Digital Diplomacy as Crisis Communication: Turkish Digital Outreach after July 15

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Abstract:
The failed coup attempt on the night of July 15th unsurprisingly affected Turkish diplomacy. In addition to being one of the deadliest clashes Turkey has ever witnessed inside its borders, the coup also constituted a threat to the country's international reputation. On the first anniversary of the coup, Turkish representations went on a digital offense under the #1507mfa hashtag. Using a dataset of tweets compiled between July 13th and July 17th, 2017, this study analyzes the messages used and the relations created by Turkey to share its story and to protect its image.

Key Words:
Digital diplomacy, crisis communication, Turkey, #1507mfa, network analysis, content analysis.

Introduction

On July 15, 2016, Turkey went through a failed coup attempt. A small faction of armed forces, calling themselves Peace at Home Council, attempted to overthrow the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* AKP) government and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. When Istanbulians saw the tanks blocking the traffic or when fighter jets were spotted over Ankara on July 15th, citizens were in shock. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım confirmed on live TV that there was an uprising of some military sections, President Erdoğan used FaceTime to address the nation live, while thousands of individuals went to the streets to stop the military.[1] The country witnessed one of its deadliest clashes on the streets of many of its cities. When the sun rose on July 16th, the fighting was

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[1]   Berk Esen and Sebnem Gumuscu, "Turkey: How the Coup Failed", *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (2017): 59–73, *https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0006.*

mostly over. The coup attempt failed yet caused over 200 civilians to lose their lives and left thousands more wounded. On July 19th, 2016[2] a state of emergency was declared. The government argued that it was Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) that mobilized military personnel and equipment to overthrow the country's democratically elected government. Since the summer of 2016, there has been a widespread attempt to bring the individuals who took part in the planning and execution of the coup attempt to justice.

While trying to recuperate from the fears of the night of July 15th, the country also found itself in need to communicate with foreign audiences. This research looks at a specific digital diplomacy campaign used by Turkish diplomatic representations around the world that took place on the first anniversary of the coup, on July 15th, 2017. Using the hashtag #1507mfa, Turkish embassies and consulates tweeted about their outreach activities in their host countries. As Twitter is a public platform, various other users – including but not limited to civil society organizations, politicians, foreign diplomats, and individuals – interacted with the content and engaged with official accounts.

We live in a networked society in which individuals are connected to each other. As summarized by Manuel Castells' prominent work, today's network society is "a society whose social structure is made around networks activated by microelectronics-based, digitally processed information and communication technologies".[3] Even contemporary foreign policy recommendations point to the importance of networks and networked cultures.[4] Diplomatic interactions on Twitter and other social media platforms present an instance of a networked society.

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[2]   The initial declaration was only for three months. The state of emergency has been extended several times and is still in effect as of this writing in February 2018.

[3]   Manuel Castells, *Communication Power* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 24.

[4]   Anne-Marie Slaughter, "America's Edge: Power in the Networked Century", *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2009): 94–113; Anne-Marie Slaughter, "A Grand Strategy of Network Centrality", in *America's Path: Grand Strategy for the Next Administration*, ed. Richard Fontaine and Kristin M. Lord, 2012, *http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_AmericasPath_FontaineAndLord.pdf*.

The Turkish campaign, #1507mfa, has the characteristics for becoming a landmark case study in how digital diplomacy can be used to reach target audiences after a crisis due to two reasons. First, the coup on July 15th has proven to be a contentious issue for the Turkish government as their post-coup practices have received mixed reactions from foreign publics, ranging from whole-hearted support to criticism. Consequently, communication – as well as its evaluation – became vital to win the hearts and minds of the people. Second, the data retrieved from Twitter shows both the content of their messages and the relationships built with other users through retweets, replies, and mentions. Therefore, it is possible to observe both the networking attempts and the messages disseminated.

The rest of the article is structured in four sections. First, a brief background on Turkish digital diplomacy and the events surrounding the failed coup attempt is presented. Second, the research questions and methodology are outlined. Third, the findings of content and network analyses are shared. The article is concluded with recommendations for practitioners and future research.

Digitalizing Diplomacy: Turkish Experience

The impact of digital communication technologies can be observed in a variety of practices, ranging from education to business. The practice of diplomacy, unsurprisingly, was also penetrated. Scholars embraced the term digital diplomacy to explain the "the overall impact ICTs (information and communication technologies) have had on the practice of diplomacy, ranging from the email to the smartphone and social networking sites".[5] This research, in line with the main theme of this special issue, focuses on four dimensions of digitalization of diplomacy.

