

EXAMINING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY MESSAGE STRATEGIES
DURING TIMES OF CRISIS COMMUNICATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT MAJOR TURKEY-RUSSIA CRISES

By

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ABSTRACT

Public diplomacy is a way of communicating a country's foreign policies to other countries with the main purpose of building favorable relationships. It is a vital instrument for international relations, used to construct relationships between nations and create positive images of a country in another. It also serves to address matters of conflict, build trust, and provide a platform for dialogue. In times of crisis, public diplomacy can help to bridge the gap between countries and create a more constructive atmosphere for negotiations. However, the role of public diplomacy in international crises has not been thoroughly studied in terms of the analysis of message strategies during challenging and critical times. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding of the effectiveness of public diplomacy as a crisis communication tool in the context of social, economic, environmental, political, and health crises. This dissertation seeks to address this need by examining the message strategies employed by a nation-state when confronted with a critical international political crisis.

This dissertation argues that public diplomacy can be used as a feasible approach in crisis communication when analyzing international crises, such as in the case of Turkey–Russia; the case of the shootdown of a Russian warplane in 2015 and the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara in 2016. Building from these case studies, the overarching questions of this dissertation are: First, do the public diplomacy functions (message strategies); advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political; used by governments differ when confronting a crisis? And second, do the public diplomacy functions used by the government differ when used in a digital platform and on a government official website during a crisis? Lastly, how did the traditional media frame and interpret both crises?

To analyze the questions, three different data sets were used (official press releases from both Turkey and Russia, Twitter posts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the presidential

accounts of both countries, and the highest circulation newspapers in the US – The New York Times, The Washington Post and in the UK-The Guardian, The Times) in the two crises mentioned above. Thematic analysis in qualitative research was used to examine the information included in all the data sets. Based on the results of the analysis, a new theme -apology- was identified and this is the contribution of this study. Additionally, the results indicated that traditional diplomacy between the leaders and behind-the-scenes diplomacy were influential in mitigating the crises. To conclude, this study supports the idea that public diplomacy is a viable approach in crisis communication to help nations mitigate crises.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NYT	The New York Times
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Controlling and disseminating information to achieve political and economic influence has become imperative for nations today, not only due to global competition but also as a tool to influence public opinion in other countries. Seib (2016) argues that "public opinion matters" in public diplomacy, and this is an important factor in influencing other countries. The effectiveness of public diplomacy in enhancing diplomatic relationships and mitigating crises depends on its ability to strategically communicate with the general public, which has become increasingly important in the digital age (Seib, 2016). To maximize this influence and reach their target audience, nations use persuasive strategic messages and framing techniques, along with technology such as social media platforms that can enhance communication efforts.

Public diplomacy is a way of communicating a country's foreign policies to citizens of other countries (Pamment, 2012). Its main purpose is to inform and educate the target audience in order to build favorable relationships with other countries (White & Radic, 2014) and increase interactions between foreign publics and governments. Another function of public diplomacy is to build dialogue and create sympathy for the country itself. Public diplomacy is described as "strategic, planned and intentional" (Pamment & Wilkins, 2018) maneuvers of the government. The activities of public diplomacy include attempts to create a positive climate in the target foreign publics to facilitate the acceptance of its foreign policy (Roberts, 2007). To succeed, (Cull, 2010) emphasizes the "golden rule of public diplomacy," which is "what counts is not what you say but what you do" (p.13). Yet the ideal aim of public diplomacy must be related to countries' foreign policy. The foreign policy of one country functions as a tool to influence the target country to build or fix relations with foreign nations. Alternatively, recent studies on public diplomacy position public diplomacy as a foreign policy tool to establish cultural

communication with other nations (Sevin, Metzgar, & Hayden, 2019).

During times of crisis, public diplomacy can be a vital instrument for international relations in crisis communication. It can serve to address matters of conflict, build trust, and provide a platform for dialogue. In times of crisis, public diplomacy can help to bridge the gap between countries and create a more constructive atmosphere for negotiations and construct relationships between nations. Moreover, it can create a more favorable image of a country and promote its values and interests and build bridges between various cultures. By engaging in public diplomacy, countries can create beneficial international relations. Such engagement creates open dialogues and meaningful exchanges which can help nations to strengthen diplomatic relationships as well as influence foreign public opinion.

Press coverage of international crises plays an important role in creating public perception and influencing media framing. Public diplomacy is used to promote foreign policy (Sun, 2008) and shape media framing (Frensey & Michaud, 2006). However, studies indicate that public diplomacy has not been adequately addressed in international relations research (Sevin, Metzgar, & Hayden, 2019). There are studies in the public diplomacy literature that analyze both traditional media and digital platforms to understand its influence. These studies analyze sources, authors, key frames, and their implications for the international arena (Golan, 2013).

International news plays an important role in determining a country's political success. In this context, scholars analyzed international newspapers to understand the political impact of promoting political perceptions through public diplomacy (Yarchi, Wolfsfeld, Sheaffer, & Shenhav, 2013). From a different perspective, the local press plays a critical role in managing a country's reputation. This topic was analyzed in the context of the visit of the Chinese president

to the U.S. in 1997. The press coverage of how this visit was perceived by the local press was discussed in terms of public diplomacy, and findings indicated that the image of China was not improved (Wang & Chang, 2004). The study emphasized that the local press plays a key role in influencing the perception and reputation of a nation in the eyes of a foreign public.

Despite being scarce, the literature regarding public diplomacy in digital media mostly focuses on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs. Much of the existing literature on public diplomacy overwhelmingly focuses on the U.S., with studies concentrating on the U.S. use of social media (Zaharna & Rugh, 2012) and the use of U.S. Embassy blogs in China (Zhong & Lu, 2013); comparative analyses of digital strategies of countries like China, Japan, and Europe (Bjola & Jiang, 2015); Iran (Burns & Eltham, 2009); Twitter accounts of Central-Eastern European and Western embassies (Dodd & Collins, 2017); and Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites of Central and Eastern Europe (White & Radic, 2014). There are other studies which have examined both traditional and digital media in the same study (Albishri, Tarasevich, Proverbs, Kioussis, & Alahmari, 2019).

Research Objectives

This dissertation aims to examine the complexities of public diplomacy in the Turkey-Russia political crises. To date, the role of public diplomacy in international crises has not been thoroughly studied in terms of the analysis of message strategies. This dissertation seeks to address this need by examining the strategic messages employed by a nation-state when confronted with a critical international political crisis. The overarching question of this dissertation is to seek answers to the following questions:

"Do the public diplomacy functions (message strategies); advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political; used by

governments differ when confronting a crisis? Do the public diplomacy functions used by the government differ when used in a digital platform and on a government official website during a crisis? Lastly, how do traditional media frame and interpret both crises?"

To analyze these questions, two case studies are used. The crises between Turkey and Russia are analyzed based on their shared messages on the governmental accounts and newspapers are also analyzed to capture how the news media framed the crises. By analyzing the message strategies utilized in the Turkey-Russia crises and the newspapers at a thematic level, this dissertation aims to further the understanding of public diplomacy as a tool for international relations in crisis communication. This dissertation focuses on the strategic messaging employed by both countries in order to assess their respective approaches to public diplomacy. Finally, the dissertation discusses the efficacy of public diplomacy messages as an instrument for managing international political crises.

Much of the research conceptualizes public diplomacy under public relations or relational management (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016), with no focus given to crisis communication. This dissertation analyzes the websites and social media platforms of government pages and newspapers, collecting three datasets and analyzing them through case studies. To accomplish this objective, the study is framed around Fitzpatrick's public diplomacy functions (2010). Therefore, the study is designed as a thematic study. The analysis relies on thematic analysis of relevant official press releases, social media, and newspapers. The main objectives of the dissertation are:

- to understand whether public diplomacy can be used as a feasible approach in international relations by using the functional categories of public diplomacy
- to examine what message strategies are used in both case studies by understanding

what governments say in press releases

-to understand what makes it into the news in major international news outlets in the U.S. and U.K. during a major crisis

-to see how public diplomacy contributes to the implementation of functional categories in crisis communication

-to contribute to building scholarly work in thematic analysis

-to identify a message strategy

-to emphasize that most public diplomacy research focuses on Western countries (Simons, 2014). Countries like Turkey and Russia need to be explored more and understood to have a broader understanding of the public diplomacy field and its application. Such analysis will bring a different richness to the field based on how public diplomacy is implemented and how it interacts with crisis communication.

Public diplomacy is the practice of international communication to influence public opinion in foreign countries. It is important to understand the connection and interaction between public diplomacy and crisis communication, as they can work together to effectively manage crises (Olsson, 2013). This knowledge can be used to create effective message strategies for crisis communication, its management, and to simultaneously influence public opinion and foreign policy. Due to the lack of research in the area where public diplomacy and crisis communication intersect, further study is needed. One of the objectives of the dissertation is to understand how these concepts can complement each other. Studies show that public diplomacy scholars have explored topics related to reputation management, international development, and conflict resolution (Sevin, Metzgar, & Hayden, 2019). However, further studies are still needed to understand how crisis is absent from public diplomacy literature (Olsson, 2013).

Auer (2016) argues that the connection between public diplomacy and crisis communication reduces the likelihood of crises occurring. In particular, Auer discusses the potential for this relationship to mitigate the occurrence of diplomatic or other types of crises. Furthermore, Auer (2016) suggests that public diplomacy can be used as a tactic to gain understanding and trust between nations, thus reducing tensions and ultimately improving international relations. Consequently, this dissertation seeks to analyze the use of public diplomacy functional categories used for message strategies as a tool for crisis communication.

A study conducted by Sevin, Metzgar, and Haydn (2019) has verified that there is an insufficient amount of literature combining and analyzing crisis communication and public diplomacy of governments. The authors argued that "media framing" and "promoting foreign policy" were less represented in public diplomacy studies, while "international development, reputation management, and conflict resolution" (p. 4831) were more studied. On the other hand, research regarding crisis communication has concentrated on the corporate and organizational level. The limited research that has been conducted suggests that public diplomacy is used as a tool for crisis communication to examine sense-making, networking, and messaging (Olsson, 2013) in international incidents. However, there is a dearth of research in the existing literature that integrates public diplomacy and crisis communication. The aim of this dissertation is to address this lack of research. In view of this, the dissertation aims to analyze the political aspect of crisis within the context of public diplomacy, utilizing thematic analysis in a qualitative approach. Furthermore, while previous research on crisis communication has mainly concentrated on private companies/organizations, there is a lack of information regarding its use from the perspective of public organizations (Olsson, 2014).

Background

Every country may experience a crises of economic, political, war, terrorism, health, and environment, whether these events are artificial or natural. Such a crisis event may bring negative or, perhaps, positive impacts. For instance, the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak had an immense influence all over the world, causing about 7 million deaths. Some countries blamed the Chinese government for not providing accurate information before of the spread of the virus. The outcome of not informing the world resulted in avoidable deaths. The outcome dramatically affected the world economy. Similarly, the Ukraine-Russian war which caused people to be displaced and thousands of people died.

When it comes to crisis, public diplomacy and crisis are integrated when conflicts occur between nations. Therefore, to overcome a crisis, the dissertation proposes that public diplomacy and crisis communication work together to understand and analyze crises. There are several definitions of crisis. To set the boundaries for the dissertation, a definition from Coombs will be employed. He defines crisis as “the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (Coombs, 2007, pp. 2-3).

Turkey and Russia have power in their own respective geo-regions. By using two case study model on the conflict between Turkey and Russia, the dissertation examines how international crises between the two countries can be understood via public diplomacy. For Turkey to create positive relationships with other countries as well as influence its international public, it must look for ways to engage with the international public through the “process of creating meaning regarding mutual concerns” (Uysal, Schroeder, & Taylor, 2012, p. 357). The general problem is that Turkey lacks a strategy in its relationship with other countries' publics

(Cevik & Sevin, 2017). In this respect, public diplomacy can play a meaningful role in influencing the public and, when used strategically, can overcome disputes.

There were two specific events that challenged both Turkey and Russia to resolve a crisis through public diplomacy. The two major events were the shooting down of a Russian warplane in Turkish airspace and the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey. The first major incident between Turkey and Russia occurred on November 24, 2015, after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane at the Turkish border. The incident increased tensions between the countries (Allen & Olorenshaw, 2015), and the dispute about where the plane was shot down has not been resolved. Russia claimed that it was shot down on the Syrian border until Turkish officials released the radar image of the Russian plane flying across Turkish territory. The second incident was the assassination of the Russian ambassador, Andrei Karlov, at an art exhibition titled “Russia Through Turks’ Eyes” while he was making remarks in Ankara on December 19, 2016. The assassin was a police officer who was later killed by the police. The event was covered widely by international media. This incident occurred after protests began in Turkey in response to Russia's support of the Syrian government and Russian involvement in the killings and destruction in Aleppo which is a city in the northern Syria (Arango & Gladstone, 2016).

Both incidents increased tensions between the two countries. The dissertation examines the incidents as case studies through the lens of public diplomacy and crisis communication to create a bridge between the two areas. Given the relatively recent attention to public diplomacy, social media use research in the field is scarce and mostly focused on the U.S. and other industrialized countries’ public diplomacy relations. That leaves much to be understood about how public diplomacy operates in other regions. Recent studies have assessed the online diplomatic representation of a country using data from embassy Twitter accounts and have

studied message strategies to see if there are any differences in messages used by different nations (Dodd & Collins, 2017; White & Radic, 2014). In another study, Zhong and Lu (2013) found differences in the public diplomacy practices of U.S. Embassy communication using Chinese blog and microblog sites. For instance, the authors argue, “In the new media context, information senders invite and encourage interaction and discussion on topics related to cultural exchange, bilateral relations, national values...” (Zhong & Lu, 2013, p. 546).

Significance

The aim of this dissertation is to examine whether public diplomacy can be used as a feasible approach in crisis communication for an international crisis case involving Turkey and Russia, and to contribute to creating a bridge between public diplomacy and crisis communication. Additionally, this dissertation applies functional message strategies to two case studies. The study aims to contribute to public diplomacy research by analyzing three different data sources official government web pages, Twitter accounts, and newspapers using qualitative thematic analysis. The results of this study can influence public diplomacy message strategies, which can be taken as an example for future political crises.

This study is significant for its thematic analysis and understanding of the fields of public diplomacy and crisis communication. It is important because there is a lack of thematic analysis in public diplomacy studies; therefore, analyzing the two crises using thematic analysis is another contribution of the study. The study is an illustrative evaluation of how the Turkish and Russian case studies can be adapted and analyzed from the identification of message strategies during times of crisis. The outcomes of the message strategies can be beneficial for crises similar to those of Turkey and Russia in the future. Such studies may enable public diplomacy scholars to analyze such cases from a broader perspective.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization of public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a relatively new domain in international and communication sciences. It emerged and developed towards the end of the Cold War period (Gilboa, 2008; White & Radic, 2014; Zhong & Lu, 2013). Public diplomacy is a way of communicating a country's international policies to other countries (Pamment, 2012). Its main purpose is to inform and educate a target audience in order to build favorable relationships between their countries (White & Radic, 2014) and increase the interactions between publics and governments. Another function of public diplomacy is to build dialog and create empathy and positive images for the country itself.

The term public diplomacy was associated with a former U.S. diplomat, Edmund Gullion, in 1965. As dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, he founded the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy. Public diplomacy was described as:

“the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of intercultural communications” (Cull, 2016).

Public diplomacy as an emerging new model in international relations has yet to develop a theoretical perspective, and its strong background is based on case studies (Entman, 2008). Studies of public diplomacy within the public relations field began in the 1990s (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992). It has been criticized for lacking a theoretical framework and offering little conceptual background of what it is and how it works (Gilboa, 2008; Graham, 2014). In line with

this argument, some scholars have questioned whether public diplomacy is an academic field due to the lack of consensus on what it is. This problem exists because of the difficulty in defining scope of public diplomacy (Gregory, 2008). Moreover, when public diplomacy emerged in the 1970s, communication technology relied heavily on radio and television. Now in the 21st century with the arrival of new digital technologies and formats, governments are challenged to become more engaged through these arriving vehicles (Cull, 2013; Gregory, 2008). Public diplomacy is a multidisciplinary field that embodies multiple definitions as it continues to develop. It draws from public relations, branding, systems theory, communication, social sciences, social psychology, media framing, international relations, political communication, cultural studies, psychology, and diplomacy studies making public diplomacy a multidisciplinary field (Gilboa, 2008; Gregory, 2008). Due to its wide range of activities, the term public diplomacy has been difficult to conceptualize and theorize. On the other hand, due to its wide applicability, it can be seen as a rich area for research.

Public diplomacy can be defined as “government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about an understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). Another definition of public diplomacy is to employ the use of communication practices for a specific foreign audience with the purpose of forming good relationships with its stakeholders and audiences by building a dialogue (Melissen, 2005). To some scholars, it is considered a way of building international trust (Mogensen, 2015). To some others it is an instrument used by the governments to build and manage relationships with foreign publics, influence their perspectives, and mobilize their actions to advance national interests and values (Gregory, 2014).

Concepts of soft, hard, and smart power

The key concepts of public diplomacy literature have been shaped by Joseph Nye. His writings on power, soft power, hard power, and smart power developed public diplomacy's key instruments. Specifically, the concept of soft power (Nye, 2008) has been used widely in international relations literature. However, before understanding what soft power means, it is important to know what power is. According to Nye (2008), power is "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want" (p. 94). Building on this definition, he defines soft power as "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction..." (2008, p. 94). In this context, soft power carries out persuasion through nonviolent actions and knitting political patterns, soft maneuvers so it can form the outcomes one desires. Nye argues that a country's soft power is based on three main sources which are "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others); its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad); and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)" (Nye, 2011, p. 84).

On the other hand, hard power is a concept which means the opposite of soft power. Implementation of hard power policies by a government is associated with military and economic coercion or sanctions. Nye (2011) defines hard power as "the ability to get desired outcomes through coercion and payment" (p. 16). Nye argues that hard power accommodates force and application of economic sanctions, as well as restrictions in the use of resources.

The last widely mentioned concept in international relations literature is the concept of smart power, which refers to the combination of both soft and hard power. Nye sees smart power as the combination of "hard and soft power resources into effective strategies" (2011, pp. 22-23), which incorporates "well-designed strategies with skillful leadership" (2011, p.8). Thus, smart power is not only a strategic crafting of political maneuvers and relationships, but also is a wise

way of implementation.

Traditional vs. new public diplomacy

In the past, governments have used the traditional way of public diplomacy to communicate with the outside world. This is called old diplomacy in the literature and usually is associated with representatives of foreign governments (Ross, 2002) and official meetings of the states. Traditional diplomacy (old diplomacy) is framed as one-way communication with a formal relation performed government-to-government or face-to-face meetings carried out in official environments. This type of public diplomacy was considered “exercises in propaganda, designed to demonstrate the superiority of a given nation’s position” (Riordan, 2003, p. 121).

As technologies developed and, more importantly, as public participation increased, traditional ways of communication were not sufficient anymore. Contrary to traditional diplomacy, the concept of new diplomacy emerged, and it has two-way communications. New diplomacy involves communication from government to people, mostly towards foreign people. It employs two-way communication where the respondent asks questions and the communication becomes interactive. It is considered “similar to propaganda” even though “it tries to persuade people what to think, but it is fundamentally different from it in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say” (Melissen, 2005, p. 18).

Even though traditional diplomacy is still used, with the increase in the use of communication technologies, two-way communication rapidly increased, and digitization of public diplomacy gave itself to what is called digital diplomacy today. This internet-based diplomacy refers to the practices of diplomacy conducted via social media platforms (Xiguang & Jing, 2010). Recent literature regarding internet-based diplomacy is referred to as “public diplomacy 2.0” (Melissen, 2005) or “networked public diplomacy,” which both aim to build

relational public diplomacy (Park & Lim, 2014) with foreign publics to try building dialog. This is especially true of public diplomacy 2.0, which focuses on user-generated content enabling two-way communication. Moreover, Melissen (2005) argues that the “new public diplomacy, also called public diplomacy 2.0, is moving away from the old structures towards practices that engage with foreign audiences and focus directly on the audiences instead of being centered on the state and the foreign media” (p. 13).

