who sympathize there."

The newspaper is a window to Turkey for the French-speaking people and this window opens not only to Turkey, but also to the world thanks to the columns written by Turkish experts. Accordingly, *Aujourd'hui la Turquie* is the only newspaper that fills the media diplomacy gap in Turkey–France relations. A fact that emerged during the meeting with Latif is that France or Turkey's newspaper was not fully supported, despite its critical role in media diplomacy. Latif stated that Turkish diplomats, senior diplomats, and top diplomats of France read the newspaper and pay attention to what is written (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). Latif's statements regarding the role of the newspaper in the field of media diplomacy are as follows (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021): "The Republic of Turkey has such a tool in its hands. It is a regularly published newspaper with a history of 17 years, and the staff in it all have postgraduate degrees. Professors write. They are on the editorial board. There is such a tool in the hands of the Republic of Turkey. It can be used very well, but I am doing this instead of the Republic of Turkey. We are advertising Turkey. Its secret advertisement... But we do it by using the rules of journalism. Neither the reader, nor the state, or the administrators of the state do not take care of the newspaper. They were supportive at times. They want to see us wherever they go, but their support is nothing more than 'You have our support'... But the French also say, 'We always support you'... For example, when the minister arrives, the ambassador introduces us immediately. I'm not talking about the present one. This is the former... We are in very good relations with the present ambassador. They call it a 'French newspaper.' They say 'we support you'. They don't support at all. That's what they tell the minister. So, some diplomatic rules would not be

appropriate there. “How do you support it?... So they don’t support anything. I think the French state would be pleased if this newspaper stopped its publication today, because there is no danger for them at the moment, but usually, for example, in Paris, I was chatting with a senior person from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Turkish Embassy on Republic Day. I showed the last issue of the newspaper. There the man was shocked. Just because we wrote a critical article about the submarine purchase story. Of course they don’t like this situation very much. Of course, we can criticize France more easily in a French newspaper that is published in French and mainly subscribed or read by Turks.”

Latif states that although the newspaper is followed by high-level diplomats, many French bureaucrats or diplomats in Turkey are not aware of the newspaper (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). He stated that the French Ambassador visited the office recently and stayed for more than two hours, that the same person came to visit the Consulate General and that they were on good terms with him (Latif, personal communication, November 3, 2021). Latif explains the reasons why the newspaper is not known and supported by some diplomats and bureaucrats as follows: “Most senior managers of *Institute Français* do not know that there is a French newspaper in Turkey. The bottom does not reflect on it. Why does not it reflect? They do not want to reflect that. I can only say it directly in person. Somehow, they do not support Turkey. The spread of French in Turkey... If you notice, most of the schools teaching French in Turkey were founded as religious schools, but after the establishment of the secular Turkish Republic in 1923, they became completely secular and even became the leading proponents of secularism. I get support from these schools. Schools support the newspaper, but the organs of the state, such as the *Institute Français*, supported the newspaper—once it only had a directrice in Istanbul—that lady supported us. I asked this to the current Ambassador—in Paris he was the director of document ‘diplomatique’ in the archives, between two assignments while he was in Paris—there: ‘Why is our newspaper not being supported?’. He replied, ‘It is not one of our priorities. There are many different priorities’. His response was short as that. I could not pursue it further, I can not. You are talking to an Ambassador. His time is very limited. He brings me the original documents of Lausanne in the archive. He showed me around, but he did not want to answer my question too much. The French State always wants to broadcast with the tools it has set up. It wants to spread.”

## 5 Conclusion

The media has become an important factor in global politics within the scope of media diplomacy. This new position also affected the development of diplomatic methods and results and changed the actors involved in the implementation of diplomacy. Establishing the relationship between political actors and institutions and the media within the framework of a balanced structure is extremely necessary for an effective and rational foreign policy structuring. The reason for this is that political actors and

institutions use global media and mass media effectively day by day. In order for media diplomacy to be successful, the balance between the media used as a functional tool and political goals should be designed by considering the structural features of the media and its duties in the democratic process. Otherwise, the situations that may be encountered will result in the failure of media diplomacy. When the complex structure of media diplomacy is combined with the complex relationship plane for the purpose of influencing and achieving results, it should also be considered that the media has a three-dimensional structure and an autonomous structure.

In addition to the efforts of political actors and institutions to hold or expand the administrative elements, it has been revealed that a consensus structure is formed by the combination of diplomacy tools and media tools. Media diplomacy reaches every level of the social structure through all kinds of activities that take place in the international system, through the media, and puts these structures in the position of “influencer” by removing them from the status of “audience”. However, this structural change also changes the structure of journalism and assigns a diplomatic mission to these people. Although the conclusion of this diplomatic mission belongs to the political power/institution, their area of responsibility has expanded as the media and journalists have assumed the “transmitter” role in achieving this result.

French newspapers have a long history in Turkey. The fact that the first newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire were French newspapers dozens of which were published in Turkey starting from the imperial period, from the foundation of the Republic to the present, reveals the dynamic nature of the relations between Turkey and France in the domain of media diplomacy. Despite this deep-rooted history, only *Aujourd'hui la Turquie* has remained from many newspapers published in French since the imperial period to the present day. In consequence of meeting with the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Hüseyin Latif, it was emphasized that the newspaper in question was neither supported by Turkey nor France and although the newspaper was followed by high-level French diplomats and bureaucrats, it was not known and wanted to be known by the French diplomats and bureaucrats at lower rank. Likewise, Turkey does not support the newspaper in a solid manner and does not see it as a potential media diplomacy tool. However, *Aujourd'hui la Turquie*, which has an important role in the field of media diplomacy, is trying to survive with its own limited means and budget, especially Latif's individual efforts, and continues its broadcast endeavors. While *Aujourd'hui la Turquie* can be an important public diplomacy and media diplomacy tool for Turkey, the newspaper is not supported in any way and is considered neither a public diplomacy nor a media diplomacy tool.

The fact that Turkey and France, which have had socio-cultural, political, economic, and diplomatic ties for centuries, could not operate in the field of media diplomacy as much as they did in the Ottoman and Republican eras also gives some clues about the relations between Turkey and France. First, the critical decrease in the number of press organizations broadcasting in French in Turkey shows that Turkey and France are not in close relations as they were before. Accordingly, it is considered that the rupture observed between Turkey and France in the field of media diplomacy will have negative consequences in the field of public diplomacy for both countries. In order to move the relations between the two countries to a more positive point,

the increase in the number of newspapers published in French in Turkey and the implementation of the newspapers published in Turkish in France can improve the relations between the two countries and create important opportunities for the societies in Turkey and France to get to know each other in a better sense. *Aujourd'hui la Turquie* newspaper, which is not among the “priorities” of France, can be included in the processes as an important public diplomacy and media diplomacy tool for Turkey. *Aujourd'hui la Turquie*, which can act as a bridge in the field of media diplomacy in the relations between Turkey and France, is waiting to be discovered as an important public diplomacy tool and actor in order to reach the French society and the French speaking people, which Turkey has difficulty in reaching.

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