From a functional dimension, digitalization introduced the implementation of new communication platforms in diplomacy. According to Digi-

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[5]   Ilan Manor, *Are We There yet: Have MFAs Realized the Potential of Digital Diplomacy?*, Brill Research Perspectives (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 3.

tal Diplomacy Atlas 2017,[6] a Turkish project that keeps track of the digital presence of ministries of foreign affairs across the world, Turkey is using social media accounts, smartphone apps, and video sharing platforms in addition to its official websites in its diplomatic outreach. Normative dimension argues that the values of digital society changes diplomatic practices. The case at hand, #1507, for instance shows the Turkish commitment to interactivity and openness. The foreign representations carry out their communication activities on a publically accessible platform and allow other users to interact with their messages. The communication process summarized here is made by changes observed through the institutional dimension. The embassies and consulates embraced social media and incorporated these tools to their daily work routines. Lastly, from an analytical dimension, digital diplomacy enables the researchers to employ different research methods – such as network and content analyses – to assess the campaigns.

Digital diplomacy enables countries to engage with target audiences and build networks[7] in addition to disseminating message. This dual function is similarly discussed within public diplomacy studies which refer to a variety of activities carried out to communicate with foreign publics such as international broadcasting and student exchanges.[8] Turkey can be considered as a late-adopter of the practice of public diplomacy. The earliest reference to the concept in public documents was in 2006.[9] The first institution to explicitly bear the name "public diplomacy", the *Office of Public Diplomacy* (KDK), was established in 2010.[10]

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[6]   The website can be accessed at *http://digital.diplomacy.live/digital-diplomacy-atlas-2017/*, last accessed February 15, 2018.

[7]   Daryl Copeland, *Guerrilla Diplomacy:Rethinking International Relations* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).

[8]   Nicholas John Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Seven Lessons for Its Future from Its Past", *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 6, no. 1 (February 2010): 11–17, *https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2010.4*.

[9]   Jan Melissen, "Reflections on Public Diplomacy Today" ("Public Diplomacy" Conference, Ankara, 2006), *http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20060206_cdsp_online_melissen.pdf*.

[10]   Başbakanlık, "Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü" (Resmi Gazete, 2010), *http://kdk.gov.tr/kurumsal/kdk-genelgesi/5*.

Yet, despite its arrival, the country has been actively engaging with foreign audiences through cultural diplomacy projects, development aid, student exchanges, and traditional media.[11]

The same rapid pace of adaptation was also observed in digital diplomacy. The country operates several social media accounts across different platforms.[12] As the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu[13] states, Turkey currently administers numerous social media accounts in 18 different languages. Virtually all Turkish foreign representations – including embassies, consulates, and permanent delegations – operate their own Twitter accounts.[14] In response to the communication needs following the failed military coup, the ministry launched a dedicated web portal[15] and social media platforms. In other words, digital diplomacy was seen as a viable crisis communication tool for Turkey that enables the country to share its side of the story.

The failed coup attempt posed a challenge to Turkish public and digital diplomacy apparatus. The Turkish government faced the need to share its narrative. The official accounts argue that the failed coup attempt was planned and executed by Fethullah Gülen and his followers. Gülen, who has been living in a self-imposed exile, is known as the leader of a religious movement, *Hizmet*, that operates a network of schools, civil society organizations, businesses, and media outlets across the world.

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[11] Gaye Asli Sancar, "Turkey's Public Diplomacy: Its Actors, Stakeholders, and Tools", in *Turkey's Public Diplomacy*, ed. Philip Seib and B. Senem Cevik, Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13–42.

[12] Jared Schroeder, Nur Uysal, and Maureen Taylor, "Social Media and Soft Power: Positioning Turkey's Image on Twitter", *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 338–59, *https://doi.org/10.1163/18739865-00503013*.

[13] Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, "Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu's Blog at the State of Digital Diplomacy 2016", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016, *http://www.mfa.gov. tr/foreign-minister-çavusoğlu_s-blog-at-the-state-of-digital-diplomacy-2016.en.mfa*.

[14] There has been no official statistics or record-keeping on the actual number of digital presence. However Turkey had 228 foreign representations in 2015 and the official account for MFA (@TC_Disisleri) follows 222 accounts that belong to Turkish representations. Given the lack of an official list, the following list of @TC_Disisleri can be seen as a proxy comprehensive list.

[15] The portal is active as of March, 2018 and can be accessed at *http://15.07.gov.tr/*.

The night of the coup was extraordinary, to say the least, in terms of civilian involvement. Across the country, unarmed civilians took the streets to stand against the coup. Within the framework of this research, what made the night even more remarkable is the employment of technology to communicate with target audiences. President Erdoğan, who was on vacation with his family at the time, used FaceTime – an iPhone application for video chat – in his first address to the public.[16] Shortly after, every mobile phone user in the country received a text message signed off by the president's name. It read "My Dear Nation; Do not give up the heroic resistance that you have shown for your country, your land, and your flag. We continue the resistance and democracy watches to teach the traitorous terrorists (FETÖ) who attempted to occupy our country a lesson. The streets belong to the people, not to tanks". The call was answered by millions of people who participated in democracy watches until they were called off by President Erdoğan in August 2016.[17]