Mediated and digital public diplomacy

To have political impact at the international level, it is important to improve the image and have a sympathetic perception of the country in media coverage in the target foreign country (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009). Governments use strategic communication to control what types of information are disseminated, most importantly how the information is framed to gain political control in international policy and called mediated public diplomacy. In other words, mediated public diplomacy is “the organized attempts by a president (or king) and his/her foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible over the framing of the government policy in foreign media” (Entman, 2008, p. 89).

Mediated diplomacy is another way of diplomacy where information is controlled by the government's action to manage media outlets during times of crisis to control framing (Golan, Yang, & Kinsey, 2015; Entman, 2008) and to create new frames. Therefore, the effort of regulating media images in foreign countries causes governments to dominate agenda and frame building (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009). Governments “maneuver strategically to achieve their political and communicative objectives,” and they “take strategic steps to “get messages across” and win arguments (Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 40).

On the other hand, digital technologies have influenced the mobility of information in the

world. Developments in the technologies influenced political, social, and economic life and increased communication and interaction among people. Despite these remarkable changes, the structure of international politics and diplomacy remained the same (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). From the diplomatic perspective, the twenty-first century is built upon an understanding of the formation of relations via dialogue and networking activities, not only at the government level, but also at the level of nongovernmental actors (Huijgh, 2019). These activities have been easily executed on digital platforms.

Contrasted with traditional diplomacy, the digital applications and networking environment accelerate the dialogue and disseminate information faster, and they offer ways to use diplomacy in a digital way. Digital diplomacy, which involves communication from government to people, mostly towards foreign people, employs two-way communication where the respondent asks questions and engages in interactive conversations. Digital diplomacy, also referred to as internet-based diplomacy, makes use of the practices of diplomacy conducted via social media platforms (Xiguang & Jing, 2010) and is a strategy for managing change through the utilization of digital tools and virtual collaboration (Duncombe, 2019).

With digital diplomacy, it is easier for governments to reach out to the masses. However, digital technologies make it harder for governments to work on controversial issues behind the scenes. Since the public is important, they can easily express opinions and disseminate information through social media channels. Thus, such information can put governments in a position where they either do not have answers or do not have control over the situation.

On the other hand, digital public diplomacy is significant for governments and specifically for diplomats. Interviews of diplomats indicate that tracking issues via social media platforms following possible conflicts enabled them to monitor and understand how various

people or groups feel or react about a certain problem (Bjole & Holmes, 2015). By listening to the audience, diplomats benefit from the instant responses they receive from social media platforms. However, the difficulty with that is that the diplomats cannot react right away. What diplomats encounter is the multiple layered decision-making processes in the bureaucracy which are not as fast as the speed of technology (Holmes, 2015). Thus, it can make them less interactive due to bureaucratic issues.

Digital and traditional media in the context of public diplomacy

Traditional media has given its power of dissemination to digital media. Over time, readers have become more inclined towards digital media and getting their news from digital news platforms. Based on a Pew Research Center (Mitchell, 2021) survey conducted between August 31 - September,7, 2020, “53% of Americans get their news from social media “often” or “sometimes.” Among these social media platforms, 36% of Americans get their news from Facebook, YouTube with 23% is second, Twitter with 15% is third, and Instagram is 11%.

Developments in technologies made digital media easily accessible via smartphones. According to the same PEW research, 60 % of Americans get their news from digital devices such as from “smartphone, computer or tablet” (Shearer, 2021). As the number of smartphone users increased, media owners started to invest and prioritize information in digital news content. Also, governments value the importance of reaching out to foreign publics by using digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other platforms like blog posts, podcasts are the new tools of public diplomacy.

Digital technologies in public diplomacy demand an understanding of face changing technology. According to J. Wang, (in U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (ACPD) official minutes, 2021), the practice of traditional public diplomacy is reversed due to

advancements in digital technologies. He argues that governments have not adjusted to the pace of technologies in terms of policy making (Walker, Baxter, & Zmary, 2021). Moreover, Wang argues that there is a need to understand more of digital public diplomacy, and this can be achieved by data collection, analyzing media consumption, and using data analytics (in ACPD official minutes, 2021).

As technological advancements continue to intensify, researchers are interested in learning how they can better understand the use of digital media, as well as social media platforms in the communication field. Some examples of research connecting social media and political communication, online political participation, and political expression include (Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014), social media and political campaigning (Ross & Bürger, 2014), content analysis of user-generated political Facebook groups (Woolley, Limperos, & Oliver, 2010), use of online media and political decision making (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010), blogs and 2008 elections (Heim, 2013), Facebook and Twitter elections 2012 (Groshek & Al-Rawi, 2013).

Social media plays an essential role because it has real-time communication with online parties. Moreover, because of its significant role, it has become an attractive field for governments to reach foreign audiences because it functions as a social instrument in communication in the dissemination of ideas. Thus, governments can take advantage of this interaction. They not only send messages to targets but also get feedback instantly. Social media creates opportunities as well as challenges for governments. One of the significant uses of social media for nations is to use digital platforms to improve the image of a country using soft power (Uysal, Schroeder, & Taylor, 2012). On one side, governments aim to disseminate the power messages to influence intended audiences; on the other side, they aim to deal with the criticisms

directed at them.

Social media platforms are interactive. They enable the sender to interact with a large target audience easily. For instance, social media studies focused on Turkish government politics and policies indicate that Turkish bureaucracy is not forming relationships with its audience via Twitter and Facebook. Turkey forwards its messages in the social media to international policy makers and governments mostly by disseminating press releases and informing the public (Uysal et al., 2012) about government actions. The country is not using its social media channels effectively.

Researchers have stated the benefits of governments using social media for the foreign public as it creates an interaction among governments, enables governments to reach the public in different geographies, establishes long-term relationships, increases public engagement and participation, and allows public concerns to be monitored (Fisher & Brockerhoff, 2008; Romsdahl, 2005; Wigand, 2011). In this regard, due to fast developments in information technologies and the increase in the numbers of users of social media, governments started to use social media sites to inform international audiences. However, government staff especially face difficulties in following up the new developments. This is mainly due to the lack of training of the staff.

To overcome the complicated use of social media, Facebook created a handbook to help diplomatic missionaries and to teach them how to communicate with their international audience. Facebook launched “2018 Digital Diplomacy on Facebook Best Practices” in August 2018 to help the diplomatic missionaries of the countries. On its opening page of the guide, Facebook asserts that “Facebook helps the diplomatic community to reach, connect, and engage the people who matter most of them.” Facebook also says that the “power shift” has changed from “states to

networks,” emphasizing the importance of digital diplomacy. In this guide, Facebook gives tips and presents ways to increase countries' “Facebook presence.” Public diplomacy, therefore, has evolved from a traditional format to a digital means which requires more analysis.

Selected theoretical approaches in public diplomacy

Gregory (2011) argues that public diplomacy is a field where its instruments are “used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; build and manage relationship; and influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values” (p. 353). However, finding and applying theoretical approaches have been difficult in public diplomacy due to the field’s lack of a theoretical framework. Due to the field’s lack of theory, Gilboa (2008) argues that “despite the growing significance of public diplomacy in contemporary international relations, scholars have not yet pursued or even sufficiently promoted systematic theoretical research in this field,” nor have they “proposed a comprehensive and integrated framework” (p. 73). Alternatively, there have been limited approaches to public diplomacy. Some scholars used public relations perspective as a functional way to study public diplomacy because the fields have some similarities: both favor building and maintenance of good relations with the public, as well as maintaining a favorable image (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Sigmotzer & Wasmer, 2006). On the other hand, research conducted between 1990 and 2014 on the scope and status of public diplomacy by public relations scholars indicates that public relations contributed tremendously to the literature of public diplomacy (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016). The findings of the research indicated that the majority of the studies were based on theoretical works, and it was observed that studies contributed to theory building when defined as generalizations supported by evidence (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016). When theory building is defined more expansively as theoretical perspectives

used to explain, understand, and portray various phenomena (Sallot, Ling, Acosta-Alzuru, & Jones, 2003), then a higher proportion of the works included in the study had a role in the development of public diplomacy theory.

Cull (2008) proposes five components of public diplomacy as listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting. He sees “listening” in public diplomacy as the actor’s act of “collecting and collating” information about “the publics and their opinions” (p. 32). For “advocacy” in public diplomacy, it is the act of managing “the international environment by...actively promote a particular policy, idea” (p. 32). “Cultural diplomacy” is the act of a mechanism to influence the international publics via cultural resources. “Exchange diplomacy” is the act of sending citizens for the purpose of mostly educational activities and it is a reciprocal action. Lastly, “international news broadcasting” is the act of using media technologies in engaging with the target public. His five key elements were applied as message strategies on Central-Eastern European and Western country embassies, and the findings focused on advocacy for Western embassies and the Central-Eastern European embassies engaged in cultural diplomacy (Dodd & Collins, 2017).

On the other hand, Melissen (2005) proposes the concept of “new public diplomacy” as an increased engagement with the public by creating a connection and nurturing long term relationships with them. Melissen (2005) argues that new public diplomacy “listens to what people have to say” (p. 18). To understand the difference from “old” public diplomacy, which has been viewed as one-way communication, generally values relationship from nation-to-nation at government level is no longer functioning due to globalization and technological developments. According to Melissen (2005), “new” public diplomacy has a different approach. He argues that “it is similar to propaganda in that it tries to persuade people what to think, but it

is fundamentally different from it in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say” (p. 11). The new public diplomacy opens up fresh possibilities (Cull, 2010), puts emphasis on communication that brings “learning to engage and even accommodate alternative views, contrary opinions and evidence, rather than attempting contemptuously to speak over them” (Riordan, 2003, p. 124).

Fitzpatrick (2010) offers one of the most influential categorical frameworks for public diplomacy, which is called the six functional categories. These can be identified as message strategies that include “*advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political.*” The six-category framework provides a basis for understanding how public diplomacy is conducted in sending messages. For example, *advocacy / influence* is the motive to influence the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of external publics by the use of persuasive messaging. It “seeks to persuade foreign elites and publics that the values, policies, and actions of the state deserve their—and their government’s—support” (Mor, 2006, p. 157), whereas public diplomacy from a *communication / informational* function focuses on educating and informing other nations about their values and policies. Furthermore, the *relational* function of public diplomacy is to build beneficial relationships and networks with other nations. The *promotional* approach focuses on promoting a specific characteristic of a country such as its tourism, values, culture, etc. A *warfare / propaganda* approach to public diplomacy is related to national security or a country’s military efforts. Lastly, the *political* approach is engaging in international relations, foreign policies, democracy, etc. Each category has a distinct purpose and can be used in various ways to reach foreign audiences.

Fitzpatrick’s functional categories, also called message strategies, were analyzed under social media platforms. One of the studies that analyzed the message strategies of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs (MFA) websites of eight countries (White & Radic, 2014) found that Turkey mostly used social media sites Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. However, regarding Fitzpatrick's public diplomacy functional categories, the same study found that Turkey mainly used “*promotional*,” followed by “*informational*” and “*advocacy*” messages. Regarding MFA of Russia, studies show that the country communicates using the message strategy of *communication / informational*. This is in line with previous studies such as that of Simons (2014), which found that Russia prefers the *communication / informational* functional category to disseminate its messages to the international public.

This analysis uses Fitzpatrick's six functional categories to identify them in the data. The terminology of functional categories and message strategies are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. Additionally, the study aims to see whether other new functional categories emerge under such political crises among countries. Finding a new functional category is one of the contributions to the existing literature. Lastly, this analysis aims to contribute to the conceptual and theoretical convergences between public diplomacy and crisis communication by using the case studies of Turkey and Russia. At this point, it is important to state that the categorical functions of public diplomacy may change depending on national politics and interests. Furthermore, Fitzpatrick suggests that categories and functions are not mutually exclusive (Fitzpatrick, 2010). A country may employ a variety of functions, and even a single message can serve more than one purpose.

Crisis communication and public diplomacy

The diplomatic representation of nations in foreign countries is handled by embassies, with the ambassador acting as the official face of the represented nation. This ambassador serves as the highest-ranking person communicating on behalf of a home government and has the most

contact with the public of the host country. Unfortunately, violent acts such as the assassination of an ambassador can result in heightened tension between countries, and this tension is exacerbated if a plane belonging to the same country with whom it has various collaborations, such as economic and tourism partnerships, is shot down. In these circumstances, hostilities between countries arise, leading to a tense and dangerous diplomatic crisis.

Crisis is defined as an "unpredictable event" which can "generate negative outcomes" (Coombs, 2007, pp. 2-3). Similarly, Fearn-Banks described a crisis as a "major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name" (2017, p. 1). Most definitions and conceptualizations of crises have been primarily concentrated on the private sector, especially corporations; however, nations also face crises that can lead to potentially negative outcomes, such as those faced by Turkey and Russia analyzed in this dissertation.

As a field of study, crisis communication became established in the 2000s and plays a significant role in protecting the organization's reputation during challenging times. It is a multidisciplinary field that embodies strategic planning and crisis management (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020). The first pioneering book, *Communication and Organizational Crisis*, was published in 2003 by M. Seeger, T. L. Sellnow, and R. R. Ulmer. In 2008, *Crisis Management in a Complex World* was published by D. R. Gilpun and J. Murphy's informative studies have helped the field of crisis communication to develop.

Crisis communication has been defined as "the dialogue between an organization and its public(s) before, during, and after a negative occurrence. This dialogue outlines strategies and tactics designed to minimize damage to the organization's image" (Fearn-Banks, 2017, p.2). Crisis communication research has traditionally been studied as a part of the public relations

literature and covers a wide range of crisis issues of different natures, such as reputation management, natural disasters, environmental, political, social, health, economic, military, religious, large-scale accidents, and terrorism. For instance, numerous amounts of crisis communication research have contributed to public relations literature (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003; Frandsen & Johansen, 2020; Fearn-Banks, 2017; Benoit, 1997; Frandsen & Johansen, 2010).

Different approaches have been proposed for studying crisis communication. For example, Frandsen and Johansen (2010) suggest a "multivocal" approach which takes into account the "diversity of actors, such as the media, politicians, employees, and others..." (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011, p. 256) in order to explore and understand multilevel environments. Conversely, political crises are not considered under the crisis categorization (Auer, 2016), and there is a lack of political studies on political crises (Zhang & Benoit, 2004).

Recent approaches have broadened the scope of inquiry into crisis communication. For instance, Auer (2016) argues that the type of crisis and crisis issues within a political institution in crisis communication are "image repair, but also defense" (p.125). This led to an increased focus on image restoration, reputation repair, crises responses, and situational crisis communication theories (Kim, Avery, & Lariscy, 2011). An example of this can be seen in the "cartoon crisis" faced by the Danish government in 2005, when a Danish newspaper published sketches of Prophet Mohammed, leading to condemnation from the Muslim community and a boycott of Denmark's products (Cassinger et.al, 2016). The "cartoon crisis" had serious repercussions for the country's trade and reputation (Rasmussen & Merckelsen, 2014).

Despite the advancements in crisis communication, studies noted that out of 74 journal articles published in the *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Public Relations Review* from

1975 to 2006, only 4.1% of the articles analyzed were related to "political or governmental crises caused by failure of governmental policy" (An & Cheng, 2010, p. 79). The study indicates that the tendency in crisis communication research, related in two major public relations journals, focuses on corporate communication. Therefore, the research in the field needs more studies regarding political crises.

Political crises play a significant role in global affairs and shape the discourse of international relations. Despite their importance, they are understudied and often neglected when studying crisis communication. Traditionally, academic investigations in crisis communication have been primarily focused on the private sector, examining the complexities of corporate challenges and responses to various incidents. Thus, the connection between crisis communication and public diplomacy has been overlooked (Auer, 2016). By bridging the gap between these two areas, this study aims to foster an understanding of public diplomacy use in crisis communication and contribute to scholarly literature in the field.

Public diplomacy is a new field of research that has conceptual similarities with crisis communication in pursuit of similar goals (Auer, 2016). Both fields engage in strategic approaches driven by specific interests, which involve and are concerned with the restoration of the image and resolution of the conflict or crisis in order to maintain stability and promote peace (Auer, 2016). Furthermore, public diplomacy can aid with crisis management techniques that help to prevent crises, reduce the probability of their occurrence, and de-escalate existing crises (Auer, 2016). It also helps to build reputation and can protect a state from reputation loss during and after a crisis.

Research has been conducted to examine the potential of public diplomacy as a tool for crisis communication (Olsson, 2013) with the aim of gaining a greater understanding and

advancing the field of public diplomacy. Although there has been little research or scholarly publications on the relationship between public diplomacy and crisis communication, recent studies related to the Danish newspapers publishing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (Rasmussen & Merckelsen, 2014) suggest that public diplomacy can be used as an effective tool for crisis communication (Olsson, 2013).

This study aims to highlight that public diplomacy and crisis communication can come together conceptually, making crisis communication an ideal partner for public diplomacy. Both fields engage in strategic approaches driven by specific interests, which involve and are concerned with the restoration of the image and resolution of *conflict* or *crisis* in order to maintain stability and promote peace. Correspondingly, research has shown that public diplomacy can be used as an effective tool for crisis communication (Olsson, 2013), demonstrating that public diplomacy and crisis communication can converge and be further examined.

Framing as a theoretical perspective

Framing research has been a critical and attractive research area for communication scholars because of its flexibility in application, and it has allowed the interpretation of texts, which shape the levels of reality in a story (D'Angelo, 2002). For instance, in journalistic use, framing plays a vital role in constructing news stories and examining how it changes the audience's interpretations of these frames (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). As for political purposes, framing is widely used in public opinion formation where political actors play with a message and influence people's way of thinking (Entman, 2007).

The concept of framing has been criticized for being vague and having no definitional clarity (Reese, 2007; Scheufele, 1999). Despite all the criticism, framing is the most popular

approach that scholars frequently use in communication studies (Matthes, 2009). Therefore, conceptualization of framing in communication literature has been a problem. Fundamentally, framing in literature is associated with selection and salience (Entman, 1993). In other words, in salience, there is the idea of making information more understandable and meaningful to the outside world.

Accompanying this, the idea of a frame is to highlight an aspect of a subject. For instance, journalists can frame an argument from a specific point of view, and this can change or reshape an audience's perception of the argument. In this context, Gitlin argues that frames "enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely [and to] package the information for efficient relay to their audiences" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). In the same way, by conveying information for the audiences, journalists can frame a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143).

An idea can be approached from different perspectives. With framing, such ideas can be simplified and make our understanding of the issues easier. However, how people understand and interpret issues is dominated by their own filtering process (Scheufele, 1999). In other words, people have prior knowledge, and when they encounter a new idea, their existing ideas, or judgments about one issue may or may not change (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Framing in this context "expands beyond what people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 70).

Framing studies gather around two main approaches, sociological and psychological. However, the literature states that conceptually, framing studies began in the sociology field with the studies of Goffman (1974). He was one of the first persons to generate a framing concept where he defined framing as "schemata of interpretation" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21).

The sociological approach, in terms of methods and practice, concentrates on textual and content analysis. Druckman stated that scholars of this view (Goffman, 1974; Tuchman, 1978; Gitlin, 1980) analyzed “words, images, phrases, and presentation styles” (Druckman 2001, p. 227). These concepts were used to build news stories and concentrated on the ways frames are presented in news and its ideological presentations (Borah, 2011; Carragee & Roefs, 2004).

On the other hand, a psychological approach explores the effects on the audience (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Iyengar, 1991) and methodologically a psychological approach concentrates on using experimental and survey designs. In the psychological approach, Scheufele (1999) argues that framing should be studied under media effects. According to him, framing must be separated from other related concepts in media effects research. He suggests analyzing frames from a larger historical context, and he proposes to build a general conceptualization of framing. Moreover, Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) also suggest that with the Web 2.0 technologies and quickly changing media environments, the traditional effects models in communication should leave itself to media effects studies.

The line of debate in the literature of framing is rooted in its vague and ambiguous definition. Not having a consensus for the definition of framing creates confusion among scholars. The problem with framing studies is that there is “no systematic, standardized analysis of the research literature has been conducted” (Matthes, 2009, p. 359). Similarly, disorganized, and disconnected definitions of the framing concept create confusion because, as Scheufele argues, scholars attribute different meanings to framing (1999).

Further, the literature indicates that Entman’s framing definition is the most cited one, followed by Gamson and Modigliani (Matthes, 2009). For Entman, framing is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a

way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Frame studies are commonly used in news analysis and are considered as “tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information” (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 60). In this respect, newspapers choose “among various approaches to the presentation of news stories” (Hook & Pu, 2006, p. 169). These choices create a pattern in the news coverage and may influence our perception of the incidents. As Sellnow and Seeger (2021) indicate, “Applications of framing theory to crisis communication focus primarily on the way organizations are portrayed by the news media following a crisis” (p. 160). Based on this the news media portrays crises.

One of the most commonly used news frame typologies in literature is by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). For instance, *conflict* frames are typically associated with disagreement between individuals, groups, or institutions. This variable contains collisions among parties and disputes in reporting of the news. Therefore, to examine how newspapers describe the conflict in these events is one of the goals of this study. *Responsibility* frames mostly aim to reveal the people or groups that are responsible for the cause of an event. Moreover, it can also relate to the people who are responsible for solutions to the situation. *Human interest* frames deal with mostly the individuals or groups that are affected by the protests. Also, the human-interest frame contains emotional issues, dramatic individual/group stories that happened during the protests. Lastly, *the economic consequences* frame describes events that mostly portray financial situations, using variables like financial loss of individuals or the government. The framing typology will enable the comparison of frames to each other.

The study examines whether any of the “conflict, responsibility, human interest, and

economic consequences” frames have a relation to public diplomacy in crisis communication. By exploring frames, the dissertation is able to assess how each frame typology is used or not used (or the emergence of a new frame) in the understanding of crisis communication and public diplomacy. The results will help to identify which frames are prominent for understanding public diplomacy in crisis communication in the news as a conceptual ground. Moreover, the results can help us understand how to operationalize such frames for future studies (Vreese, 2005).

Turkey and public diplomacy

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I., the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a secular nation-state. Turkey has become a role model for other Muslim countries in the Arab region by demonstrating that it is possible to both maintain its secular structure and be a democratic country with a predominantly Muslim population. The country is a successful example of a secular nation-state. With its deep cultural and historical roots, Turkey acts as a bridge between East and West, and plays an important key role as a regional power. It is an emerging power, a member of NATO and one of the countries of the G-20 and is in the process of becoming a member of the European Union (EU). The country has been governed by the religion-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) since November 2002.

The country’s vital geographic location places Turkey in the middle of problematic events such as the ongoing Syrian war since 2011, which has been followed by a large humanitarian and refugee crisis in the region. As a result of the Syrian conflict, ISIS has spread in the region and committed inevitable attacks in the country, such as, the Istanbul airport attack in June 2016, the New Year’s attack in Istanbul on December 2016, and the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara in December 2016, putting Turkey in a difficult situation.

On the other hand, the attempted coup d'état on July 15, 2016, created a suffocating climate for the Turkish people. The government detained and imprisoned journalists and academicians. Furthermore, the recent killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi national, in the Saudi Arabia consulate by its own people in Istanbul in October 2018 (Timberg & Dadouch, 2021) created another crisis that the country is trying to solve. Even though Turkey is a modern democratic country with its Islamic roots and a model for the Middle East with its secular system, it is surrounded by such crises and facing national image challenges.

Turkey's involvement in public diplomacy was recognized in 2010 with the founding of the Office of Public Diplomacy (Resmi Gazete, 2010). The country's extensive networking with countries around the world necessitated the formation of this office. However, with the country's transition to a presidential system in 2018, the office became part of a new structure under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's control, called the Directorate of Communications. The Turkish president now represents and controls the communications. The centralization of power and control under the president makes Turkey's public diplomacy effort obsolete because there is no independence in the public institutions (Cevik, 2020).

The characteristics of Turkey's public diplomacy efforts in the region are concentrated on Central Asia, Europe, and the Middle East where Turkey employs the foreign policy of using soft power (Sevin, 2017). Due to the European accession process, there has been a shift in Turkish foreign policy with its foreign audience. Turkey currently employs a soft power policy rather than depending on hard power, which is Turkey's traditional way of projecting its political position (Sevin, 2017). Turkey specifically targets these geographical locations because of their shared cultural heritage and historical roots coming from its historical past (Cevik & Seib, 2015; Sevin, 2017). On the other hand, Turkey also sticks to the West for its ongoing European Union

accession process. Turkey's persistence in becoming part of the EU caused the country to implement the accession criteria required by the EU. The criteria on democracy and human rights improvements were promising at the beginning. This reform process required by the EU influenced how Turkey is seen by the Middle East countries (Uysal et al., 2012) which look at Turkey as a modern Islamic country.

Unfortunately, the country experienced two coups and three attempted coups in the past with the most recent attempted coup d'état in July 2016. This event motivated the government to become more stringent in monitoring and controlling, thus limiting freedom of expression and access to social media sites at times. Such restrictions have placed a great negative impact on Turkey's international image and influenced country's progress. The country continues to censor social media websites. In addition, in terms of freedom of the press, Turkey unfortunately is a prison for professional journalists. According to the World Press Freedom Index of 2023, Turkey ranked as 168 out of 180 countries (World Press Freedom Index Turkey). Since the attempted coup d'état in 2016, journalists have been detained (Turkey, 2016) and websites and social media censorship has reached unprecedented levels. The country faces a toxic environment and serious problems under the rule of the president who controls the majority of the media.

Moreover, one of the weaknesses of the Turkish government is that it is not taking advantage of social media to transmit its vital messages. Rather, the literature states that Turkey uses "press releases or governmental news agencies" to share information for its international audiences (Uysal et al., 2012) to deliver mostly positive images. On the contrary, if the Turkish government wants to create a positive representation of the country and influence its international audience, it must look for ways to engage with the international audience through the "process of creating meaning regarding mutual concerns" (Uysal et al., 2012, p. 357).

The Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index provides a visual representation of the diplomatic networks of 65 G-20, OECD, and Asian countries and territories, enabling users to compare the most prominent diplomatic networks across the globe. According to the latest data available from 2021, Turkey has been ranked as having the fifth-strongest diplomatic network in the world, with 246 diplomatic posts (Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy, 2021). Additionally, Turkey has been performing well in its digital diplomacy relations with the international community. The Digital Diplomacy Index of 2022, which evaluates G20 countries' influence in the online world, has placed the MFA of Turkey third in diplomatic network outreach and tenth in the digital diplomacy index. These results demonstrate that Turkey is making considerable efforts to expand its diplomatic network and strengthen its ties with other nations.

With wide diplomatic locations and engagement with the international community, Turkey's public diplomacy activities revolve around two predominant themes: humanitarian aid and its cultural heritage, which is connected to its strong historical heritage (Cevik & Seib, 2015). These two predominant themes constitute Turkey's core messages that are intended for the international audience. Turkey primarily employs and positions itself as a humanitarian country. Under the humanitarian theme, Turkey uses subthemes of a "benevolent country and righteous" country (Cevik & Sevin, 2017).

Russia and public diplomacy

The Russian Federation is the world's largest country by land mass. Its land extends across Asia and Europe, and it has been an important country throughout history. Before becoming the Russian Federation, the country was the most important and largest part of the Soviet Union and was established in 1922. After its founding, it was isolated by the international community (Lebedeva, 2020) due to the country's political ideology, which made it difficult for

the Soviet Union to form international relations. After the dissolution of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) on December 31, 1991, the Soviet Union was replaced by 15 independent countries, and its socio-political sphere changed completely (Semedov & Kurbatova, 2020).

The history of public diplomacy in modern times in Russia dates to the 1920s during Soviet times when the country started diplomatic relations with European countries, China, Japan, and Mexico. From 1954 to 1989, the Soviet Union became actively involved in humanitarian aid to other nations (Lebedeva, 2020). When the Russian Federation was formed, it had to build its new public diplomacy approach under the new system because the old system had collapsed, and it had to write its own story. According to Lebedeva (2020), public diplomacy in Russia is not systematically organized and does not have strategic coordination. The reason is that public diplomacy is ruled by the high-ranked government officials, and most of the directives are issued by the leaders (Lebedeva, 2020). Institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Civic Chamber, Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation), RIA Novosti (a state-owned domestic news agency), and Russia Today (a state-owned domestic news agency) are part of public diplomacy. However, the criticism is that these institutions do not have the coordination as they need to implement public diplomacy (Lebedeva, 2020).

Russia's president Vladimir Putin (2012) in a speech on July 9, 2012, defined soft power as "promoting one's interests and policies through persuasion and creating a positive perception of one's country, based not just on its material achievements but also its spiritual and intellectual heritage." Building on this, Russian public diplomacy strategies and activities focus on

promoting the country's interests on the international stage. Further, the country has given importance to promote Russian culture, its language, and its education system (Simons, 2014). Additionally, Russia seeks to improve its image, present itself as a global player in international relations and, at the same time, contribute to global collaborations in peace, as well as to the political challenges that are around in the world. In the context of public diplomacy, Russia aims to deliver messages such as “communicational, network and relational” (Simons, 2014, p. 449) when communicating with the foreign public. It uses Rossotrudnichestvo; a Russian federal agency responsible for promoting Russian interests; is represented in “77 countries, 59 Russian centers of science and culture” (Simons, 2014, p. 446) and promotes “Russian culture and language” as well as “educational and scientific cooperation” (Shakirov, 2013), by serving Russians living in other countries and reaching out to people who are interested in Russia.

Russia is using mass communication as well as social media platforms and it is benefitting from international broadcasting such as the RT (Russia Today) channel which is its international television network that broadcasts in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian. Having content in six languages, the channel broadcasts worldwide and contributes to the public diplomacy of the country. RIA Novosti and TASS (Russian News Agency) are state-owned news agencies that work to overcome the negative image of Russia.

On the other hand, Russia is no different than Turkey in terms of freedom of press, control of the internet, and censorship. Leading news outlets are under the control of Putin's government, according to the World Press Freedom Index of 2020. Based on the same index, Russia ranked as 149 out of 180 countries (Russia, n.d.). Besides the country's negative image due to its historical legacy, freedom of press is one of the major problems that needs to be investigated. Furthermore, given its negative reputation, Russia is attempting to employ soft

power components as a foreign policy in order to construct a more positive image of the country on the international stage (Gricheva, 2015). Additionally, it is observed that the nation is attempting to change its image via digital diplomacy (Tsvetkova, 2020).

According to the latest data from the Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index of 2021, Russia has been ranked as having the sixth strongest diplomatic network in the world, with 243 diplomatic posts (Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy, 2021). Furthermore, it has been performing well in its digital diplomacy efforts with the international community. The Digital Diplomacy Index of 2022 placed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia twelfth in diplomatic network outreach and fifth in the digital diplomacy index. These results demonstrate that Russia, like Turkey, is making significant efforts to expand its diplomatic network and strengthen its ties with the rest of the world.

Mapping Turkey and Russia case studies

The uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East led to protests in the region starting in 2010, called the Arab Spring. Thus, all the conditions and factors that triggered political instability and protests that spread to Syria were driven by political, economic, historical, and social factors, contributing to the Syrian War which began in 2011. As a result, the Syrian war and the conflict in the region forced millions of people to be displaced from their homes and become refugees in nearby countries, as well as other parts of the world, resulting in one of the biggest humanitarian crises in the world. Following the refugee crisis, countries in the region and the international community became involved in the conflict, with some nations taking sides in the Syrian war.

The Syrian war has been continuing for more than a decade and it influenced regional and international power struggles in the region. Multiple regional and international actors such as

Russia and Iran, took sides with the Syrian government, whereas Turkey, Western powers, and some Gulf Arab states have backed the opposition to varying degrees during the conflict. As the violence of the war escalated, various militant groups in the region became involved in the conflict.

The tensions between Turkey and Russia increased due to Russia's "bombings of Syrian rebels and multiple violations of Turkish airspace" (The New York Times, October 7, 2015). Turkey repeatedly warned the Russian party and expressed its discomfort about its intrusion into its airspace. NATO, the alliance of Western allies of which Turkey is a part, also warned Russia over Turkey's airspace violation (The Washington Post, October 7, 2015).

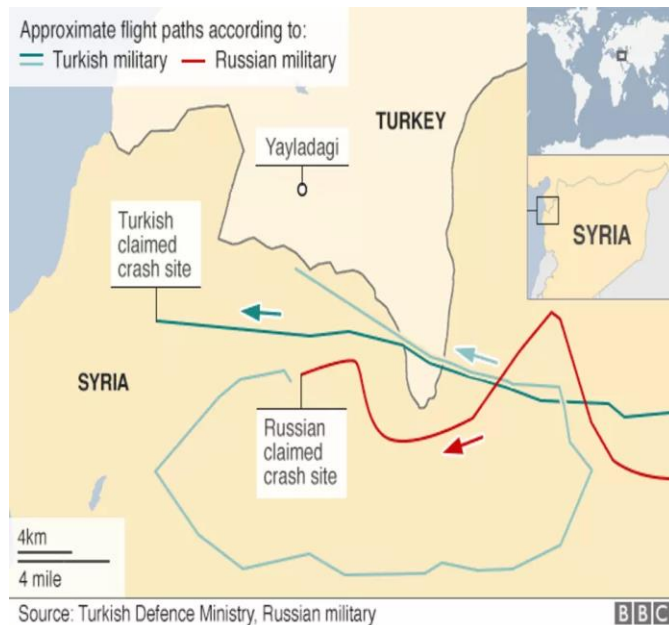
On the other hand, Turkey and Russia have supported opposing sides in the Syrian war; however, tensions between them have been exacerbated by Russia's bombing of the Turkmen villages in northwestern Syria, close to Turkey's border. Turkey expressed concern over the attacks on the Turkmens, a Sunni Muslim minority whom many Turks regard as their kin. Like the Turkish government, the Turkmens oppose the regime of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad (The Guardian, November 24, 2015).

On November 24, 2015, the first major incident between Turkey and Russia occurred when a Turkish Air Force F-16 fighter jet shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 aircraft for crossing the Turkish border. The Russian plane had two pilots, both of whom ejected and had parachutes. One of the pilots was able to land safely, but the second pilot was killed by rebel fire on the ground. The incident increased tensions between the two countries (Allen & Olorenshaw, 2015), and the dispute about where the plane was shot down has been argued. Russia initially claimed that it had been shot down on the Syrian border but stated that the warplane did not violate Turkish airspace during the flight until Turkish officials released a radar image showing the

Russian plane flying across Turkish territory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Radar image



The occurrence of the incident caused shock in both Turkey and Russia and raised concern among the international community, particularly in NATO. The incident escalated the diplomatic crisis between the two countries. Russia's president Putin imposed economic sanctions against Turkey. He described the event as a “stab in the back” and stated that Ankara was the “accomplice of terrorists” and warned Turkey would face “significant consequences” and he insisted that the warplane was not causing any harm (The Times, November 25, 2015). Furthermore, Russia deployed anti-aircraft missiles in Syria, which further increased the level of military tension in the region (BBC News, 2015). In response, Turkey increased its military presence in the area and strengthened its borders. Both reactions escalated the tensions between Turkey and Russia.

The second major incident that caused tensions to escalate between Turkey and Russia once more was the assassination of the Russian Ambassador (see Figure 2) to Turkey in Ankara.

On December 19, 2016, the Russian Ambassador, Andrei Karlov, was making remarks at an art exhibition in Ankara titled "Russia Through Turks' Eyes" when he was assassinated. The assassin was a police officer, who was later killed by the police. The incident happened after protests in Turkey started over Russia when the Russian government supported the Syrian government in the killings in Aleppo (Arango & Gladstone, 2016).

Figure 2

Photo of the ambassador incident



The assassin shouted, "Don't forget Aleppo! Don't forget Syria!" after shooting. Both the presidents and foreign ministries of Turkey and Russia called the assassination a terrorist attack and condemned it. Both governments confirmed that the incident was a provocation intended to ruin Turkish-Russian relations. The event was widely covered by international media. The newspapers reported that, due to tensions between Turkey and Russia caused by the Syrian conflict and the shooting of the warplane, the normalization process had already begun.

Therefore, some analysts said that the "assassination might bring the countries closer as they sought to take on terrorism" (The New York Times, December 19, 2016) and cooperate more in fighting terrorism.

Main Research Questions

Based on these two cases, the objective of this dissertation is to examine how public diplomacy can be utilized in crisis communication to understand and analyze crises. The phenomenon being examined is essential for the literature of public diplomacy to enhance its use in areas such as crisis communication. Literature states that political crises are rarely studied in crisis communication research (Auer, 2016). Therefore, this dissertation aims to contribute to public diplomacy as a tool in crisis communication.

The overarching objective of the research was to examine these questions: Do the public diplomacy functions; (advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political (Fitzpatrick, 2010)); used by governments differ when confronting a crisis? Do the public diplomacy functions (Fitzpatrick, 2010) used by a government differ when used in a digital platform (such as Twitter for this study) and on a government official website during a crisis? Lastly, how did the traditional media frame and interpret both crises?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Rationale

The aim of this study is to examine whether the public diplomacy messages used by governments differ when confronting a crisis, and if they differ when used on official websites, social media accounts, and how they are framed by the media. To examine this issue, qualitative inquiry and specifically thematic analysis was chosen as the research method to be employed for the study. Qualitative research analysis aims to understand a social phenomenon (Mays & Pope, 1995) and it allows for exploration and understanding of the hidden patterns in communication, and it brings out in-depth analysis. Also, qualitative data analysis provides “a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible...qualitative researchers study things in... attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 43).

The two case studies which caused crises and damaged the relations between Turkey and Russia are the shootdown of the Russian warplane and the assassination of the Russian ambassador. A case study is described as a type of study that analyzes “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin 1994: 13). It has been noted that case studies may use a variety of data techniques, both qualitative (e.g., in-depth interviews, textual analysis) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, content analysis), depending on the variables studied (Cutler, 2004). For this study thematic analysis is used to analyze the two cases thematically. The thematic analysis is a method for “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). It is a method that identifies “what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and making sense of those commonalities” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Thematic analysis is essential for this study as it identifies and analyzes themes across data

sets, makes sense of the patterns, and transforms them into messages and strategies for understanding the use of public diplomacy messages in crisis communication.

Research methods in public diplomacy & crisis communication have concentrated on normative models. A relevant study that sought to understand the “status of public diplomacy research by public relations scholars between 1990 and 2014” (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016, p. 432) offered a good overview of the methods available. Vanc and Fitzpatrick’s (2016) research showed that most public relations scholars who studied public diplomacy used a single method approach, while only 17% employed mixed-method approaches. According to the same research, the most favored approach was the “essay (40%),” followed by “content analysis (21%), case study (20%), survey (12%), interview (9%), and secondary research/analysis (7%).” Less popular research methods were “rhetorical analysis (2%), historical analysis (2%), thematic analysis (2%), comparative analysis (2%) ...” (p. 435). Upon examining the figures above, it is evident that 2% of thematic studies are utilized in research. In this regard, this thesis study seeks to contribute to the field by conducting a thematic field study.

Procedures

As a procedure, the thematic analysis method of Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed, following their six stages (Table 1). The data was retrieved from the English language official web pages of the Turkish and Russian governments' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presidential English language websites and Twitter accounts. Similarly, four newspapers were downloaded for the media segment of the analysis. The unnecessary information in the data that are not related to the subject were manually cleaned. The final data was arranged in a spreadsheet depending on their types (official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers) categorized, and organized for analysis.

Table 1*Stages of thematic analysis*

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Note. Reprinted from "Using thematic analysis in psychology," by Braun, V., & Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), p. 87.

The first stage of thematic analysis is to become familiar with the data (Figure 3). This stage is described as reading and re-reading the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) rigorously and in great depth. Taking notes and noting initial ideas during this stage is important. The second stage in thematic analysis is described as generating initial codes. The entire dataset was coded for English language official web page press releases, Twitter posts, and newspapers by two coders, who are studying in the field of communication, in order to generate initial codes. During this stage, the researchers had already familiarized themselves with the data, collated it and had generated initial codes that were of interest to them. The third stage is the stage for searching for themes. By collating codes into potential themes, the labeling of the categories was completed after the detailed coding and descriptive wording for the data. The fourth stage is the reviewing and discussion of the initial themes. Subsequently, similar themes and topics were clustered and

assembled to form the main themes, and the two coders checked if the themes worked in relation to the “coded extracts” from stage one and “the entire dataset” from stage two (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, the number of themes was generated for each case study. The fifth stage is defining and naming the themes. During this stage, the data was reviewed to identify and generate final themes, which were labeled with descriptions. Names for each theme were generated. The last stage is the production of reports, meaning that themes were identified per case for official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers. Thus, the themes were analyzed and supported by examples in the data when writing the final analysis.