Starting with the declaration of state of emergency on July 19th, 2016, Turkey started a widespread investigation into FETÖ and its members. As of October 2017,[18] the investigations led to over 60,000 arrests, closing of over 180 media outlets and 2,000 educational facilities affiliated with FETÖ, and dismissal of over 140,000 individuals from public service. Fifteen universities were shut down, and around 5,000 faculty members were dismissed.[19] Across all the cases, official accounts argue that the individuals and organizations had links with FETÖ and constituted formidable threats to national security. Domestic opposition, on the other hand, claims that the government is using the coup as a pretext to crackdown any dis-

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[16] Al Jazeera, "Erdogan Resorts to iPhone's FaceTime after Coup Attempt", July 16, 2016, *http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/erdogan-resorts-iphone-facetime-coup-attempt-160715233749172.html.*

[17] Anadolu Ajansı, "Avrupa Yenikapı'daki Dev Mitingi Böyle Gördü", NTV, August 8, 2016, *http://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/dunya/avrupa-yenikapidaki-dev-mitingi-boyle-gordu,W1w5riGZrkKCsHeiUnbnuQ.*

[18] For up-to-date figures, readers can visit the website of Turkey Purge, a watchdog organization. *https://www.turkeypurge.com/.*

[19] Scholars at Risk, "Free to Think 2017: Reports of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project", Free to Think (New York: Scholars at Risk, 2017), *https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Free-to-Think-2017.pdf.*

sidents.[20] International reaction has been similarly mixed, ranging from seeing the purge as a strong-willed attempt to protect democracy to accusing Turkey of indiscriminately punishing all opposition.[21]

The plethora of opinions makes communication even more essential and digital diplomacy more relevant. The Turkish government is in a position where it needs to promote its views and defend its actions to gain support. The next section provides further details about the specific digital diplomacy attempt studied and the research methodology.

Research Design and Methodology

During the week leading up to the anniversary of the coup, a hashtag started showing up in the tweets of official representations: #1507mfa, with numbers referring to July 15th and letters to Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such a coordinated effort was noteworthy, as there is usually little to no coordination among Turkish public diplomacy actors.[22] More often than not, even the content shared by the same actor across different platform – such as across the four Twitter accounts of MFA in different languages or across Facebook and Twitter pages of KDK – is not uniform. Yet, the data collected for this research found that 227 different accounts belonging to foreign representations and diplomats stationed in for-

[20]   Umit Bektas and Humeyra Pamuk, "Huge Crowd Rallies in Istanbul against Turkey's Post-Coup Crackdown", *Reuters*, July 10, 2017, *https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-march/huge-crowd-rallies-in-istanbul-against-turkeys-post-coup-crackdown-idUSKBN19U0O2.*

[21]   Hassan Hassan, "Post-Coup Turkey Asserts Bold, New Foreign Policy", The National, July 24, 2016, *https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/post-coup-turkey-asserts-bold-new-foreign-policy-1.160483*; Leela Jacinto, "Turkey's Post-Coup Purge and Erdogan's Private Army", *Foreign Policy* (blog), July 13, 2017, *https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/*; Kareem Shaheen, "Erdoğan to Continue Crackdown as Turkey Marks Failed Coup", *The Guardian*, July 16, 2017, sec. World news, *http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/15/erdogan-repeats-support-death-penalty-on-anniversary-of-turkey-coup-attempt.*

[22]   Gaye Asli Sancar, "Turkey's Public Diplomacy: Its Actors, Stakeholders, and Tools", in *Turkey's Public Diplomacy*, ed. Philip Seib and B. Senem Cevik, Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13–42.

eign representations have used the same hashtag. It can be argued that #1507mfa constitutes the largest coordinated digital diplomacy campaign in Turkish practice.

As the analytical dimension of digital diplomacy posits, Twitter makes it possible to import new research methods to the study of diplomacy. As researchers, we can observe both the content of the messages shared by and between actors, as well as how these actors come together to form groups. This research focuses both on the content of messages and relations. In terms of content, the research looks at the message Turkey shares on Twitter: *RQ1: What are the messages shared by Turkish representations on Twitter?*

Turkish messages have two main objectives – debriefing foreign audiences and restoring the image. In order to analyze the topics used in debriefing foreign audiences, an inductive content analysis method is used where each message is coded separately. For image restoration, the five strategies from Benoit's image restoration theory – denial, evasion of responsibility, reduce offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification – are used to code the messages.[23]

As Twitter gives users the opportunity to engage with each other through mentions, retweets, and replies, it is also possible to analyze the network that is created around a hashtag. The research also looks at the characteristics of #1507mfa as a network: *RQ2: What are the characteristics of the social network created around #1507 hashtag?*

For the purposes of this research, a dataset composed of all tweets sent using #1507mfa between July 13th, and July 17th, 2017 was created. Tweets were scrapped using twitter package of R.[24] A total of 4,136 tweets posted by 1,086 unique users was collected as a result. The dataset includes 2,989 instances of interaction among these users. The next section presents the findings of the content and network analyses.

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[23] William Benoit, "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication", *Public Relations Review* 23, no. 2 (1997): 177–86.

[24] Jeff Gentry, *twitteR: R Based Twitter Client*, 2013, *http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=twitteR*.