Figure 3

Six-phase thematic analytic process



Note: adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012.

Data Collection

Convenience sampling is used for this study. The unit of analysis is the official press releases, Twitter accounts of the Turkish and Russian governments, and newspapers. The study period for both case studies is thirteen months. The study period for both case studies was thirteen months. In order to understand if there were any previous effects that were triggering the incidents, the time of downloading the data started approximately one month before for both cases. The first incident, the shooting down of the Russian Su-24 warplane, occurred on November 24, 2015; the analysis period for this case study covered from October 1, 2015, to October 31, 2016. The second case study, the assassination of the Russian ambassador, occurred on December 19, 2016; the analysis period covered from December 1, 2016, to December 31,

2017. The following Table 2 indicates a summary of the data being collected for both cases.

Table 2

Summary of the data

Case Studies	Dates	Official Press Releases	Twitter Accounts	Newspapers
Shot down of the Russian Su-warplane	October 1, 2015 – October 31, 2016	Turkey-MFA Russia-MFA	@MFATurkey	The New York Times
Ambassador Case	December 1, 2016 – December 31, 2017	Turkey- Presidential Russia- Presidential	@trpresidency @mfa_Russia @KremlinRussia_E	The Washington Post The Guardian The Times

The research aims to examine the data to provide a set of interpretive conclusions as well as comparative analysis of the Turkish and the Russian case studies from the perspective of public diplomacy in relation to crisis communication. The study aims to examine and analyze the connections between public diplomacy and crisis communication through the analysis of news content, social media, and official government websites.

Official Press Releases

Official government websites are significant for international relations and public diplomacy because they provide official information and contribute to advocacy of national interests and image cultivation (White & Radic, 2014, p. 461) of a country. Both countries have English language web pages that have archives and are easily accessible to the international public. Thus, a manual download of the official government accounts for both Turkish and the Russian MFA's and presidential websites was performed using the archive system found on their official web page. The cleaning of the data was conducted manually due to the low amount of

press releases.

The number of data retrieved from the MFA of Turkey web page for the shoot down of the plane was 7 whereas for the Turkish presidential page it was 3 official presses. On the other hand, MFA of Russia had 6 press releases focused on the case. Lastly, the Russian presidency published 40 press releases focused on Turkey, and only three of them emphasized the case.

Conversely, the number of data retrieved from the MFA of Turkey web page for the assassination of the ambassador was 2, whereas for the presidential page it was 8. On the other hand, MFA of Russia posted 40 press releases related to Turkey and 8 of the press releases focused on the case. Lastly, the Russian presidency published 35 press releases and 4 of the press releases focused on the case.

Twitter

By using R-Software, the tweets were retrieved from Twitter's Developer's Platform using the Twitter API, which enabled access to historical data by activating a Twitter academic project account. The data for the MFA Turkey (@MFATurkiye), Turkish presidency (@trpresidency), MFA of Russia (@mfa_russia), and President of Russia (@KremlinRussia_E) accounts were downloaded using R software. For case number one, the tweets were downloaded by using the search terms of “Turkey, Russia, plane” for case number one. For case number two, the key terms included “Turkey, Russia, and assassination” The downloaded data was transferred to an Excel sheet and it was read and cleaned manually.

The MFA of Turkey posted 22, and the Turkish presidency posted 29 tweets related to the first case within the 13-month period, whereas the MFA of Russia generated 170 posts over a 13-month period, Russian Presidency posted 43 tweets about Turkey. As for the second case, the MFA of Turkey posted 13 tweets, and the Turkish Presidency posted 32 tweets related to the first

case within the 13-month period, whereas the MFA of Russia generated 41 tweets over a 13-month period, Russian Presidency posted 49 tweets about Turkey.

Newspapers

The selection of newspapers was based on several attributes. Firstly, the purpose of public diplomacy is to target foreign audiences and influence them, so prominent international media was used for the research. Secondly, the study did not assess Turkish and Russian newspapers as they mainly focus on domestic audiences rather than foreign audiences. Thirdly, the majority of the media in both of these countries is controlled by the governments. Therefore, the study analyzed prominent international newspapers such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, and The Times, which are all highly reputable, have high circulation numbers, and are influential international newspapers. At the beginning, newspapers such as The Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal were also included and downloaded for the analysis. However, due to their focus mostly on the economic aspect of news and the low number of published news articles, they were excluded from the analysis. Fourthly, these newspapers were chosen because they cover a broader range of international news related to political crises. Lastly, in order to take advantage of the English language for conducting the analysis, the study used U.S. and U.K. newspapers.

The articles were retrieved from Lexis Nexis and Factiva. Articles that fall under an opinion, editorial section, or any derivative were not included due to the framing that comes with an opinion piece. This research is concerned with more subtle framing used in traditional news pieces. The articles were found by searching the key terms of “Turkey, Russia, and plane” for case number one. For case number two the key terms included “Turkey, Russia, and assassination.” An analysis was conducted over a thirteen-month period on two distinct cases.

Later, the total number of news articles from the four newspapers were analyzed. The sample for case one includes 38 articles from The Guardian, 24 articles from The New York Times, 18 articles from The Times, and 12 articles from The Washington Post. The sample for case two includes 28 articles from The New York Times, 17 articles from The Times, 14 articles from The Guardian, and 12 articles from The Washington Post.

Research Questions

The overarching research question of the dissertation was to examine the questions of: Do the public diplomacy functions; (advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political (Fitzpatrick, 2010)); used by governments differ when confronting a crisis? Do the public diplomacy functions (Fitzpatrick, 2010) used by a government differ when used in a digital platform (such as Twitter for this study) and on a government official website during a crisis? Lastly, how do traditional media frame and interpret both crises? Corresponding to the objectives outlined in chapter one, and based on the literature review, this dissertation proposed the following research questions:

RQ1: Were there any functional categories of public diplomacy used in the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments in relation to the shooting down of the warplane?

RQ2: Were there any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Twitter accounts of the Turkish and Russian governments regarding the shoot-down of the warplane event?

RQ3: What frames were used by the major news outlets in the U.S. (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the U.K. (The Guardian, The Times) regarding the shooting down of the warplane event?

RQ4: Were any public diplomacy functional categories used in the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments regarding the assassination of the Russian ambassador event?

RQ5: Were any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Turkish and Russian governments' Twitter accounts regarding the assassination of the Russian ambassador event?

RQ6: What frames were used by the major news outlets in the U.S. (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the U.K. (The Guardian, The Times) in their coverage of the Russian ambassador event?

Validity and Reliability

The credibility in thematic analysis corresponds to validity (Bengtsson , 2016). The themes were identified through thematic analysis and they were determined by their ability to accurately reflect the meanings present in the entirety of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, individual themes were considered in relation to the data set. The two coders reviewed the data and in every six step of the thematic analysis discussed the findings to ensure they have the same outcomes. The iterative process increased their coder reliability.

Additionally, because thematic analysis is a method that needs to be rigorously applied in a systematic way Braun and Clark (2006) created a 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis (see Table 3) and this checklist was followed throughout the analysis of the research.

Table 3*15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis*

Process	No	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for ‘accuracy’.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed _ interpreted, made sense of _ rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other _ the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done _ ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as active in the research

Note. Reprinted from “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” by Braun, V., & Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), p. 96.

Moreover, the literature was reviewed for similar themes to increase the validity of the analysis. When writing the thematic analysis, direct quotes were used to aid in the understanding of specific points of interpretation and demonstrate the prevalence of the themes (Nowell et al., 2017), creating support for the structured theme.

Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that reliability in qualitative analysis refers to the stability of the coders' responses to the data. Therefore, reliability has to do with consistency and its observations (Hammersley, 1992 ; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). The procedures of thematic analysis that guided the study that is proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) have rigorous steps that require good documentation of the data, good note-taking, labeling, and most importantly it ensured that the coders to discuss the data and to finalize a theme. The two coders followed those steps and interpreted the data.

Limitations

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe the advantages of thematic analysis as providing flexibility that can be modified to meet the needs of the study. Therefore, the method was advantageous for summarizing key features and emphasizing the similarities and differences in the data (Nowell et al., 2017). On the other hand, the results of the study were limited to these case studies and it was time consuming. Although the findings may have similarities in terms of themes and message strategies, the study cannot be generalized to a larger population. Therefore, as a disadvantage, qualitative research is interpretive and its studies are not generalizable.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS & RESULTS

This study examines the ways in which public diplomacy can be used as a tool for crisis communication (Olsson, 2013). To examine two major crises between Turkey and Russia, thematic analysis has been selected as analysis methods. As part of the methodology, first the data was download from the official web pages of the Turkish and Russian governments' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presidential websites and Twitter accounts. Similarly, four newspapers were downloaded. All the data was organized for the analysis. Second, the data was read rigorously in overall depth and notes were taken during this stage. Third, the researchers coded the data by labeling categories. Next, detailed coding and descriptive wording for the data was used to identify and generate themes by the labeled descriptions. Subsequently, similar themes and topics were clustered and to form the main themes. The number of themes was generated for each case study. Lastly, themes were identified per case for official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers.

The dissertation analyzes the Turkish and Russian governments' digital media contents, namely, their official government web pages and Twitter accounts. Following that, the study examined the traditional media components in the light of news media coverage. To perform the analysis news dimension part, prominent international newspapers were used. They are The New York Times and The Washington Post from the U.S. and The Guardian and The Times from the U.K. As mentioned in the previous chapters, two major events caused a dispute between Turkey and Russia: the shooting down of a warplane and the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Ankara. The researcher conducted a thorough analysis of the two cases using official press releases, Twitter posts, and newspapers.

Theme Description

After collecting data, the study proceeded to code each source, which included official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers. As a result of the coding process for both case studies, the codes were assigned to the corresponding themes. The following themes were identified, and it represents the salient themes with their corresponding descriptions. It is important to highlight that the themes and their corresponding definitions identified from all three primary sources of data remain consistent throughout the analysis. Especially, the themes described in official press releases and Twitter are the same because they refer to functional categories, whereas for newspapers it was identification of frames. Additionally, the definitions associated with the themes maintain consistency across both case studies throughout the entire analysis. The following is a list of themes and their respective definitions observed within the two case studies.

Advocacy / influence - one of Fitzpatrick's functional categories where its aim is to influence the attitudes and opinions of the public.

Analysis is defined as the investigation of events by studying its parts.

Apology is a statement acknowledging something, an expression of regret.

Bilateral Relations - mutual relations between the two parties. Bilateral relations do not only cover the mutual relations that both parties develop, but also entail one-to-one relations between the leaders. The presidents of both countries have direct communication, and this may involve phone conversation as well as face-to-face meetings. Another thing that is included in bilateral relations is the subject related to tourism, bilateral agreements, safety flights, normalization of relations, etc.

Blame attribution- Blame is about being responsible for something that's bad. It is an accusation that one is responsible for some misdeed. Blame attribution is the act of

holding them accountable or charging someone for the action.

Communication / informational, one of Fitzpatrick's functional categories that focuses on informing foreign citizens.

Commemoration is a ceremony that honors someone's memory

Condemnation is an expression of strong disapproval of a certain action or policy

Condolences is an expression of sorrow to someone who has suffered a loss

Contextual is information that is relating to the set of facts surrounding a situation

Cooperation is defined as joint operation or action

Denial of attribution is the act of refusing ascription

Event causes refers to other underlying incidents that led to the event.

Event effects - includes sanction responsible for the changes that occur in the related relations - how it impacts -

International community support - refers to NATO, EU, the USA, and any other country or organization that shows support

Justification- is the act of defending or explaining and is described as an underlying reason

Leadership - is the action of leading a group of people; however, in this context it is used as the status of a leader and how it is perceived

Political - Fitzpatrick's functional category refers to international relations and foreign policy.

Regional Politics - politics related to a particular geography

Relational - Fitzpatrick's functional category depends on beneficial relationships.

Security - the state of being free from danger, being safety

Warfare /propaganda approach is related to national security or a country's military efforts

Warning- a message informing of danger

Case I. Results of the Shooting Down of the Warplane Case

Turkey and Russia have been on opposing sides in the Syrian conflict since the beginning, each supporting different groups to fight against terrorists. This caused great confusion during the war, making it difficult to distinguish between the groups involved. On November 24, 2015, the first major incident between Turkey and Russia occurred when a Turkish Air Force F-16 fighter jet shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 aircraft for crossing the Turkish border. The incident caused huge concern for Turkey, Russia, and the international community. Both governments issued official press releases and utilized their Twitter accounts to comment on the incident and its aftermath. Furthermore, the incident was widely covered in the international news media, providing a platform for further discussion of the incident. This section of the dissertation presents the results of data analyzed from these official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers.

Official Press Releases

For the analysis of the official press release data, RQ 1 asked: Were there any functional categories of public diplomacy used in the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments in relation to the shooting down of the warplane?

On the Turkish side, the total number of official press releases published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was 10. Out of the total 10 press releases, 7 were related to the case. Within those 7 press releases, six dominant themes were identified, including *communication / informational, bilateral relations* (covering topics such as tourism, agreements, and safety

flights), *justification*, *condemnation*, *warning*, and *cooperation*. On the contrary, the Turkish Presidency issued 3 official press releases stressing Russia, which focused on three themes: *communication / information*, *bilateral relations* with an emphasis on normalization of mutual relations and *cooperation*. On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia released a total of 10 press releases related to Turkey. 6 out of the 10 official releases highlighted the following themes: *political*, *blame attribution*, *advocacy / influence*, *communication / information*, *cooperation*, and *bilateral relations*. Conversely, out of the 40 official press releases published on the Russian Presidency's official webpage that focused on Turkey, only 3 emphasized the case, while the remaining press releases pertained to general relations with Turkey. Table 4 displays the prominent themes, which include *communication / informational*, *bilateral relations*, *blame attribution*, *apology*, and *cooperation*.

Table 4

Emerging Themes for the Official Press Releases Case I

MFA of Turkey	Presidency of Turkey	MFA of Russia	Presidency of Russia
Communication / Informational	Communication / Informational	Communication / Informational	Communication / Informational
Bilateral Relations	Bilateral Relations	Bilateral Relations	Bilateral Relations
Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation
Condemnation		Blame Attribution	Blame Attribution
Warning		Political	
Justification		Advocacy / influence	Apology

Twitter posts

RQ 2 inquired: Were there any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Twitter accounts of the Turkish and Russian governments regarding the shoot-down of the warplane event? The results from the Turkish side indicate that the MFA of Turkey posted 22 tweets about Russia within the 13-month period. These tweets were predominantly about the themes of *communication / informational, blame attribution, relational, and international community support*. Additionally, the Turkish Presidency posted 29 tweets related to Russia during the same time frame. These tweets mainly focused on themes of *communication / informational, blame attribution, advocacy / influence, relational, warning and political* (see Table 5).

The MFA of Russia actively utilized its official account and generated 170 posts over a 13-month period, with the main themes being *communication / informational, blame attribution, advocacy / influence, relational, condolences, denial of attribution, political, and justification*. Meanwhile, the Russian Presidency posted 43 tweets about Turkey during the same time frame. As illustrated in Table 5, the dominant themes that emerged from the Twitter data include *communication / informational, blame attribution, advocacy / influence, relational, and condolences*.

Table 5*Emerging Themes for the Twitter Case I*

MFA of Turkey	Presidency of Turkey	MFA of Russia	Presidency of Russia
Communication / informational	Communication / informational	Communication / informational	Communication / informational
Blame attribution	Blame attribution	Blame attribution	Blame attribution
	Advocacy/influence	Advocacy/influence	Advocacy /influence
Relational	Relational	Relational	Relational
	Warning	Condolences	Condolences
International community support	Political	Denial of attribution	
		Political	
		Justification	

Newspapers

RQ 3 asked: What frames were used by the major news outlets in the US (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the UK (The Guardian, The Times) regarding the shooting down of the warplane event?

The total number of news articles that were downloaded from search platforms was 92 (see Table 6). The Guardian published 41% (38) of the news articles regarding the warplane case. The dominant themes that were stressed in the newspaper are *event effects*, *economic consequences*, *regional politics*, *conflict*, *international community support*, *bilateral relations*, *analysis*, *leadership*, and *apology*.

Table 6*Total Number of Newspapers for Case I*

Newspaper Name	Number of news articles	% of news
1. The Guardian	38	41%
2. The New York Times	24	26%
3. The Times	18	20%
4. The Washington Post	12	13%
Total	92	100%

The second newspaper that had more information on the case study was The New York Times, which published 26% (24) of the articles. The salient themes that were identified are *contextual, regional politics, event effects, international community support, bilateral relations, and leadership*. Subsequently, The Times published 20% (18) of the articles about the case. Emerging themes observed are *bilateral relations, regional politics, international community support, and event effects*. Lastly, The Washington Post published 13% (12) of the articles. The prominent themes identified are *regional politics, international community support, event effects, and bilateral relations* (see Table 7).

Table 7*Newspapers - Emerging Themes for Case I*

The Guardian	The New York Times	The Times	The Washington Post
Event effects	Contextual	Bilateral relations	Regional politics
Economic consequences	Regional politics	Regional politics	International community support
Regional politics	Event effects	International community support	Event effects
Conflict	International community support		Bilateral relations
International community support	Bilateral relations	Event effects	
Bilateral relations	Leadership		
Analysis			
Leadership			
Apology			

Case II. Results of the Assassination of the Russian Ambassador

The second case analysis in this dissertation, the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara on December 19, 2016, serves as a reflection of the effects of the Russian involvement in the Syrian conflict in the region. This incident had significant implications for both Turkey and Russia, as well as the international community, prompting official press releases from both governments and commentary on their respective Twitter accounts. Furthermore, the incident received widespread coverage in the international news media, which provided a platform for further discussion of the incident. Therefore, data from these sources were analyzed for the

purposes of this dissertation, with the results presented here.

This section of the dissertation presents the results of data taken from official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers about the assassination of the Russian ambassador case.

Official Press Releases

RQ 4 asked: Were any public diplomacy functional categories used in the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments regarding the assassination of the Russian ambassador event?

From the Turkish side, the total number of official press releases published by the MFA of Turkey was 2. Out of those 2 releases, 1 press release was related to the case. The press releases had the dominant themes of *condemnation, condolences, bilateral relations, cooperation, political, and communication / information*. On the other hand, the Turkish Presidency served 8 official press releases related to Russia. The prevailing themes for the event included *bilateral relations, political, cooperation, condemnation, condolences, communication / informational*.

On the Russian side, the MFA of Russia shared 40 press releases related to Turkey. Out of 40 official releases, 8 of the releases stressed themes of *condemnation, condolences, political, bilateral relations, cooperation, and communication / informational*. In contrast, the Russian presidency's official webpage released 35 official announcements, and 4 press releases emphasized the event. The rest of the press releases relate to general relations with Turkey. The outstanding themes were *condolences, bilateral relations, political, cooperation and communication / informational* (see Table 8).

Table 8*Emerging Themes for the Official Press Releases Case II*

MFA of Turkey	Presidency of Turkey	MFA of Russia	Presidency of Russia
Condemnation	Condemnation	Condemnation	
Condolences	Condolences	Condolences	Condolences
Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations
Political	Political	Political	Political
Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation
Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational

Twitter posts

RQ 5 inquired as to whether there were any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Turkish and Russian governments' Twitter accounts regarding the assassination of the Russian ambassador. MFA of Turkey posted 13 tweets regarding Russia over a 13-month period. The dominant themes that were examined are “*bilateral relations, condolences, commemoration, communication / informational, and political.*” The Turkish Presidency posted 32 tweets for the same period related to Russia. The topics emphasized were “*bilateral relations, cooperation, blame attribution, political, condolences, and communication / information.*” Russian MFA actively uses its Twitter account. The MFA of Russia tweeted 41 posts from its account. The main themes emphasized were “*condolences, commemoration, bilateral relations, cooperation, political, and communication / informational.*” Similarly, the Russian presidency tweeted 49 tweets posts related to Turkey with the outstanding themes “*condolences, communication /*

informational, and bilateral relations (see Table 9).

Table 9

Emerging Themes for the Twitter Case II

MFA of Turkey	Presidency of Turkey	MFA of Russia	Presidency of Russia
Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations	Bilateral relations
Condolences	Condolences	Condolences	Condolences
	Cooperation	Cooperation	
Political	Political	Political	
	Blame attribution		
Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational	Communication/ informational
Commemoration		Commemoration	

Newspapers

RQ 6 asked: What frames were used by the major news outlets in the US (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the UK (The Guardian, The Times) in their coverage of the Russian ambassador event?