Findings

Content of the Messages

The content analysis of the tweets uncovers the themes used in debriefing the target audiences about the coup and in restoring the Turkish image. All 1,643 tweets included in the dataset had a debriefing context. The inductive analysis identified four different arguments used in coup debriefs.

First, and the most observed category, was providing evidence. Turkish representation in the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (*@TurkeyIOC*) tweeted that it has been continuing its "information activities" in its fight "against FETÖ". The Consulate General in Munich (*@TC_MunihBK*) tweeted that it works towards unmasking FETÖ. The Embassy in Rome (*@TC_Roma*) shared an article entitled "Evidence of Gülen's Involvement in July 15 Coup Attempt".

Second, in addition to presenting FETÖ as the culprit, the tweets also presented a terrorism frame – labelling the coup as an act of terrorism and FETÖ as a terrorist organization. The Embassy in Cairo (*@TurkEmbCairo*) quoted the Turkish Prime Minister who called the coup as the "deadliest terrorist event in Turkish history". The Embassy in Sana'a *(@TurkishEmbSanaa*) called FETÖ "a new generation terrorist organization based on hypocrisy, concealment and secrecy". Turkish Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva (*@TurkeyUNGeneva*) posted photos of Turkish people talking about the "terrorist FETÖ coup attempt". The Embassy in Dhaka (*@TCDakkaBE*) framed its commemoration events as "cooperation with the Bangladeshi government in the field of counter-terrorism".

Third, the role of civilians in thwarting the coup is extensively promoted. A quote from President Erdoğan that said "[t]hey try to take control of our country on July 15, but they could not take control of Turkish people who fought" was shared by 13 foreign representations. Similarly, a short video created by TRT World, Turkey's English-language public broadcaster, titled "How the Turkish people stopped a coup" was widely shared. Around 40 foreign representations tweeted photos from the events they held around July 15th. The events were either called "commemoration events" for those who lost their lives or celebrations of the

"Democracy and National Unity Day" – a newly minted national holiday in Turkey marking the day of the failed coup attempt.

Last, Turkey draws attention to the global outreach of FETÖ. The Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations (*@Turkey_UN*) tweeted that "[a]ll member States need to be vigilant against FETÖ's activities". The mission also argued that FETÖ is a global enterprise with "global aspirations of power and dominance". The global outreach tweets also included examples of international support to Turkey. The condemnation of the coup by Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO, was also shared by Anatolian Agency – Turkey's state-owned news agency. The most retweeted text in the dataset belonged to the Embassy in Islamabad (*@TrEmbIslamabad*) which thanked Pakistan for its cooperation in Turkey's fight against FETÖ.

In its attempt to debrief the target audiences, the Turkish representations had more than 12,000 diplomatic engagements, gave 2,798 interviews, held 267 press conferences, and published 646 op-eds.[25] In its digital diplomacy activities, the aim seems to be painting a picture in which there is no doubt about the perpetrators of the coup attempt. Foreign audiences should recognize the coup as a terrorist attack undertaken by FETÖ which was stopped by the determination of Turkish people. Moreover, this particular terrorist threat is not limited to Turkey and has the potential to affect other countries.

Nearly 70% (1,123) also included an image restoration aspect. Even though Turkey faced two image restoration issues, the coup itself and post-coup investigations, the latter subject received relatively less attention. In one of the few such instances, the Embassy in Washington, D.C. (*@TurkishEmbassy*) presented a simple denial, positioning the post-coup investigations as Turkey's right to self-defense. The Permanent Mission to the UN presented these investigations as examples of how Turkey uses "rule of law, morality, & democracy" to fight against FETÖ.

With regard to restoring the failed-coup image, tweets portray a mix of denial and reducing the offensiveness. In denial tweets, Turkey shifts the blame to FETÖ, where FETÖ, as a heinous terrorist organization, attacked

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[25]   Ecenur Çolak and Meltem Bulur, "Türkiye FETÖ'nün Gerçek Yüzünü Dünyaya Anlattı," *Anadolu Ajansı*, July 14, 2017, *http://aa.com.tr/tr/15-temmuz-darbe-girisimi/turkiye-fetonun-gercek-yuzunu-dunyaya-anlatti/861241.*

a unified front of Turkish government and people. The Consulate General in Munster (*@TC_Munster_Bk*) shared a video of Turkish people participating in symbolic democracy watches in Germany. The Permanent Mission to the Council of Europe sees July 15th as the day when Turkish people stood for the values of Council of Europe.

To reduce the offensiveness of the political unrest, Turkey both attacks the 'accuser' and bolsters its image. The attack tweets aim to highlight the lack of objective coverage. The Permanent Mission to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation shared a video on the effect of media bias on the perception of the failed coup. References to FETÖ's global outreach and influence on foreign media are observed across the tweets. The Ambassador to Khartoum (*@cmlttnaydin*), for instance, introduced the take-over of FETÖ-linked schools by Turkey as a success in this aspect. Bolstering messages highlight the developments in Turkish economy and democracy. The dataset includes 74 tweets, shared by nine different representations that highlight the economic growth the country has experienced in the last year. Both President Erdoğan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu published op-eds, discussing how Turkey is defending its democratic values and how it is fighting the enemies of democracy with democracy respectively.
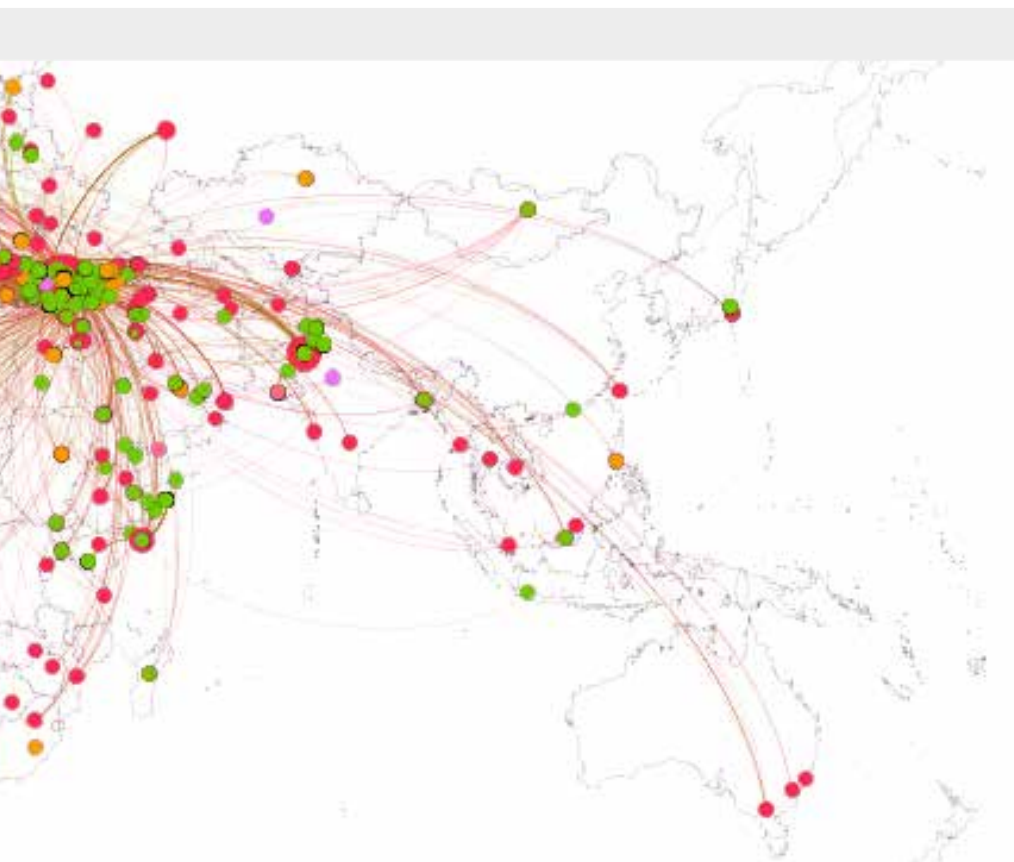
Structure of the Relations

The dataset includes 2,989 instances of interaction among 1,086 unique users. The interactions between users were observed through three possibilities provided by Twitter: mentions, replies, and retweets. Across these three instances, a user includes another username in the text of the tweet, creating an interaction originating from itself to the user tagged. This research question requires the importation of social network analysis tools into the study,[26] making it possible to take a structural look at relations among users. In other words, instead of solely focusing on bilat-

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[26]   Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery, "Network Analysis for International Relations", *International Organization* 63 (July 15, 2009): 559, *https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309090195.*

Figure 1. Network Map #1507mfa

In this figure, each circle represents a Twitter account and each line represents an interaction between the two connected actors. The location of the accounts in the figure represents their geographical locations.

eral relations between two actors, a more inclusive picture that demonstrates all the relations among all the actors is provided.

Around half (663) of the users only posted one tweet. Top 11 accounts[27] with the highest number of tweets have produced nearly a quarter of the tweets (1,263 tweets). In other words, a select group of users account for most of the activity. Four representations, MFA's accounts in Turkish, and an ambassador's account is included in the top 11 list.

Subsequently, a network map is created to explain the interactions of Turkish representations with other users. In addition to the graphic interpretations, the measures in social network analysis methods are also used in identifying important actors. This study used three such measures in addition to the network visualizations: degree centrality, modularity, and betweeness centrality.[28]

Figure 1 shows the network map of the users and their geographic locations. The colors correspond to different categories: red denotes a Turkish representation or a diplomat; orange represent Turkish public agencies; purple is foreign politicians; pink is international media; and lastly green belongs to individuals. As the map demonstrates, Turkey managed to create a global presence. Indeed, active accounts were found in 121 different countries.