The total number of news articles that were downloaded from search platforms was 71. The New York Times published 39% (27) of the news articles related to the assassination of the ambassador (see Table 10).

Table 10*Total Number of Newspapers for Case II*

Newspaper Name	Number of news articles	% of news
1. The New York Times	28	39%
2. The Times	17	24%
3. The Guardian	14	20%
4. The Washington Post	12	17%
Total	71	100%

The dominant themes covered in the newspaper included “*contextual, analysis, security, blame attribution, bilateral relations, cooperation, and regional politics.*” The second newspaper that had more information on the case study was The Times, which published 24% (17) of the articles. The salient themes that emerged are “*contextual, bilateral relations, regional politics, and blame attribution.*” Subsequently, The Guardian published 20% (14) of the articles. The emerging themes are “*contextual, regional policies, bilateral relations, cooperation, and analysis.*” Lastly, The Washington Post published 17% (12) of the articles on the case. The prominent themes that are observed, as shown in Table 11, are “*regional politics, bilateral relations, cooperation, and analysis.*”

Table 11*Newspapers - Emerging Themes for Case II*

The New York Times	The Times	The Guardian	The Washington Post
Contextual	Contextual	Contextual	Regional politics
Analysis	Bilateral relations	Regional politics	Bilateral relations
Security	Regional politics	Bilateral Relations	Cooperation
Blame Attribution	Blame Attribution	Cooperation	Analysis
Regional politics		Analysis	
Bilateral relations			
Cooperation			

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This dissertation “Examining Public Diplomacy Message Strategies During Times of Crisis Communication: An Analysis of Recent Major Turkey-Russia Crises,” examined whether public diplomacy can be used as a tool in crisis communication. Drawing upon the two case studies involving Turkey and Russia, the chapter delves into a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the research findings gathered from official press releases, Twitter posts, and newspaper articles.

The research identified that the government accounts of Turkey and Russia from the MFA and the presidency, employed official press releases and maintained active Twitter usage during the 13-month period under analysis. Nonetheless, with regard to the two crises examined using the functional categories of Fitzpatrick (2010), the conveyance of messages to the general public appeared minimal on the Turkish end. This finding can indicate that it is because both crises occurred within the confines of Turkish territory and the Turkish government would like to act cautiously regarding the responses shared with the public. As for the Russian side, it preferred to have an offensive attitude. However, the analysis suggests that novel themes can be employed in the context of public diplomacy and can be analyzed through the perspective of crisis communication. The discussion section was presented under two case studies, with each research question discussed individually and concluded with a final discussion of the findings.

Case I. Shooting Down of the Warplane

Analysis of the Official Press Releases of MFA of Turkey and the Turkish Presidency

English language official websites are important communication channels for public diplomacy activities of a country because they contribute to image and advocate for national interests of a country (White & Radic, 2014). For this reason, when governments need to

disseminate their strategic message to the international community during a crisis period, the use of official press releases is an invaluable tool for effective communication. This is because press releases allow governments to communicate important information quickly and efficiently.

The first research question analyzed the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments by answering the question: Were there any functional categories of public diplomacy used in the official press releases of the Turkish and Russian governments in relation to the shooting down of the warplane? A 13-month period of analysis of the official press releases of the MFA of Turkey revealed six dominant themes. These themes, identified through a thematic analysis, are *communication / informational*, *bilateral relations*, *justification*, *condemnation*, *warning*, and *cooperation*.

Applying the results to Fitzpatrick's six functional categories, it is evident that the MFA Turkey mainly uses the message strategy of *communication/informational* to disseminate its messages; as described in the definitions associated with the themes in chapter four; with the main focus being on informing the international community. This category is consistent and supported by previous literature which found that Turkey preferred the *communication / informational* functional category to disseminate its messages to the international public as noted in White & Radic's (2014) study. An example can be seen in the official press release issued by the MFA of Turkey on October 1, 2015, which was titled Press Release Regarding the Violation of Turkish Airspace by Russian Federation Aircraft and stated the following:

A fighter aircraft belonging to the Russian Federation violated Turkish airspace at 12:08 on 3 October 2015 south of the Yayladağı/Hatay region. The Russian aircraft exited Turkish airspace into Syria after it was intercepted by two F-16s from the Turkish Air Force, which were conducting patrols in the region. The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry summoned the Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Ankara to the Ministry and strongly protested this violation, demanded that any such violation not be repeated

and affirmed that, otherwise, the Russian Federation will be responsible for any undesired incident that may occur. The Foreign Minister called the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov to reiterate the views stated above and express our reaction. The Foreign Minister also held telephone calls with his US, French, Italian and UK counterparts to evaluate the situation. The Foreign Minister will also consult with the NATO Secretary General and his German counterpart. (10/1/2015)

This press release was posted prior to the incident on November 24, 2015. This is an indication that Turkey was not only informing but also made its warnings before the event and shared its discomfort with Russia, as well as announced its concern to the international community and its NATO partners. The tension had already started to slowly escalate before the main incident happened.

On the other hand, the *bilateral relations* theme is the second most used theme by the MFA of Turkey. Both countries continue their relations as stated in the press release of November 19, 2015: “The Fifth Meeting of the Turkish-Russian Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG), a sub-organ of the Turkish-Russian High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC), will be held in Istanbul on 25 November 2015.” The third identified theme is *justification* where the MFA of Turkey used the theme to rationalize its action and its justification was backed by NATO and the U.S. in the press release provided below. The fourth is *condemnation*, fifth being *warning* are identified in the press releases regarding Russia’s repeated invasions of Turkish air space states:

Yesterday (29 January 2016) at 11.46 hours local time, a SU-34 type Russian aircraft violated Turkish airspace. Before the violation actually took place, Russian plane was warned numerous times by Turkish air radar units, (through appropriate channels) both in English and Russian languages. Despite several previous explicit statements of warnings by both Turkey and NATO, this new violation is yet another concrete example of Russian escalatory behavior. We once again explicitly call on Russia, to act responsibly and not to

violate Turkish Airspace, which is NATO airspace. We underline that such actions could lead to serious consequences, the responsibility of which will totally rest with the Russian Federation. Russian Ambassador to Ankara has been summoned to the MFA yesterday evening. At the meeting we strongly protested and condemned this violation and reiterated, once again, aforementioned concerns as to the gravity of such violations. (1/30/2016)

The sixth and final prominent theme is *cooperation*. It is observed that before and after the incident, Turkey and Russia continued their bilateral relations and increased their cooperation. Before the incident, both countries had a group meeting (as mentioned in the press release of November 19, 2015) and in the months of June and July 2016, both parties' delegations met to overcome the disputes and continue their cooperation on tourism, safety, flights, etc. as the press release dated July 13, 2016, states that:

Upon the invitation of the Russian Federation authorities and with the purpose of discussing the cooperation and relations in the field of tourism between Turkey and Russia, a Turkish delegation will hold talks with Russian counterparts in Moscow on 14 July. The Turkish delegation will be headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consist of the authorities from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Transport, Maritime and Communications and the Ministry of Interior, as well as the representatives of the private sector. In the meeting, there will be an exchange of views regarding the preparations for the resumption of charter flights between Turkey and Russia, safety of tourists and measures that have been taken to this end and new areas of cooperation in the tourism sector for the upcoming period. (7/13/ 2016)

It has been noted that *cooperation* and *bilateral relations* themes are reflective of the public diplomacy relational functional category which is concerned with the building of beneficial relationships and networks between nations.

The findings of the press releases related to Russia's repeated violations of Turkish airspace in the months following the incident revealed three resounding themes: *condemnation*,

warning, and *justification*. These themes are not only powerful but they also demonstrate the strength and resolve of the Turkish government in protecting its borders and airspace from outside aggression. From the fierce criticism of these air invasions to the intense warnings and condemnations for Russia to cease its unlawful activities, it is clear that the Turkish government was determined to stand firm in defense of its sovereign borders to have a stance to ensure their security and autonomy is preserved. The themes are identified as a means of conveying Turkey's disapproval and concern with regards to the multiple cases of airspace violations that occurred in the months that followed the incident. *Warning* theme corresponds to the *warfare / propaganda* message strategy of Fitzpatrick's functional category which narrates about the national security or a country's military efforts whereas *condemnation* is often used to express disapproval of a certain policy or action and it does not correspond to any message strategy, however, it certainly indicates a strong reaction.

Lastly, a significant finding of the official press releases of the MFA of Turkey is the identification of the *justification* theme. There is no category that corresponds to the justification theme, and no resemblances found with other message strategies of Fitzpatrick. Justification was used on both January 29th and 30th to justify the shooting down of the plane. In the same press release, in the context of a political crisis, justification is used to identify the process of providing evidence to support a particular course of action.

In scholarly literature, justification is a defensive concept (Simmons, 1999). It is an "action, strategy, practice, arrangement, or institution generally necessitates demonstrating its prudential rationality, moral acceptability, or a combination of both (contingent upon the type of justification in question)" (p.740). Building on this, justification can be used constructively, not only defensively, but also as evidence in crisis communication, not to provoke a crisis, but to

build a useful function for persuasion and crisis mitigation. Therefore, justification can be a helpful concept to use during crisis times.

The presidency of the Republic of Turkey's website has been analyzed in terms of published official press releases. The webpage has a section where official speeches and statements are displayed for the public. Moreover, it has a separate section dedicated to news. An analysis of the official press releases from the presidential account of Turkey over a 13-month period revealed that the three themes identified were that of *communication / informational*, *bilateral relations* and *cooperation*. The presidency did not share an official press release focused on the shooting of the plane. The most important official press release stated:

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had a phone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation today. President Erdoğan and President Putin of Russia mainly focused on the importance of the normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia during the phone conversation. The two Presidents also underlined the importance of acting in cooperation in the face of political, economic and humanitarian crises in the region as well as taking necessary steps to revive the bilateral relations. Condemning the heinous terror attack in Istanbul, President Putin of Russia offered his condolences to the Turkish nation. The two leaders also agreed to stay in contact and hold a face-to-face meeting, stressing their determination to revive bilateral relations and join forces in the fight against terror. Respectfully announced to the public. (6/ 29/ 2016)

It is observed that the themes of *bilateral relations* and *cooperation* are prominent in the presidential official press releases. The research in this study only included the official press releases and not the news section of the presidential account where the president of Turkey made his remarks regarding the shooting down of the plane incident and his comments were presented on the news section of the page. The news section of the webpage was not within the scope of the study. It is observed that six months after the incident, on June 29, 2016, both leaders met for the first time to normalize their relations and to have conversations about normalizing the

relations. This relates to the functional category of *relational* category. Lastly, the press release provides insight into the steps both countries are taking towards bilateral collaboration. On the other hand, it is observed that the presidential releases of Turkey related to this incident did not comment on the plane incident. The website published and shared mostly informational news. Therefore, the presidential website is observed to be only sharing *communication / informational* and *bilateral relations* announcements. Thus, it appears that the press releases from the presidential website were carefully chosen to ensure only relevant information was shared with the public.

Analysis of the Official Press Releases of MFA of Russia and the Russian Presidency

The official press releases of the MFA of Russia revealed six dominant themes which are *regional politics (political)*, *blame attribution*, *advocacy / influence*, *communication / information*, *cooperation*, and *bilateral relations*. Applying the results to Fitzpatrick's six functional categories, analyses indicate that the MFA of Russia mainly use the message strategy of *communication / informational* to disseminate its messages and provides detailed statements. This category is consistent and supported by previous literature which found that Russia preferred the communication / informational functional category to disseminate its messages to the international public as noted in the Simons (2014) study. Additionally, the MFA of Russia uses *blame attribution* and *advocacy / influence* themes, with the main focus being on informing the international community in order to win the argument as presented by the press release:

On November 25, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke on the phone with the Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, a call initiated by Turkey. Sergey Lavrov expressed indignation over Turkey's unfriendly act. He pointed out that, by shooting down a Russian plane on a counter-terrorist mission of the Russian Aerospace Force in Syria, and one that did not violate Turkey's airspace, the Turkish government has in effect sided with ISIS. Judging by the facts, Turkey's actions appear premeditated,

planned, and undertaken with a specific objective. The Russian Minister reminded his counterpart about Turkey's involvement in the ISIS' illegal trade in oil, which is transported via the area where the Russian plane was shot down, and about the terrorist infrastructure, arms and munitions depots and control centres that are also located there. Sergey Lavrov specifically said that this act by Turkey will have serious consequences for Russian-Turkish relations and will not go unanswered. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has expressed his condolences and regret over the death of the pilot. At the same time, his statement was ultimately intended to justify the actions of the Turkish Air Force. The Turkish Minister also spoke about the importance of maintaining dialogue and ties with Russia. (11/25/2015)

The results indicate that the MFA of Russia uses aggressive speech when communicating with the community. The language the ministry uses in the statement is assertive and confrontational (Ziegler, 2018), and it is evidently focused on influencing the attitudes and opinions of external publics through persuasive messaging. In particular, the statement expresses the Turkish side's condolences and regret over the incident. The statement is thus an example of how *advocacy / influence* messaging is used to effectively build an argument to influence the attitudes and perceptions of the external public.

As for *cooperation*, and *bilateral relations*, in the same statement Turkish side gives “importance of dialogue and ties with Russia.” Cooperation and bilateral relations themes correspond to Fitzpatrick's *relational* functional category where MFA Russia constantly uses in its press releases as seen in the press release:

At Turkey's initiative, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had a telephone conversation with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on August 31. The two foreign ministers discussed current bilateral issues, including the implementation of agreements reached between the Russian and Turkish presidents in St Petersburg on August 9 as part of a common understanding on gradual restoration of bilateral cooperation ...(8/31/2016) One of the most significant themes identified is *regional politics*. This corresponds to the

political approach in Fitzpatrick's message strategies, which involves messages of engaging in international relations, international politics, foreign policies, democracy, etc. Due to the Syrian conflict in the region, Turkey and Russia have been in dispute about regional policies. Most of the press statements refer to regional politics; for example, Russia has constantly expressed concern over the Syrian zone, as seen in this press release:

The Foreign Ministry expresses grave concern about the advance of the Turkish troops and armed groups of the Syrian opposition it supports further into Syrian territory, and stresses that these actions are not being coordinated with the legitimate Syrian Government and are undertaken without approval of the UN Security Council. This undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Taking this into account, the position adopted by Damascus seems justified and valid in terms of international law. The Foreign Ministry believes that Turkey's actions could further complicate an already challenging military and political situation in Syria and negatively affect international efforts to devise a settlement platform that would ensure a more sustainable ceasefire, uninterrupted humanitarian access and would provide a solid foundation for conciliation and overcoming the crisis in this country. Russia calls on Ankara to put these objectives above immediate military and tactical aims and refrain from steps that could further destabilise the Syrian Arab Republic. (9/7/2016)

MFA Russia is actively involved in regional politics and as literature states its policy is to maintain control, power (Zeigler, 2018), and have a say in the conflicts of the region.

The Russian presidential website has been analyzed for its official press releases. The page is well-organized and easy to navigate, making it simple to locate the official press releases. The results of the analysis showed that *communication / informational, bilateral relations, blame attribution, apology, and cooperation* are the five dominant themes. All of these press releases were shared with the intention of *communication / informational* message strategies. The literature supports that Russia uses communicational, network and relational (Simmons, 2014, p.449) approach in message strategies.

The Russian presidential account announced the G-20 Summit, which Putin attended, before the plane incident and shared several pieces of information regarding the summit, which was held in the city of Antalya on November 15-16, 2015, in Turkey, a week prior to the incident. For example, on November 15, 2015, an official press release stated that “Vladimir Putin took part in the tenth G20 summit in Turkey,” and another press release dated November 16, 2015, presented that “Vladimir Putin met with President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the G20 summit.” These press releases emphasized the bilateral relation and cooperation message functions.

Three days after the incident, a press release on November 27, 2015, stated that “Vladimir Putin met with permanent members of the Security Council. The discussion focused on the increased tensions Syria and Turkey's aggressive and unpredictable action.” This statement not only attributed blame to Turkey, but also portrayed the country as unpredictable and unreliable, aiming to damage its image. Additionally, the presidential account posted another press release on December 8, 2015, stating that “Vladimir Putin had a working meeting with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. In particular, the Defence Minister informed the President on the discovery of the flight data recorder from the Russian fighter jet shot down in Syria by the Turkish Air Force.” With this press release, they aimed to inform the world about their actions and emphasize that they are pursuing the case.

The *apology* theme is not one of the functional categories, however, in this case, the press release dated June 27, 2016, with the title of “Vladimir Putin received a letter from President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in which the Turkish President expressed his desire to settle the situation concerning the downing of a Russian military aircraft ” has the following content:

Mr. Erdogan said in his letter that Russia is Turkey’s friend and strategic partner, and the Turkish authorities do not want to ruin relations between the two countries. “We never

had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian Federation's plane," Mr. Erdogan said. The letter went on to say that the Turkish side "undertook much effort at great risk to retrieve the Russian pilot's body from the Syrian opposition and bring it back to Turkey, where pre-burial procedures were carried out in accordance with religious and military procedures. We performed this work at a level worthy of our two countries' relations. I once again express my sympathy and profound condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed and I am saying: "Excuse us." I share their grief with all my heart. We look on this Russian pilot's family as we would a Turkish family and we are ready to undertake any initiative that could lessen the pain and severity of the damage caused. The letter also said that a judicial investigation is underway against the Turkish citizen said to be involved in the Russian pilot's death. Mr. Erdogan expressed his deep regret for what happened and said that he is ready to do all possible to restore the traditionally friendly ties between Turkey and Russia and also to work together to respond to crisis situations in the region and fight terrorism. (6/ 27/ 2016)

An interesting finding is that the theme of *apology* has been emphasized by the Russian side, while there has been no official statement on the matter from the Turkish side. As mentioned in chapter four, an apology is defined as a statement acknowledging something and expressing regret. Apology diplomacy is used by governments as a way of easing historical grievances held by foreign publics (Kitagawa & Chu, 2021); Kitagawa and Chu (2021) found that apology-making, both in the form of statements and expressions of regret, increases approval from the recipient country. Other studies indicate that the implications of an apology go beyond simply understanding the appropriate language; cultural differences must be taken into consideration as well (Anagondahalli & Zhu, 2016). It is essential to recognize that the meaning and impact of an apology can vary widely depending on the culture and context in which it is given. Even though the apology theme is not mentioned in any of Fitzpatrick's message strategies, it can function as a new functional category during crisis times. Therefore, this dissertation finds that in the context of public diplomacy message strategy it is essential to

consider the cultural background of the country to ensure that the apology is meaningful and effective.

Analysis of the Twitter Accounts of the MFA of Turkey and the Turkish Presidency

Social media has had an impact on foreign relations of governments, prompting them to communicate with international communities through internet-based diplomacy in an effort to create relational public diplomacy (Park & Lim, 2014) to foster dialogue. Consequently, Twitter has become an important and official tool for public diplomacy (Tiago, 2017) for governments to engage in and form relationships with the international community, and more importantly, to spread messages to a broader audience. Specifically, European Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) use Twitter to communicate with the international community (Bjola & Manor, 2022). Therefore, the second research question analyzed the Twitter accounts of the Turkish and Russian governments by answering the question: “Were there any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Twitter accounts of the Turkish and Russian governments regarding the shoot-down of the warplane event?”

The analysis found that the MFA of Turkey communicated with the four themes being *communication / informational, blame attribution, relational, and international community support*. The identified themes of *communication / informational, relational and international community support* correspond with Fitzpatrick’s message strategies. *Communication / informational* and *relational* message strategies are used consistently. For instance, one day after the incident, the MFA of Turkey posted the following tweet on November 25, 2015 “Regarding the Telephone Conversation between FM Mevlüt Çavusoğlu and FM Sergey Lavrov.” From this tweet it is confirmed that there has been an intense communication between the MFA of Turkey and the MFA of Russia regarding the incident.