Table 1 shows the more influential actors in this network through degree and betweenness centrality measures, both for overall network and for only Turkish representations. MFA's Turkish and English accounts, Turkish Embassy in London, and in the Hague (*@TCLaheyBE*) not only disseminate content and engage with others (out-degree centrality) but

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[27] The discussion looks at the top 11 accounts as two accounts are tied for the 10th place.

[28] Degree centrality identifies the number of interactions an actor has. If an account is mentioned by or mentions another account, its degree centrality measure increases. An actor with a high degree centrality measure in #1507mfa means that the Twitter account interacts with other accounts more often than an actor with a low degree centrality measure. Modularity identifies the smaller and denser communities within a network. In any given network, it is theoretically possible to have a smaller community whose members interact with each other more often compared to their interactions in the overall network. If two Twitter accounts belong to the same group in the current study, it means that they interact with the same accounts. Betweenness centrality is used to see which actors connect different modular groups to each other. An actor with a high betweenness centrality measure is situated as a bridge between different groups and connects them.

Table 1. Network #1507mfa Measures		
	Overall	Representations
Betweenness Centrality	TC_Disisleri	TC_Disisleri
	TurkEmbLondon	TurkEmbLondon
	TCLaheyBE	TCLaheyBE
	MFATurkey	MFATurkey
	TCKazanBK	TCKazanBK
In-degree Centrality	TC_Disisleri	TC_Disisleri
	TrEmbIslamabad	TrEmbIslamabad
	TC_Mogadishu	TC_Mogadishu
	TCLaheyBE	TCLaheyBE
	TurkEmbLondon	TurkEmbLondon
Out-degree Centrality	aslanmahmut45	TC_Disisleri
	BitlisliMahmud	TrEmbIslamabad
	vatan00091	TC_Mogadishu
	TC_Disisleri	TCLaheyBE
	cerginay	TurkEmbLondon
Degree Centrality	TC_Disisleri	TC_Disisleri
	TrEmbIslamabad	TrEmbIslamabad
	aslanmahmut45	TC_Mogadishu
	BitlisliMahmud	TurkEmbLondon
	vatan00091	TCLaheyBE

In-degree centrality ranking shows the accounts that are most interacted with by other account. Out-degree centrality ranking lists the accounts that interacts with the highest number of accounts. Degree centrality ranking is based on the sum of in-degree and out-degree measures, showing the actors with the highest number of interactions regardless of which account started the interaction.

also their content is engaged with by other accounts (in-degree centrality). Three individual users that occupy the third, fourth, and fifth places in degree centrality, actively retweeted the content created by others, but all have zero in-degree centralities. Therefore, their influence was limited. Cihad Erginay (*@cerginay*), a deputy undersecretary at MFA, similarly retweeted 53 content shared by Turkish representations around the region. Turkish Consulate General in Kazan (*@TCKazanBK*) constitutes an intriguing case. The account posted a total of 19 different tweets using the hashtag, including one retweet each from MFA and Yunus Emre Institute – a cultural diplomacy actor from Turkey. Its high betweenness centrality stems from one tweet that was widely shared by a variety of actors, including Turkish citizens, representations, and media outlets. The tweet portrayed a Tatar imam, Bulat Mubarakov, leading a prayer for those who lost their lives during the failed coup attempt.

The embassies in Mogadishu and Islamabad (*@TC_Mogadishu* and *@TrEmbIslamabad*) also warrant further explanation. Both representations produced a relatively low level of content, with 6 and 17 tweets respectively, both including two retweets. However, with such low figures, they were able to interact with dozens of other users (84 and 192 unique interactions respectively). Despite their low-level activity, these embassies reached better engagement figures.

Figure 2 portrays the entire social network once again, however, this time colors represent modularity groups. Islamabad and Mogadishu are the only representations where geographic proximity and modularity group overlap. Moreover, it should be noted that Pakistan and Somalia have the second and third highest number of accounts included in the dataset, following Turkey. In other words, several users in both countries not only supported the Turkish narrative by using #1507mfa, they also actively engaged with the Turkish representations.

Turkish digital diplomacy project, in this particular instance, predominantly communicated with foreign and domestic publics. However, it should be noted that the interactions included 20 media outlets and journalists, and 22 foreign political actors. The media interactions are limited to sharing the op-ed pieces and news articles published about the coup. The foreign political actors are engaged with in three different way: digital-only, mixed, actor-led. In its digital-only engagement with Council of

Europe (*@CoE*) for instance, the Turkish representation solely tagged the account in a tweet. The communication was only between the Twitter accounts. In its mixed engagement, the Mogadishu Embassy invited the Prime Minister and Minister of Information to the commemoration event, and sent out a photo of the event, tagging both Twitter accounts (*@SomaliPM* and *@engyarisow*). In actor-led engagement, foreign political actors take the initiative to create content using the hashtag or retweet existing content, similar to what the Senator Sehar Kamran (*@SeharKamran*) in Pakistan did by retweeting an article shared by the Islamabad Embassy.

The digital diplomacy component of Turkey's post-coup communication attempts is far from being over. The hashtag is still used – albeit rarely – by foreign representations. The analysis discussed in this section focused on the peak point of traffic around the first anniversary of the events. The next section concludes the study by reflecting on the findings of content and social network analyses.


Conclusion

Considering the number of countries adopting digital communication platforms and of the studies highlighting their importance, it can easily be argued that digital diplomacy is no longer an optional practice and is becoming a necessary core competency for diplomatic corps across the world. The case of Turkey and #1507mfa presents an opportunity in which all four dimensions of digital diplomacy come together.

During the five-day period included in this study, 227 accounts belonging to Turkish representations and diplomats, as well as 74 other Turkish-state owned accounts were active, interacting with over 1,000 accounts across the world and sharing 1,643 different texts. Functional dimension is highlighted the implementation of Twitter as an accepted diplomatic communication tool. Normative dimension is underlined by the importance of openness and engagement in the digital era. Institutional dimension is observed through the adaptation of Turkish representations and diplomats.

The research methodology presented here completes the four dimensions by introducing the analytical dimension. It is possible to evaluate this

Figure 2. Network Map #1507mfa, Modularity
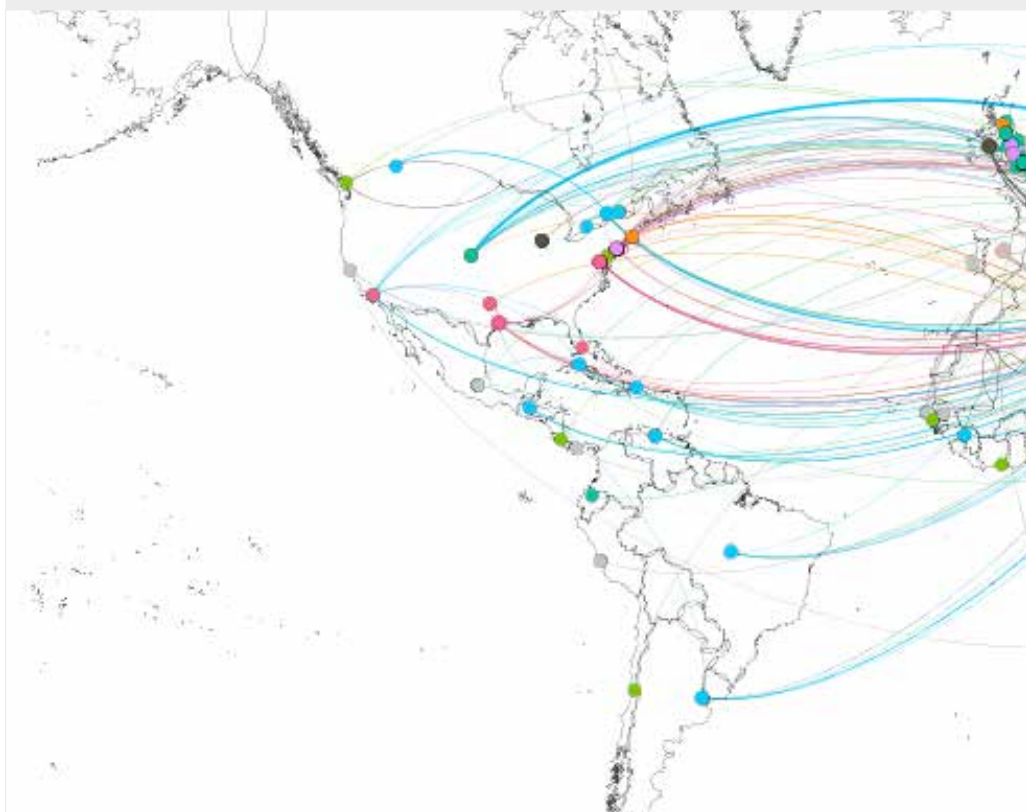
The actors that have the same color have denser relations with each other, compared to the interactions they have with others.
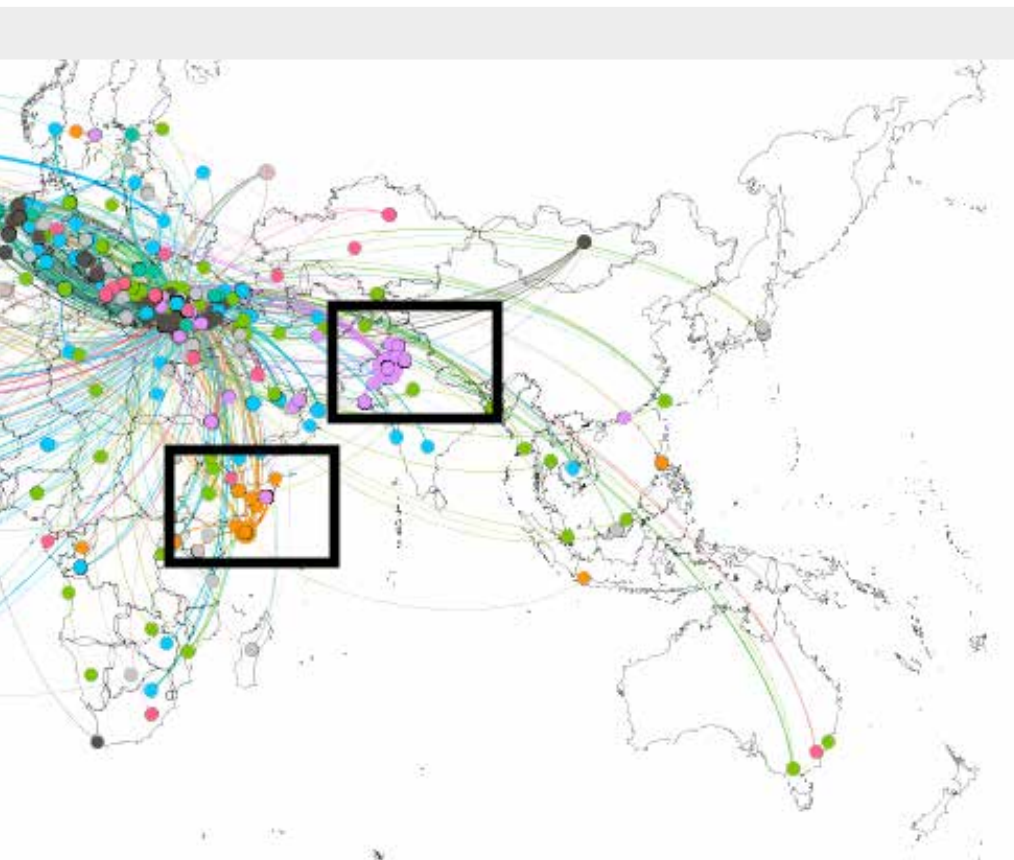
unique crisis communication attempt by combining content and network analyses. The content of the messages shared signal a coordinated effort in which messages do not contradict with each other. In debriefing efforts, Turkey consistently frames the coup as a terrorist attack that is, beyond a doubt, carried out by FETÖ – a terrorist organization with global threat potential. Image restoration efforts are also in line with the same frame. Turkish attempts to deny responsibility and reduce the effectiveness of the acts revolve around framing the coup as a terrorist attack and the Turkish response as self-defense.