On the other hand, seeking international community support corresponds to the *advocacy / influence* message strategy where Turkey tries to influence the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of the external public. For instance, the MFA of Turkey is constantly *communicating / informing* and *advocating* its stance to the international community about the situation in its airspace related to border breach. On October 5, 2015, they tweeted about the airspace violation of Russia stating, “Press Release Regarding the Violation of Turkish Airspace by a #Russian Federation Aircraft.” This action demonstrates the MFA of Turkey's commitment to enforcing the country's sovereign airspace from intrusions. As a result, the MFA of Turkey continues to maintain a strong presence in the international arena to ensure the respect of Turkish airspace.

In findings about the theme of *blame attribution*, it is evident that Turkey issued warnings and directed blame towards Russia for their actions, as evidenced by the tweets released on January 30, 2016, which presented a “Press Release Regarding the Violation of Turkish Airspace on 29 January 2016 by a RF Aircraft,” the tweets released on February 16, 2016, which stated a “Press Release Regarding the Targeting of Civilians by Russian Air Strikes,” and the tweets released on June 23, 2016, which displayed a “Press Release Regarding Russia's Attacks in Syria.”

It has been identified that the MFA of Turkey prefers to use its Twitter account and its official press releases simultaneously. The tweets are consistent with the content of its official press releases (Uysal, Schroeder & Taylor , 2012), indicating that the MFA of Turkey maintains a consistent information and communication policy approach when communicating with the international community. For instance, on November 26, 2015, it tweeted “Press Release Regarding the Attacks against the Turkish Embassy in Moscow and other Missions in the RF” and the official press release had the details of the incident. Furthermore, it has been observed

that the MFA of Turkey's Twitter usage and the message content of the posts are not aggressive. Due to their nature, the official press releases are more informative and Turkey is advocating more about its stance with the official press releases whereas its Twitter engagement is not active regarding this case. These results provide insight into how Turkey is engaging with Russia in the digital space, suggesting that Turkey is utilizing digital media channels to diplomatically address the issues that arise between the two countries.

The Turkish presidency's tweets mainly focused on themes of *communication / informational, warning, advocacy / influence, political, blame attribution, and relational* message strategies. The majority of the tweets have been identified as *communicational / informational* message strategies as supported by White and Radic's MFA twitter analysis study (2014). Moreover, the tweets of the Turkish presidential account had the same themes as the MFA of Turkey except for *warning* and *political* message themes.

The *warning* theme had been used before the main incident occurred on November 24, 2015. For example, the Turkish President's account tweeted on October 6, 2015, quoting the president's words, "If Russia loses a friend like Turkey, it will lose a lot." The Turkish side had already given the Russian side a warning before the main incident happened. On November 25, 2015, one day after the incident, the presidential account posted a striking message from the president that emphasized a warning message stating, "Everyone must respect Turkey's right to protect its borders." Additionally, on November 27, 2015, they posted another tweet that mentioned "No country could ever violate another country's sovereign rights." Both of the tweets posted by the account disseminated a clear *warning* and *advocacy / influence* message strategy to influence the opinions, and behaviors of external publics by the use of persuasive messaging. They sought "to persuade foreign elites and publics that the ...policies, and actions of the state

deserve ... - support” (Mor, 2006, p. 157) from the international community. As for the political message theme, the presidential account shared a tweet on December 2, 2015, with a message saying, “Our concern is to contribute to the peace in the region,” which emphasized their concern for the regional political issues.

Blame attribution emerged as a dominant theme in the messages disseminated by the official Turkish presidential Twitter account. The posts accused Russia of its border invasion and blame for causing the current situation in the region. A striking example of this phenomenon occurred on February 6, 2016, when the account relayed incisive comments made by the Turkish president, insinuating that “Russia is trying to set up a boutique state for Assad” and hold the nation accountable for its aggressive conduct. Concurrently, the same account focused on maintaining bilateral relations and thus strategically employed relational messages to underscore this objective. Six days later, on February 12, 2016, the president’s Twitter account delivered another message stating that “Adding fuel to the fire benefits no one” signaling the Turkish government’s intention to de-escalate the tensions between the two nations. Subsequently, as the relations between both countries began to recover, the message strategies changed in format. The first step was taken months later on June 6, 2016, with a tweet from the same account posting “Presidential Spokesperson Kalin: Russia and Turkey have agreed to take necessary steps to improve relations” initiating the peace process. On August 9, 2016, before meeting the president of Russia, the Turkish president's account tweeted, “Turkey-Russia relations have entered a positive phase of great targets.”

Lastly, on November 27, 2015, a striking tweet was posted on the Turkish President's Twitter account, rejecting and denying an apology. The tweet stated, “Those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize.” Contrary to the press release findings regarding the

apology theme, it was identified that only the Turkish presidential Twitter account had posted this remark by the president of Turkey.

Analysis of the Twitter Accounts of the MFA of Russia and the Russian Presidency

The literature on Russia's use of social media and digital platforms indicates that the country uses its accounts actively. However, it employs a harsh tone, conveys its message explicitly and disregards the use of diplomatic language (Manor, 2021). For the findings regarding Twitter accounts, it was observed that the MFA of Russia actively advocated and attempted to justify its stance regarding the incident in order to win the argument over international public opinion. The themes that were identified are *communication / informational*, *blame attribution*, *advocacy / influence*, *relational*, *denial of attribution*, *politics*, *justification*, and *event effects*.

Analysis of Russia's MFA reveals that the country primarily communicates using the message strategy of *communication / informational*. This is in line with previous studies such as that of Simons (2014), which found that Russia prefers the *communication / informational* functional category to disseminate its messages to the international public. Furthermore, *blame attribution*, *justification*, and *advocacy / influence* themes are core messages used by the MFA of Russia. For instance, on November 24, 2015, the ministry tweeted *blaming* the Turkish government for its "unfriendly act" of the Turkish Air Force. Further, on November 25, 2015, the MFA of Russia's post stated that "Sergey Lavrov reminded Turkish FM on the phone about Turkey's involvement in the ISIS' illegal trade in oil" and emphasized the message of *justification* with this tweet. One significant point is that the ministry tried to provide evidence and intensely tweeted, stating that the Russian warplanes did not cross the Turkish border at all. For instance, on the day of the incident it posted "Russian aircraft Su-24 crashed in Syria.

According to the preliminary data, the pilots managed to eject ...” The multiple tweets on the same day stated, “During all flight time, aircraft was flying only within borders of Syrian territory...”; “Russian aircraft did not cross the Turkish border and acted only against objects on the territory of Syria...”; “Turkish Air Force's actions considered as unfriendly act”; “Now Russian Defence Ministry is designing a complex of measures directed to respond such incidents”. Two days after the incident, the ministry still posted to justify that they did not cross the border by showing more evidence and tweeted on November 26, 2015, saying “Our CSTO partners have been shown a map and a radar that prove the #Su24 was shot down over Syria.”

By sharing more tweets on the incident, the MFA of Russia used *advocacy / influence* message strategy to influence the attitudes and opinions of the international public. The post on November 24, 2015, included a quote from President Putin referring to the act by Turkey. He stated that “today's loss is a result of a stab in the back delivered by terrorists' accomplices” thereby underscoring the malicious intent behind the act. It is evident that by invoking the words of President Putin, the MFA seeks to amplify the impact of its advocacy / influence message strategy, and to stimulate support for its stance on the matter.

Another prominent theme identified in the analysis is the *denial of attribution*, which involves refusing to assign responsibility or blame for a particular event or action. For example, on November 26, 2015, the ministry posted a tweet in response to the controversy surrounding the downing of Russia's #Su24 jet, denying any blame and asserting, “Attempts to shift the blame for the downing of Russia's #Su24 jet on Russia are evident in NATO's diplomatic statements.” In addition to not taking any responsibility, the ministry criticized Turkey and NATO for their apparent avoidance of accountability. This behavior is supported by existing literature, which suggests that, unlike other diplomatic entities, Russia tends to be direct and

clear in its communication, avoiding the use of diplomatic jargon (Manor, 2019).

Fitzpatrick's *relational* message strategy is used by the MFA of Russia to emphasize its *cooperation* and *bilateral relations* with Turkey. The ministry regularly issues posts regarding conference participations, high-level meetings such as the G20 Summit held in Turkey in 2015, the strategic planning group, and meetings between both presidents. For instance, the G20 meeting held in Antalya was shared multiple times in tweets. Additionally, political functional message strategy has been emphasized in the posts by addressing regional political issues, mostly related to Syria, and the involvement of other regional partners has been actively posted by the ministry.

Lastly, the *event effect* emerged as a dominant theme addressed in the ministry's posts. This theme consisted of a variety of sub-elements such as economic sanctions, visa limitations, tourism-related issues, banning of travel, and the cancellation of bilateral meetings. After the incident, Russia imposed economic sanctions on Turkey and announced this with a tweet on November 28, 2015, stating, "Russia has introduced economic restrictions against Turkey following the #Su24 crash -Presidential executive order." The MFA disclosed a statement from the minister on November 27, 2015, noting, "Lavrov: Starting January 1, 2016, Russia will suspend visa-free travel with Turkey as the threat from this country is very real." Furthermore, with regard to tourism and travel, the ministry warned its citizens in a tweet on November 26, 2015, stating, "We recommend Russian citizens to refrain from visiting Turkey, advise that Russians staying there to return home." Moreover, on November 24, 2015, the day of the incident, the scheduled visit of the Russian MFA to Turkey was canceled and this was announced in a tweet: "Zakharova: Visit of Russian delegation headed by Sergey Lavrov in Turkey is canceled."

The MFA of Russia is the most active Twitter account among those examined in this study. The findings suggest that the use of tweets and messages was aggressive. The account demonstrated a distinctive communication style where Russia is known for adopting a more direct and clear communication style, when using diplomatic jargon which can be confusing (Manor, 2019). This straightforward approach to communication can be seen as a strategic choice, as it enables Russia to convey their messages effectively to international audiences.

The identified themes in the Russian presidential account are mainly *communication / informational*, *relational*, and *blame attribution* functional strategies. Unlike the MFA of Russia account, the presidential account is not very active. On the day of the incident there was no statement of the president shared from the account. It was rather an informative post a day after on November 25, 2015, saying “Answers to media questions on Russia’s downed #Su24 fighter in Syria” statement which had a web link. The presidential accounts major theme is *communication / information*, where the telephone conversations and in-person meetings between the Turkish and Russian presidents are regularly posted in relation to the *relational* functional category. Additionally, the relational message category is used intensively in the relations between Turkey and Russia, and the level of cooperation related to politics, trade, and economics between both countries has been emphasized.

The *blame attribution* theme has been stressed multiple times. The remarks of the presidency were posted with a statement from the account mentioning that “We do not identify the Turkish people with a certain part of Turkey’s current ruling establishment” (December 3, 2016) where it focuses on the government rather than the country's citizens. Another post came that same day on blaming asserting “Turkey and ISIS: We do not forget about Turkey abetting the terrorists. There is nothing more dishonorable and shameful than betrayal.” Moreover, the

criticism of the president Putin was posted on December 17, 2015, stating “Putin: I don’t see how to improve our relations with Turkey’s leadership but the Turkish nation remains our partner” is focusing on the problem of the leadership of the country referring to the Turkish president.

An interesting note is that the theme of *apology* is used on both accounts of Russia, while there has been no official statement identified in the Twitter statements of both the Turkish government's accounts about the death of the Russian pilot, on June 27, 2016, the Russian presidential account posted a tweet stating that “The President of Turkey expressed sympathy and deep condolences to the family of the killed Russian #Su24 pilot.” Similarly, the MFA of Russia copied the same tweet and posted it on their Twitter account.

On June 27, 2016, both the Russian presidential and MFA accounts posted the same tweet of apology from the Turkish government for the family of the deceased pilot. The tweet stated that “The President of Turkey expressed sympathy and deep condolences to the family of the killed Russian #Su24 pilot.” This is a rare occurrence, as there had been no official statement from the Turkish government's accounts to address the death of the pilot. Furthermore, the Turkish presidential account on the same day shared a remark focusing on the relations. The tweet was made by the presidential spokesperson saying, “Russia and Turkey have agreed to take necessary steps to improve relations.”

The case of Russia and Turkey is a reminder of how countries present messages differently. Upon analyzing the public diplomacy functional categories used in the Twitter of the Turkish and Russian governments accounts, it becomes evident that Russia's MFA account demonstrated a higher level of activity in comparison to its Turkish counterpart. This observation highlights Russia’s approach to utilize digital platforms for communication and public

diplomacy. MFA of Russia stressed *communication / informational* and *advocacy / influence* functional categories and used aggressive tone in its discourse whereas *blame attribution*, *denial of attribution* and *justification* are the other main findings of the analysis which are important message categories. Conversely, the MFA of Turkey did not actively use its account may be due to the fact that Turkey is the side that performed the act. Their account focused more on *communication / informational* and *relational* message strategies. In terms of Twitter activity of the official presidential accounts for both Russia and Turkey, it is noted that neither country exhibited a particularly high degree of engagement in this regard. This is primarily because these accounts tend to serve the fundamental announcements and updates related to their respective nations.

Analysis of the major U.S. and U.K. News Outlets

The news media have the power to quickly disseminate information and create a sensation. Knowing how to communicate information to effectively influence the public is important when newspapers frame stories in a certain way to maximize their influence during an important international crisis. Building on this, the study analyzed how U.S. and U.K. newspapers interpret the news stories. Therefore, the third research question asks, What frames were used by the major news outlets in the U.S. (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the U.K. (The Guardian, The Times) on the shooting down of the warplane event? during the crises times.

The Guardian newspaper had extensive coverage of the incident, with the dominant themes being the *event effects*, *economic consequences*, *regional politics*, *conflict*, *international community support*, *bilateral relations*, *analysis*, *leadership*, and *apology*. The newspaper focused on the event's effects in detail which entailed the sanctions responsible for the changes in

the relations and how they impacted the country. In the case of Turkey, on November 27, 2015, it covered how “Russia introduces visa regime for Turkish citizens...forbidden tour companies from selling packages to Turkey” and banning traveling which influences tourism, and “dozens of Turkish workers were rounded up and arrested for visa violations”(November 26, 2015), as well as frozen bilateral projects such as construction and trade agreements. As for gas, “Russia is now Turkey's second-largest trading partner and 60% of its natural gas comes from Russia” (November 24, 2015). Furthermore, the newspaper highlighted the escalating tensions, and as the tension intensified, the Turkish embassy in Moscow was the subject of demonstrations and assaults, as was highlighted by the newspaper. “A spokesman for the Turkish embassy in Moscow, said it had received many calls from Turkish citizens complaining about document checks and other bureaucratic hassles. The embassy itself was pelted with eggs, paint and stones...” (December 2, 2015).

In relation to the *event effects* theme, the *economic consequences* is the second most used theme by the newspaper. An example of this coverage was included on November 24, 2015, in a coverage stating, “The Turkish lira fell after a jet was shot down...The Turkish military shooting down a Russian-made plane near the Syrian border is having an impact on the markets...” Also, another story on November 26, 2015, focused on the Russian prime minister, Dmitry Medvedev’s talk saying, “punitive steps could include halting joint economic projects, restricting financial and trade transactions and changing customs duties.” Lastly, due to economic sanctions, financial transactions between the countries had stopped, causing businesses to be adversely affected.

The third theme discussed in depth is *regional politics*, which is coverage related to a certain geographical area, in this case Syria, and the issues between groups in that region and

international community. The Syrian war and regional problems are covered under regional politics, with each actor Turkey and Russia, and the U.S. and NATO supporting different sides of the war and being concerned about the developments in the region. Turkey and some regional countries like Saudi Arabia were unhappy about the Russian involvement, which is causing more tensions in the region as well as internationally. Also, the regional politics theme is related to the conflict theme, where The Guardian emphasized the conflict between Turkey and Russia, as well as other international actors such as the U.S. and the U.K., which the newspaper refers to as the West. One of the impactful emphasis mentioned by the newspaper on November 25, 2015, is that it was “the first time a NATO member state has shot down a Russian warplane since the Korean war - risks provoking a clash over the ongoing conflict in Syria...,” which not only created a huge concern but also a big conflict in the region.

International community support theme refers to NATO, EU, the USA, and any other country or organization that showed support for what Turkey has done. Before the event, on October 6, 2015, the news story focused on NATO’s secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg’s remarks saying, “the Russian incursions into Turkish airspace did not appear to be an accident, because the incursions had happened twice and lasted for a long time.” Furthermore, NATO’s support for Turkey has been emphasized with the statement on October 8, 2015 “NATO is ready to send troops to Turkey to defend against threats.” Another significant statement in the newspaper on October 12, 2015, is that “NATO condemns Russia over violations of Turkey's airspace; Allies hold emergency meeting after second incursion by a Russian jet, following first violation Moscow blamed on bad weather.” On the other hand, the concern of the European Union was also stressed by the newspaper on October 12, 2015: “EU calls on Russia to halt airstrikes in Syria...EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg on Monday said the Russian

attacks were of ‘deep concern and must cease immediately.’ After the incident occurred, the newspaper’s coverage on November 24 emphasized the support for Turkey stating that the “US president and NATO both backed the Turkish version of events” after the shootdown of the warplane. Additionally, after the concerns of the international community again on November 24, 2015, the newspaper repeated “NATO and the United Nations have called for calm in the wake of the shooting down of a Russian fighter jet by Turkish aircraft that drew warnings of ‘serious consequences’ from Vladimir Putin.”

Bilateral relations is another theme that has been identified throughout the analysis. The newspapers focused on Turkish and Russian relations and in some stories, provided insight about historical roots of the bilateral relations as stated on November 24, 2015, in a story: “Relations with Turkey will be revised completely. Putin will write off Erdogan as a partner, and Turkey will no longer be regarded as a friendly country.” In the same story Putin said: “...the loss today is a stab in the back, carried out by the accomplices of terrorists. I can't describe it in any other way. We will never tolerate such crimes like the one committed today.” However, only three days after the event on November 27, 2015, the Turkish president said that “We really attach a lot of importance to our relations with Russia ...We don't want these relations to suffer harm in any way” indicates that Turkey is eager to get over these difficulties as mentioned in the news. However, the newspapers framed the relations as “badly strained relations between Moscow and Ankara” (December 11, 2015).

On the other hand, approximately six months after the incident, June 28, 2016, the newspaper reported that the countries have “re-start the bilateral dialogue.” On August 9, 2016, the newspaper stated that “Putin and Erdogan are due to meet face to face for the first time since the Turkish air force shot down a Russian plane last November. The incident led to a breakdown

in relations between the countries and their leaders.” It is important to mention here that before this meeting occurred, there was a failed coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, and the news story covered that by stating “Erdogan’s day trip to St Petersburg on Tuesday will also be his first foreign visit since the failed coup in Turkey last month and an ensuing, vicious crackdown that has strained relations between Ankara and its western allies” (August 9, 2016). A significant point stressed by the newspaper is that the Russian president was “one of the first foreign leaders to phone Erdogan and voice his support after the coup attempt” (August 9, 2016). This even emphasizes that Turkey and Russia would start to improve their relations.

Analysis theme is where the news media investigates events by studying its parts. The Guardian covered several analytical pieces on Turkey and Russia issues. One of the pieces, referred to the root of the problem by setting the scene and indicating the problematic roots and stating:

Ties with Russia were already under strain before last autumn's clash, in part over Russian president Vladimir Putin's support for Assad, in part over tensions between Armenia, Turkey's old foe and Russia's friend, and Azerbaijan. Like western leaders in NATO, to which Turkey belongs, Erdogan opposed Russia's Ukraine intervention and annexation of Crimea - an unsettling precedent for a country with its own memories of Russian invasion. (5/27/ 2016).

Additionally, in another piece the newspaper emphasized Turkey’s significance as an ally (June 28, 2016), stating, “Turkey's reliability as a military ally, and its continued status as a moderate, secular, democratic Middle Eastern power matter a lot to Europe and the US in strategic and security terms.” The analysis theme brings an in-depth perspective to the issues and delves into what is behind the incidents is significant because newspapers with such analysis can convey information that may not be known for all the people.

The *leadership* theme has been an important theme identified in the study. Leadership in

this study is used as the status of a leader and how it is perceived and framed within the news story. As for the Turkish leader, President Erdogan is described as “been viewed almost as a pariah figure,” “his widening crackdown on press freedom and independent journalism. A growing number of journalists have been accused of insulting the president - an offence that carries a five-year jail term,” “Putin-style executive presidency. He plainly hopes to scare voters into supporting his power-grab,” “abrasive president” (October 4, 2015). Additionally, he is referred to as “Turkey's famously stubborn president,” “authoritarian,” “devout Sunni Muslim,” “Erdogan also deeply resents western criticism of his perceived, creeping authoritarianism and his crackdown on independent media, academics and journalists” (June 28, 2016).