The social network analysis points to two important variables. First, the content of tweets matters in terms of their outreach. As argued above, the inclusion of a Tatar imam helped the Consulate General in Kazan engage with more people. The most retweeted text in the dataset belongs to the Embassy in Islamabad in which Turkey thanks Pakistan for its support in Turkish, English, and Urdu. As local audiences can easily identify with such messages that focus on shared assets, such as shared religion and experiences, they are more likely to respond positively.

Second, digital diplomacy does not occur in vacuum but is influenced by other diplomatic, political, social, and cultural events. Two embassies that enjoyed the highest levels of interaction, Islamabad and Mogadishu, are based in countries that have positive attitudes towards Turkey, share the same religion, and have worked with Turkey. Somalia has received the highest part of Turkish foreign aid budget until 2014, and currently receives the second highest after Syria.[29] Turkey and Pakistan have always enjoyed amicable relations and are currently working on a variety of projects ranging from education to counter-terrorism together[30] Digital diplomacy based on pre-existing positive notions generates a larger outreach.

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[29] KDK, "Uluslararası Yardımlarda 'en Cömert Ülke' Unvanını Taşıyan Türkiye'nin Yardım Seferberliği Sürüyor", 2014, *http://kdk.gov.tr/haber/turkiyenin-dis-yardimlari-2013/494*; KDK, "Türkiye'nin 2014 Yılı Yardımları %47,3'lük Artışla 6,4 Milyar Dolara Çıktı", 2015, *http://kdk.gov.tr/haber/turkiyenin-dis-yardimlari-2014/590.*

[30] Birsen Erdogan, "Turkish Foreign Policy: A Literature and Discourse Analysis", in *Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Turkish Foreign Policy Discourse*, ed. Birsen Erdogan (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 47–77, *https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47683-4_4.*

Succinctly stated, #1507mfa is a significant episode of digital diplomacy. This study presented a descriptive account of Turkey on Twitter. The findings and conclusions should not be seen as a support for Turkey's success or lack thereof. Rather, the objective has been solely to show how digital diplomacy can function as a crisis communication tool. Moreover, the methodology demonstrates how a combination of content and social network analyses can be used to analyze such efforts.

Finally, this study provides useful insight for practitioners:

1. Digital diplomacy presents an opportunity to go on a public diplomacy offense at a global level.

2. Leveraging a network effect – in other words coordinating a digital diplomacy project among foreign representations increase:

■ the success of image restoration through consistent messaging,
■ the outreach of messages through local connections in foreign countries,
■ the presence of a country on digital networks.

3. Social network analysis gives practitioners the tools to measure the effectiveness of digital diplomacy campaigns by:

■ enabling the study of both content and relations,
■ summarizing the findings in visualizations,
■ highlighting the relations beyond bilateral interactions.