On the other hand, the newspaper also compared both presidents and stated that “Putin and the Turkish leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, both have carefully maintained images as strongmen” (November 24, 2015). It that “both of the leaders are known for their “backing down from a confrontation ”(November 28, 2015). However, even though they both had disputes, both leaders have almost the same characteristics and defined almost within the same framing *leadership* features. The Guardian stressed that no matter the “dramatic souring of the relationship between Putin and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, after Turkey shot down a Russian plane last year, is a small taste of how quickly things can deteriorate in a personality-based relationship between two leaders for whom displaying strength is everything” (November 12, 2016). This is an indication that authoritarian leaders who share the same leadership characteristics and styles may end up reconnecting that diplomatic bridge by one-to-one, personal based relations.

The last emphasized theme of the analysis of the Guardian is the *apology* theme. Due to the incident, Russia expected an apology from Turkey. The Turkish side officially did not

apologize for the incident itself because it was the Russian warplanes that crossed the border. The newspaper published the remark of the Turkish president where he told CNN that it is “Russia, not Turkey, should be apologizing...” for the incident. Also, “Moscow was still awaiting an apology or an offer of reimbursement for damages.” It emphasized that the Turkish president “Erdogan has always refused to apologise for the shooting down of the Russian plane, which reportedly took place on his express orders...to break the ice, he sent a letter to Moscow this week expressing sorrow and regret over the loss of life” (June 28, 2016). Similarly in another news story they stated, “Even tough guys have to say sorry sometimes, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan is no exception...the regrets expressed...by Turkey's famously stubborn president over last November's shooting down of a Russian military plane...” (June 28, 2016). Moreover, “in June Erdogan penned a letter to Putin that stopped short of offering a full apology for the incident but did apologize to the families of the pilots. He also wrote that Turkey "never had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian Federation's plane," according to a Kremlin statement. The Kremlin accepted Erdogan's letter as an apology...” (August 9, 2016). After this incident the Turkish president met with the Russian president on August 9, 2016, for the first time the meeting took place face-to-face since the incident happened on November 24, 2015, and the MFA of Turkey had been invited to an upcoming regional summit in Sochi (June 28, 2016). The two countries initiated their bilateral relations and normalization processes started.

The New York Times is the second newspaper to have extensive coverage of the incident, with the leading themes being the *contextual*, *regional politics*, *event effects*, *international community support*, *bilateral relations*, and *leadership*. The first identified theme was the *contextual* theme. This study identifies *contextual* themes as information that relates to

the set of facts surrounding a situation. In other words, the concept of contextual frame “refers to the news context, that is, the background against which a certain event is presented as a piece of news” (Morasso, 2012, p.197). Based on this definition, it is observed that the NYT, after providing contextual coverage of the incident, tends to provide news stories that connect the events to history, such as these examples indicated: “Turkey's relationship with Russia is also deeply clouded by history (October 7, 2015)”; “The province is a melting pot of ethnic Turks and Arabs. It is also a religious mélange, with many Muslims but also a large Christian population, as Hatay includes the biblical city of Antioch. And the province has an acrimonious history (November 26, 2015)”; “the Ottoman Empire, Turkey's ancestor, was a bloody rival of the Russian Empire, and the confrontation over the warplane mostly evoked a patriotic response across social media (November 27, 2015)”; “Russian and Ottoman Empires battled for centuries (November 26, 2015)” and “the economic, geographic and historically competitive ties that bind the two faded empires are facing new strains” (November 27, 2015).

The second theme of *regional politics* is mentioned in the coverage where Russia's plans “in Syria challenge the regional policies” (October 6, 2015) of Turkey, the US, and NATO. The news stories emphasized the regional politics theme and criticized “Russia's intervention...to have subverted diplomatic efforts to halt the war.” Moreover, stories focused on the conflict between Turkey and Russia after the incident, but also concentrated on the US and Russia, where they have “different interests in Syria, and Mr. Putin has been clear about the need to preserve the existing Syrian government...Mr. Obama...is committed to the ouster of Mr. Assad...” (November 25, 2015). Furthermore, the news stories covered other groups and allies who are involved in regional politics. As for groups, such as “the Turkmens...Turkic people” who live in the region where the “tensions between Russia and Turkey have increased lately over Russian

bombing of Turkmen tribesmen in northern Syria” (November 25, 2015), and thus, Russia has been criticized by the Turkish president. The allies where “British warplanes...joined the United States-led coalition’s bombing...which includes Turkey, supports the opposition and would like to see Mr. Assad gone,” whereas Tehran and Moscow back president... in Syria” (December 3, 2015). Lastly, the regional politics theme focuses on covering regional issues and provides an understanding of each key player’s respective position. The theme allows for an insight into the dynamics of regional politics; therefore, it has been an essential theme throughout the dissertation.

The *event effects* is a significant theme which the newspaper emphasized with regards to the sanctions imposed on Turkey. It provided a wide range of influences that the incident had on Turkey. The day after the incident, it started with the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov canceling his visit to Turkey (November 25, 2015), protests “gathered outside the Turkish Embassy in Moscow, pelting it with eggs and rocks, shattering windows” (November 26, 2015), “trucks bearing Turkish fruits, vegetables and other products were lining up at the Georgian border with Russia,” major “energy projects, including the gas pipeline across the Black Sea and the construction of Turkey’s first nuclear power plant” (November 27, 2015), “visa-free travel for Turks” was canceled, and Russia “banned its citizens from vacationing in Turkey...ordering travel agents to stop selling package tours,” (November 28, 2015). Also, there was coverage of how the “energy stocks moved higher along with the price of oil (November 25, 2015). The NYT did not cover the economic consequences like the Guardian newspaper did; rather it provided a detailed focus on the event’s effects for Turkey.

Another theme that the study identified is the *international community support*. The newspaper covered a story of NATO warning “the Kremlin after at least one Russian warplane

trespassed into Turkey's airspace" before the major incident occurred and NATO's secretary general stated that the intrusions are "unacceptable violation of Turkish airspace" (October 6, 2015). In another story, the newspaper made a point where Russia called "the air incursion an innocent mistake because of foul weather, a claim that the Americans rejected" (October 6, 2015). The spokesman from the US military confirmed that "Turkish pilots had warned the Russian pilot 10 times, but that the Russian jet ignored the warnings....," and in the same news story president Obama said, "Turkey has the right to defend its territory" and "he urged both sides talk...and "discourage any kind of escalation" (November 25, 2015). On the other hand, one striking comment mentioned in the news reporting regarding the international community's support theme is that "NATO countries have been concerned about Mr. Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian tendencies for some time, and NATO officials acknowledge that Turkey's agenda in Syria does not always match that of Washington, Britain, or France - let alone Russia" (November 25, 2015). This argument suggests that, even though they were all allies, the concern is stressed by the newspaper.

The *bilateral relations* theme in the newspaper referred to Turkey and Russia's cooperation due to a "pipeline project" and it was presented as "a solid foundation in terms of mutually profitable relations" and referred to the Turkish president's statements, saying, "bilateral trade had reached \$31 billion last year, and that Turkey's goal was for that figure to hit \$100 billion by 2023" (October 6, 2015). Additionally, the news stories stressed how the downing of the jet "paralyzed relations between two counties" (June 28, 2015). The most significant news story related to relations covering the normalization and reunion of the Turkish and the Russian presidents was on August 10, 2015. It emphasized that both sides met in St. Petersburg "to repair relations after nine months...Russia agreed to lift sanctions" and the

Turkish president said, “Both countries are committed and determined to returning our relationship to its pre-crisis level.” The Turkish president’s visit to Russia in August, is considered ‘symbolic’ because neither the U.S. nor the E.U. had the support that Turkey was expecting; the newspaper reported that “there is a deepening sense in Turkey that its Western allies have failed the solidarity test” (August 9, 2016).

On the other hand, some news stories focused on Turkey taking steps “to calm relations with Russia...calling for a presidential-level meeting...,” and stressed that the Turkish president “would like to meet Putin face to face in Paris” in order to “...bring the issue to a reasonable point...” They also provided a statement from the Turkish president saying, “We really attach a lot of importance to our relations with Russia, and we don’t want our relations to suffer in any way”(November 28, 2015). Conversely, due to the shoot down of the warplane, some other stories focused on the bilateral relations between Russia and NATO allies. For instance, President Putin said, “We are ready to cooperate with the coalition, which is led by the United States,” and after the meeting he had with the François Hollande, the French president said that both “had agreed that France and its allies would share intelligence with Russia, coordinate more strikes against IS targets” (November 28, 2015) so that by exchanging information future accidents could be prevented.

The *leadership* theme is the last theme that is stressed and used frequently by the NYT. The newspaper presented both leaders as being “authoritarian and cracking down on free expression” (October 7, 2015) and stated that both “Mr. Putin and Mr. Erdogan are often seen as similar: authoritarian, combative, unbending and nationalistic, with little time for niceties like freedom of expression. Both are quick to anger but can shelve it just as quickly when strategic interests are at stake” (August 9, 2016). “Two prideful leaders” (November 27, 2015),

“combative, uncompromising, nationalistic” and they are compared as leaders who have “imperial ambitions” and are “trying to restore luster to the empires that were lost in World War I - Czarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire.” Additionally, it emphasized that two leaders are criticized for not respecting the law, and silence criticism from opposition media where “foreign journalists have been deported” and, lastly, both leaders “tend to blame external, global conspiracies for failures” (November 30, 2015).

The analysis of The Times found coverage of the following prominent themes: *bilateral relations, regional politics, international community support, and event effects*. *Bilateral relations* is the first dominant theme covered by the newspaper. After the incident, the news coverage emphasized that at the climate change conference “Putin refused to meet President Erdogan of Turkey” (December 1, 2015). In another coverage, it reported that “relations between Russia and Turkey would not improve in the near future” (December 18, 2015) and described the two countries’ relations as a “frosty relationship erupted into open hostility” (July 11, 2016). The second emerging theme is regional politics where the newspaper covered “military confrontation between Russia and Turkey” (February 17, 2016), along with regional groups who are fighting in Syria. Moreover, it also covered the Syrian conflict with each party's relationship to each other and focused on the “Russian influence in the region” which is growing (August 12, 2016). The third identified theme is international community support where the newspaper covered NATO’s reaction against Russia for “violating the Turkish airspace” (October 6, 2015) before the incident and reported that “NATO believes that the Russian incursions into Turkish airspace were deliberate”(October 9, 2015). Last theme is event effects, which had less coverage, mostly focusing on “imposing sanctions on some Turkish food imports and canceling visa-free travel” (December 18, 2015) and “Package holidays to Turkey” being banned (December 24, 2015). The

Times did not have an analytical or contextual perspective in its news stories; it was rather informative.

The last newspaper analyzed was The Washington Post with the prominent themes being *regional politics*, *international community support*, *event effects*, and *bilateral relations*. *Regional politics* theme is the main focus of the news stories, mostly narrating the regional conflict “arising from air missions over Syria- with Russia backing the government of Syria” (November 25, 2015), “the disagreement between Russia and the West over the future” of Syria (November 27, 2015), “opposing goals of Russia and Assad” (November 28, 2015), and the West calling for the “Syrian president...to step down...” (November 29, 2015).

The second theme in the coverage is the *international community support* where the news emphasized NATO's support for Turkey, stating that “NATO warns Russia over Turkey airspace violation” and the “Western allies...expressed concern” over the issue (October 6, 2015). After the violation of the airspace, the coverage reported NATO's supportive comments, stating that NATO “had confirmed Turkey's version of events and rejected Russia's claim that its aircraft was flying over Syria and had not crossed in Turkish airspace” (November 25, 2015). Another supportive news article stated that “the United States joined its NATO allies in supporting Turkey in the wake of its shoot-down of a Russian warplane near the Syrian border”(December 3, 2015).

The *event effects* theme focused on “cutting joint investment projects and banning many Turkish companies from working Russia” (November 27, 2015), stopping “tourism ties between the countries” which would be influenced by the canceling of “free-visa” (November 28, 2015), banning “Russian companies from hiring Turkish citizens and blocking the import of some Turkish goods” and “sanctions would freeze some prestige projects between the two countries,

including...first nuclear power plant and...gas pipeline called Turkstream” (November 29, 2015). Lastly, in terms of the *bilateral relations* theme, the news article emphasized the bad relations stating that “Putin has ignored Erdogan’s phone calls” (November 29, 2015). In other coverage, it focused on Russia and Turkey’s agreeing “to take necessary steps without delay to improve bilateral relations.” However, what they emphasized is that “Turkey and Russia may resume normal relations, they remain on opposing sides of the Syrian crisis” (June 28, 2016).

Case II. Assassination of the Russian Ambassador

Analysis of the Official Press Releases of MFA of Turkey and the Turkish Presidency

The fourth research question asked: Were any public diplomacy functional categories (Fitzpatrick, 2010) used in the Turkish and Russian governments’ official press releases for the assassination of the Russian ambassador event? A 13-month period of analysis of the official press releases of the MFA of Turkey revealed six dominant themes: *condemnation* of the act, *condolences*, *bilateral relations*, *cooperation*, *political*, and *communication / information*. On December 19, 2016, the day of the assassination, a press release was issued by the MFA of Turkey titled “Press Release Regarding the Terrorist Attack Against the Russian Ambassador in Ankara” which shared the message stating: “We have learned with great sorrow that H.E. Andrei Karlov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ankara, lost his life today in an armed attack...We condemn this heinous terrorist attack...We convey our heartfelt condolences to the Russian people...” The message emphasized the themes of *condolences* and *condemnation* of the act. Additionally, the press release had the theme of *communication / information* message strategies where the government was expressing its worry and concern about the incident and it was informing the foreign audience.

The same press release also emphasized the theme of *bilateral relations*, stating “We will

not allow this attack to shed a shadow on Turkish-Russian friendship" and stressing cooperation by Turkey's working together to "struggle against terrorism together with Russia and all other partners." It has been identified that the themes of *bilateral relations* and *cooperation* correspond to Fitzpatrick's *relational* functional message strategy which is focused on building beneficial relationships and networks between nations. Lastly, in another press release dated November 17, 2017, *political* functional message strategy was identified, stating: "Press Release Regarding the Trilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Russian Federation and Iran," where the three presidents of the countries met to discuss the issue of Syria working towards resolving the issues.

The study identified the six following dominant themes in the official press releases of the Turkish presidency: *bilateral relations*, *political*, *cooperation*, *condemnation*, *condolences*, and *communication / informational*. On the day of the attack (December 19, 2016), the presidential account shared a message titled "Armed Attack on Russia's Ambassador to Turkey" with the remark of the Turkish president: "I vehemently condemn the despicable and brutal killing of the Russian Federation's Ambassador to Turkey... I offer my condolences to the friendly Russian people..." which emphasized the themes of *condemnation* and *condolences*. Moreover, the Turkish president in his message focused on *bilateral relations* and *cooperation*, saying that "We will never allow the relations between our countries to deteriorate. We have an unwavering determination for a joint fight against the terror... We will work together with Russia... Our relations with Russia are very valuable." The other important theme identified was the *political* functional message strategy where the president emphasized "joint efforts towards finding a political resolution for the Syrian issue..." Lastly, the *communication / informational* strategy is used by both official pages to disseminate informative messages to the international community. The use of this category is consistent and supported by previous literature which

found that Turkey preferred the *communication / informational* functional category to disseminate its messages to the international public as noted in White and Radic's (2014) study.

Analysis of the MFA of Turkey and the Turkish Presidency's official press releases found that the dominant themes are *bilateral relations* and *cooperation*. These themes align with Fitzpatrick's *relational* message functional category, which promotes the cultivation and preservation of mutually beneficial relationships. Additionally, the emphasis on *relational* messages indicates the concern of the Turkish government regarding the relationship between both parties. After the shooting of the warplane in 2015, the countries' mutual relations were disrupted and they became foes. It took a while to normalize the relations, and a year later the assassination incident occurred. It is observed that the messages disseminated from both sets of official press releases indicate great concern and how the Turkish government is putting an effort into emphasizing the importance of Turkish and Russian relations, as well as the primary aim of preventing another confrontation between the parties. It is found that the Turkish government is determined to do anything to not damage but preserve the mutual relations and was taking every necessary step to safeguard these relationships.

Analysis of the Official Press Releases of MFA of Russia and the Russian Presidency

The official press releases of the MFA of Russia had six dominant themes: *condemnation, condolences, political, bilateral relations, cooperation, and communication / information*. The day of the assassination, the MFA shared a press release that included these themes. The press release stated:

On December 19, Russian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Turkey Andrei Karlov was shot dead in a terrorist attack in Ankara. We condemn this heinous crime that was committed to undermine our collective efforts towards an early political settlement in Syria and the ongoing normalisation of Russian-Turkish relations. We

expect the Turkish authorities to closely cooperate with the relevant Russian agencies to investigate the circumstances of this barbaric crime, to identify and apprehend its organisers and to take effective measures to protect the safety of Russian citizens, Russian offices abroad and their personnel. For our part, we will act in conjunction with the Turkish law enforcement agencies to bring the culprits to justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses deep condolences to the family and friends of Andrei Karlov, an outstanding Russian diplomat. His memory will always remain in the hearts of his colleagues and all those who knew him. This tragedy is an indication that we must redouble our efforts in an uncompromising struggle against all forms of terrorism. (12/19/2016)

Most of the press releases issued by the MFA of Russia used the *communication / informational* functional categories. The remaining press releases that focus on *cooperation* and *bilateral relations* correspond to the *relational* message category, and the *political* theme focuses on matters concerning regional issues, mainly focusing on the Syrian conflict. An example can be seen in the following press release:

Like President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish minister also expressed his deep condolences over the December 19 terrorist attack in Ankara, which resulted in the tragic death of Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrey Karlov. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing efforts to effectively fight terrorism, to eliminate the very possibility of successful provocation, no matter where it comes from, aimed at undermining the progressive development of Russian-Turkish relations and the two countries' cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Syria and Iraq. (12/ 20/ 2016)

Similarly, the Russian presidency's official press releases had five outstanding themes: *condolences, bilateral relations, political, cooperation* and *communication / informational*. The press release on December 22, 2016, focused on the terrorist attack and President said, “Putin expressed heartfelt condolences to Andrei Karlov’s family...” Additionally, the increased phone calls between the Russian and Turkish presidents were reported on the page that presents the *communication / informational* aspect of the functional categories. The details of the phone

conversation between the two presidents are presented as follows:

The President of Turkey informed Vladimir Putin on the progress made in investigating the murder of Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov. Mr. Erdogan highlighted close cooperation between Russian and Turkish law enforcement agencies and special services on this issue. The two leaders continued their ongoing discussion on Syria. Both parties expressed satisfaction with the successful completion of the operation in Aleppo. This has paved the way to the launch of a peace process, allowing for the cessation of military operations in the entire Syrian territory and transition to political settlement. (12/23/2016)

From the published statement, it is evident that both the Russian and Turkish parties were willing to cooperate, and work on the political issues as stated in the press releases. Moreover, there was no indication of any allegations or blame attributed to the Turkish government in the Russian government's press releases related to the assassination incident. Furthermore, both the Turkish and Russian official press releases for the four accounts have been analyzed and found that all parties focused on *cooperation* and *bilateral relations* regarding the attack. It is observed that behind-the-scenes diplomacy and cooperation between the two countries' intelligence services worked together in order to solve the crisis. Lastly, it is important to stress that the press release dated April 18, 2017, states that both presidents have discussed the issues and they have “agreed to maintain personal contact.” This is another indication in the findings that personal relations between the leaders are essential during crisis communication.

Analysis of the Twitter Accounts of the MFA of Turkey and the Turkish Presidency

RQ5 asked whether there were any public diplomacy functional categories used in the Turkish and Russian governments' Twitter accounts regarding the assassination of the Russian ambassador event? The analysis found that the MFA of Turkey communicated with the following five dominant themes which are “*bilateral relations, condolences, commemoration,*

communication / informational, and *regional politics*.” The identified themes of *condolences* and *commemoration* are used in the posts of the MFA of Turkey regarding the assassination incident. On the day of the incident, December 19, 2016, the MFA of Turkey conveyed their condolences and commemoration in tweets that stated: “We have learned with great sorrow that Ambassador Karlov of Russian Federation lost his life today in an armed attack”; “we convey our heartfelt condolences to the Russian people and state.” The following day, December 20, 2016, the Turkish MFA posted a remark of the Turkish foreign minister saying, “Offered our condolences to my friend FM Lavrov and the people of Russia again. Turkish people are as sad as Russian people.”

As previously stated, Turkey uses a *communication / informational* message strategy, a functional category that focuses on informing foreign citizens. When disseminating its messages, it is simultaneously spreading the same messages through its Twitter platform and official press releases. For instance, on December 21, 2016, the ministry retweeted a post from the MFA of Russia that stated, “The body of Andrey Karlov was received with honour in Moscow. The ceremony was attended by Lavrov @MevlutCavusoglu...” This post informs the international audience that the Turkish minister attended the ceremony. Moreover, on August 8, 2017, the Ministry posted a statement of the Turkish MFA's remarks, that acknowledged “the newly appointed Ambassador of Russia and wished him success during his tenure.”

The *bilateral relations* theme corresponds to Fitzpatrick's *relational* message strategy. The MFA of Turkey emphasized the relational message strategy throughout its published Twitter posts. Further, the relational aspect was not only an indication of mutual expectations, but also a sign of shared interests towards a collective goal. Additionally, the theme of *regional politics* aligns with the *political* message strategy. This strategy, by its very nature, emphasizes the

political discourse within the message context. For example, a tweet on February 16, 2017, states that the Turkish MFA Minister Çavuşoğlu “Discusses bilateral relations and current developments in Syria with Foreign Minister of RF Lavrov.” This tweet confirms that there was communication between both parties.

The Turkish presidential Twitter account focused on themes such as *bilateral relations*, *cooperation*, *blame attribution*, *regional politics (political)*, *condolences*, and *communication / information*. The two most dominant themes of the posts were *bilateral relations* and *cooperation*, which correspond to *relational* functional categories. On December 19, 2016, the day of the incident, the presidential account disseminated the president's statements focusing on *bilateral relations*: “This attack is aimed at disrupting our relations...”; in another statement, the president said, “The attack on Karlov is a clear provocation against Turkey-Russia relations.” Approximately three months later, on March 11, 2017, the account posted a tweet emphasizing the importance of relations, stating: “We have seen that Turkish-Russian friendship has the power to overcome any challenge.” Additionally, tweets related to *cooperation* themes were posted, such as “President Erdogan discusses Turkish stream project with President Putin of Russia” (June 23, 2017) and “Our close cooperation with Russia will continue” (September 28, 2017); “Turkey and Russia agree on closer and stronger cooperation in all areas” (November 14, 2017); and “Turkey and Russia cooperation is growing stronger with every passing day” (December 12, 2017). These statements emphasize how the Turkish-Russian relations had improved, no matter what had happened in the past.

A theme of *blame attribution* emerged as a prominent theme in the shared posts from the presidential account on December 21, 2016. The Turkish president stated, “Connections in Ambassador Karlov’s Assassination point to the FETO,” thus directing the blame to a terrorist

group. On July 15, 2016, an armed group referred to as FETO, a terrorist organization, attempted a coup d'état against state institutions, including the government and Turkish president. The Turkish president was making reference to that group with the statement and blaming it for the assassination. On the other hand, due to the Syrian conflict in the region, *regional politics* is another identified theme. As Turkey and Russia were working closely to fight against terror the post on December 29, 2016, states: "President Erdogan addresses Syria ceasefire with President Putin of Russia" and he continues on saying "We will continue to make every effort for Peace in Syria" and "We will continue our decisive fight against terror organizations both in Turkey and abroad." As mentioned before, regional politics aligns with the *political* message strategy where regional issues are an important part of the Turkish government's foreign policy, and it observed the posts as informative messaging which relates to the communication /information functional category. Lastly, the *condolences* theme has been used to indicate the president's message where he says, "On behalf of my country and my nation, I offer my condolences to the friendly Russian people" (December 19, 2016).

Analysis of the Twitter Accounts of the MFA of Russia and the Russian Presidency

As previously mentioned, the MFA of Russia actively uses its social media accounts, and the prominent themes identified are *condolences*, *commemoration*, *bilateral relations*, *cooperation*, *regional politics*, and *communication / informational*. It has been observed that the MFA of Russia used a message strategy of *communication / information* to provide as much information as possible regarding the incident. Additionally, it retweeted a post from the presidential accounts which stated: "The murder of an ambassador is among the gravest crimes under international law. Russia will not let this go unpunished" (December 20, 2016). On the other hand, the themes of *condolences* and *commemoration* are other emerging themes of this

incident. Right before the assassination incident, Turkey experienced terrorist attacks in various cities. The Russian ministry posted the condolences of the Russian president's statement: "RT @KremlinRussia_E: Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to Turkish President Erdogan on the deaths of servicemen in the terror attack in Kayseri (December 17, 2016)." On the other hand, when the incident happened, not only Turkey, but all nations of the world expressed their condolences to Russia regarding the attack on the ambassador, and the Russian ministry account retweeted the posts of the countries/organizations. As for the commemoration theme, several posts were shared, such as: "A commemoration ceremony for the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Andrey #Karlov, took place at Ankara Airport" (December 20, 2016); "The body of Andrey Karlov was received with honour in Moscow. The ceremony was attended by Lavrov, Mevlut Çavuşoğlu, and Mr. Karlov's widow" (December 20, 2016).

Bilateral relations and *cooperation* are dominant themes in the tweets. As stated before, these two themes correspond to *relational* functional categories. Bilateral relations between Russia and Turkey have been strongly emphasized. The process of normalization between the two countries began when the Turkish president visited the Russian president in August 2016 for the first time after the shooting down of the Russian warplane. However, the following tweet suggests that bilateral relations had not been fully normalized until the meetings between the Russian and Turkish ministers. The Russian MFA shared the Russian minister's tweet after a meeting with the Turkish minister, saying: "Lavrov: #Russia & #Turkey stated mutual interest in progressive normalization of bilateral relations" (December 2, 2016). On the other hand, the MFA of Russia retweeted the Russian presidential accounts post with a statement of the Turkish president that says, "RT @KremlinRussia_E: #Turkey: The murder of ambassador Andrei Karlov was an attempt to undermine Russia-Turkey relations but there will be no deterioration"

(December 23, 2016). This is a strong indication that Russia was willing to continue the bilateral relations and willing to work things out. After the incident there were intensive telephone conversations between the MFA ministers and the presidents of both countries. This was observed by the use of *communication / informational* functional category where the ministry informed the international community by stating that there was an investigation going on, and regarding this issue the international community was informed with this tweet: “Phone conversation with the Turkish President: investigation of the Russian ambassador's murder, update on Syria” (December 23, 2016). Moreover, the phone conversations between the two presidents were also posted.

This was observed through the use of the *communication/informational* functional category, in which the ministry informed the international community by stating that an investigation was underway. Regarding this issue, the international community was informed through this tweet: “Phone conversation with the Turkish President: investigation of the Russian ambassador's murder, update on Syria” (December 23, 2016). Furthermore, the phone conversations between the two presidents have also been posted.

Additionally, *cooperation* theme is used to show how both nations are cooperating against terrorism as seen in this tweet: “#Lavrov and @MevlutCavusoglu reaffirmed #Russia-#Turkey resolve to actively fight international terrorism” (December 14, 2016). In another tweet the ministry shared: “Terrorism shall not pass, we will take resolute effort against it” (December 19, 2016). Moreover, the ministry periodically retweeted information from the presidential account regarding cooperation in other various areas, as seen in this tweet: “RT @KremlinRussia_E: Telephone conversation with the Turkish President: political, trade, economic cooperation between the countries...” (November 11, 2016).

Lastly, one of the important analyzed themes is the *regional politics* theme which corresponds to the *political* functional category. This theme focused on the regional issues, most specifically those related to the Syrian conflict. Before the incident, the MFA of Russia posted information regarding a meeting between the two countries that focused on regional politics, as stated in this tweet: “The Russian-Turkish Joint Strategic Planning Group meeting will focus on #Syria...” (November 24, 2016). Additionally, one of the important posts was a remark by the MFA Russian minister where he stated: “Lavrov: Iran, Russia, Turkey are convinced there is no military solution to Syrian conflict” and a day later the ministry announced that “On December 20, Russia, Iran and Turkey adopted a Joint Statement on Syria” (December 21, 2016). All three of these countries stated that they fully respect Syria’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. The post was related to a link where the link had the speech of the Russian ministers press speech that stated:

We all agree that it is necessary to fully respect Syria’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, and that there is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. We believe there is no alternative to a political and diplomatic settlement of this conflict. Needless to say, the main task is to stop the suffering of completely innocent people, resolve humanitarian issues and wage a relentless fight against terrorism. (12/21/2016)

The Russian presidential account posted about the incidents, focusing on the themes of *communication/informational*, *condolences*, and *bilateral relations*. It was observed that the account mainly used the *communication/informational* functional category to inform the international community. Almost all of the messages addressed and informed the phone conversations between the two presidents, such as “Telephone conversation with the President of Turkey” (January 12, 2017) and “Sochi: Russian-Turkish Talks” (May 3, 2017). Under the *condolences* theme, the account shared a post from the Russian president stating, “The President has expressed condolences following the murder of Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei

Karlov” (December 19, 2016). Additionally, it retweeted a post from the Turkish president saying, “Turkey: The murder of ambassador Andrei Karlov was an attempt to undermine Russia-Turkey relations but there will be no deterioration” (December 23, 2016). By retweeting Turkey’s post, it can be interpreted as an indication that Russia is willing to work together and stand together with Turkey. Lastly, regarding *bilateral relations*, most of the posts focused on topics such as “Phone conversation with the Turkish President: investigation of the Russian ambassador's murder, update on Syria” (December 23, 2016). Other posts addressed the “Turkish Stream gas pipeline construction” (June 23, 2017) and “Telephone conversation with the Turkish President: political, trade, economic cooperation between the countries” (December 25, 2016).

Analysis of the major U.S. and U.K. News Outlets

RQ 6 focused on what frames were used by the major news outlets in the U.S. (The New York Times, The Washington Post) and the U.K. (The Guardian, The Times) in their coverage of the Russian ambassador event? The NYT had an extensive coverage of the incident with the dominant themes being “*contextual, analysis, security, blame attribution, bilateral relations, cooperation, and regional politics.*” The newspaper focused on *contextual* content, providing information related to the facts surrounding the assassination incident. In the attack event, stories not only provided a descriptive narrative, but also advanced the news coverage by giving a background of the assassinated ambassador, his life, his relations with other people, and his contribution as an ambassador. For instance, a news report titled “Who Was Andrey Karlov, the Russian Ambassador Killed in Turkey?” on December 19, 2016, covered how “Mr. Karlov was repeatedly called upon to ease tensions over Russia’s role in the Syrian civil war.” The news story also gave historical facts about other Russian ambassadors who were also shot to death. Additionally, contextual content covered news about the gunman, who was a police officer, his

origins, and his connection to the terrorist organization that the Turkish president blamed for organizing the attempted coup d'état. After shooting, he yelled, "Don't forget Aleppo, Don't forget Syria" (December 19, 2016), and the incident was linked to the Syrian conflict. "After a Russian bombing in northern Syria targeted Turkmen" people whom Turkey supports, the *contextual* theme has been used in the majority of news reports to emphasize the facts surrounding the situation.

The *analysis* theme is the second dominant theme used by the newspaper, its aim being to investigate events by studying their parts. For example, a news story titled "Turkey, Russia and an Assassination: The Swirling Crises, Explained" (December 19, 2016) covered the background of the Syrian conflict and emphasized that "The two countries were, and to some extent still are, on opposite sides of the Syrian war. Turkey opposes President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and has backed rebel groups. Russia supports Mr. Assad and entered the conflict on his behalf in the fall of 2015." Based on this, the story dives into making a political analysis of what had happened in Turkey during July 15, 2016, and states that the Turkish president blamed a cleric living in the U.S. for a coup attempt.

In another news article titled: "Turkey Assassination Suggests Erdogan's Loyalty Problem Is Lingerin'" (December 20, 2016), the analysis focused on the coup attempt, "purges in Turkey's security forces" and "the assassination of the Russian ambassador by a vetted Turkish police officer suggests that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may face a resilient disloyalty problem." Additionally, article titled "Erdogan Says Follower of Gulen, His Rival, Killed Russian Envoy" (December 21, 2016) the focus was on how the Turkish authorities have "arrested or dismissed thousands of people in the security forces, civil services and educational institutions suspected of being Gulen followers, describing them as seditious infiltrators. The

purge was further widened on Wednesday with the suspension of nearly 2,000 teachers and school employees...” The same article emphasized that the “The Turkish authorities also have arrested more than 100 journalists and closed dozens of news media outlets, in what press activists have called an unprecedented repression. The Committee to Protect Journalists, an advocacy group, reported on Dec. 13 that Turkey has become the world’s leading jailer of journalists.” As indicated above, the *analysis* theme not only focused on the assassination incident, but also provided a comprehensive overview of it. It gave a thorough analysis of what kind of chain of events led to the incident that occurred.

The assassination of the Russian ambassador brought *security* breaches into the spotlight, thus intensifying the security theme in news stories. The NYT labeled the assassination as an “embarrassing security failure” in the Turkish capital and raised “questions about how the gunman was able to enter the exhibition” (December 20, 2016). In another news story, it mentioned that “the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara has raised concerns about the ineffectiveness of the country's security establishment” (December 01, 2016). Furthermore, this incident raised concerns in other coverage and “questioned the capability of Turkey’s intelligence forces to keep the country safe” (January 1, 2017). The incident stressed the importance of security measures in Turkey and thus ended up framing security in the news coverage.

The analyzed articles focused on the theme of *blame attribution*, which corresponds to the *responsibility* frame in the literature referred to as revealing the people or groups that are responsible for the cause of an event (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In the assassination news stories, the newspaper published a headline: “Erdogan Says Follower of Gulen, His Rival, Killed Russian Envoy” (December 21, 2016). The Turkish president blamed and held the cleric

responsible for the assassination of the ambassador, who was “His Rival, Killed Russian Envoy (December 21, 2016) and he said that he had “no doubt the assassin of Russia’s ambassador had belonged to the outlawed Turkish organization of Mr. Erdogan’s rival, Fethullah Gulen.” In another news headline, “Turkey Says Envoy's Killer Had Links to U.S. Cleric” (December 22, 2016), it was reported that the cleric was “accused by the Turkish government of remotely directing the failed coup attempt on July 15, which he has denied. Since then, the government has requested his extradition from the United States.” On the other hand, The NYT reported a blame attribution or responsibility frame in a news report titled "Killing Shows Erdogan Still on Shaky Ground," which began with the assassination incidents and then presented how a pro-government newspaper accused "the C.I.A. of collaborating with the Gulenists in the coup attempt" (December 21, 2016) in its news story. Through these articles, NYT showcased the theme of blame attribution in the context of the assassination of the Russian envoy.

Bilateral relations refer to any relations between two parties. On December 19, 2016, the newspaper had a story questioning the “state of relations between Turkey and Russia” after the jet was shot down on November 24, 2015, causing the relations to worsen and Russia to employ economic sanctions against Turkey. It was analyzed that this theme was also used in relation to the *cooperation* theme, with analysts saying that “the assassination might bring the countries closer as they sought to take on terrorism.” The news story, “Turkey, Russia and an Assassination: The Swirling Crises, Explained” (December 19, 2016), emphasized that “both countries are working to manage the situation and sending signals of cooperation. They appear to be aligning their explanations of what happened, pointing their fingers at mutual enemies but not each other”. Similarly, in another news story titled “Russia's Envoy Gunned Down By Lone Turk” (December 20, 2016), it was reported that “analysts played down the notion that the

assassination would lead to a new rupture, saying it could conversely bring the countries closer together in a shared fight against terrorism.” Also, President “Putin spoke with the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan by phone, and the two leaders agreed to cooperate in investigating the killing, and in combating terrorism broadly” (December 20, 2016). Also, the Russian government “sent investigators to Turkey to collaborate on the inquiry into Mr. Karlov’s assassination, has been far more cautious in public statements about the killer’s possible affiliation or motive, saying it was premature to draw any conclusions” (December 21, 2016). Lastly, bilateral relations and cooperation are two closely related themes that are important in international relations. The analysis indicates that the news emphasized these themes to refer not only to the relationship between two countries, but also to the joint efforts of those countries in fighting the global war on terror.

On the other hand, the last theme of *regional politics* was stressed by The NYT, and it is sometimes used in relation to *bilateral relations* and *cooperation* themes to emphasize “normalization of relations between Russia and Turkey - both in a bilateral sense and in terms of relations that allow to intensify and unite efforts on the way to political settlement in Syria”(December 20, 2016). Additionally, the *regional politics* theme is discussed to show the “regional struggle for Syria” (December 19, 2016), and thus the assassination incident “forced Turkey and Russia to confront a new crisis tied directly to the Syrian conflict” (December 20, 2016). Another important emphasis covered by the newspaper regarding *regional politics* is the meeting between “Russia, Iran and Turkey” where they agreed to the “Moscow Declaration, a framework for ending the Syrian conflict” (December 20, 2016). Lastly, The NYT focused on the speech of the Turkish president where he said, “the assassination was a provocation meant to derail efforts by Turkey and Russia to collaborate more closely on regional issues...” (December

20, 2016). By sharing different perspectives of the incident, the newspaper discussed the importance of *regional politics* in relation to Turkey and Russia. They highlighted how the assassination incident had caused concern around the world. It also portrayed how Turkey and Russia, as regional powers in their own right, were playing a key role in the Syrian conflict.

The second newspaper that had more coverage in the case study was The Times. The salient themes that emerged were “*contextual, bilateral relations, regional politics, and blame attribution.*” The current study found that the newspaper provided similar contextual coverage of the incidents like The NYT where the *contextual* theme was used intensely to provide background that relates to sets of facts surrounding a situation such as presented in the examples: “shooting down of the Su-24 bomber in November 2015” resulting in the Kremlin banning “charter flights to Turkey” and imposing “an embargo on fruit imports. It later accused Mr. Erdogan's family of benefiting from an illegal oil trade with Isis” (December 20, 2016) ; “Seven people were last night in detention in connection with the shooting...how he was radicalised and the possible involvement of organised terrorist groups. However, the Turkish government has been quick to hint that the attack could have been orchestrated by Gulenists, members of a secretive Islamic sect that Ankara also accuses of trying to overthrow Mr. Erdogan in a military coup in July...In October Washington ordered the family members of its consulate staff in Istanbul out of Turkey because of the heightened terrorism risk and it has shut its missions in the country several times this year on receiving information of imminent attacks” (December 21, 2016).

The second theme of *bilateral relations* is evident in the coverage which focuses on the Russian and Turkish relations before and after the event. The newspaper published information on how the relations were damaged before due to “the downing of a Russian jet by a Turkish

fighter plane near the Syrian border in November last year,” and the Russian ambassador “played a pivotal role in repairing relations between Moscow and Ankara” (December 21, 2016). After the shooting, the relations were presented as if they would not be ruined due to the assassination, as seen in the coverage that reported the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s statement that defined the act as a “cowardly terrorist attack” and this incident would not “cast a shadow on the Turkish-Russian friendship” (December 20, 2016). The newspaper further emphasized the “growing friendship” between the two presidents, which is “built around a mutual personal admiration between Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Putin” (December 20, 2016).

Regional politics was the third theme that was emphasized. This theme mostly related to the Syrian conflict and the news titled: “Syria’s new trio of power brokers leave US out in the cold” (December 21, 2016). The coverage stressed that “Russia, Iran and Turkey asserted their dominance as power brokers in Syria...” and “they agreed to guarantee peace talks and expand a ceasefire...” One thing that was mentioned is that as the ceasefire was happening ,the report focused on the fact that the decision was made but it was “sidelining the United States” and the “U.S. was not represented at the meeting.”

The fourth theme of *blame attribution* revolves around how Turkey is holding the cleric accountable for the assassination. Additionally, the newspaper reported that “some pro-government news channels have blamed the CIA for the coup attempt and Mr. Karlov’s killing” (December 22, 2016). On the other hand, it was reported that the cleric in the U.S. released a video statement and blamed the Turkish president for “defaming his followers” (December 23, 2016).

The Guardian was the third newspaper to have emerging themes of “*contextual, regional policies, bilateral relations, cooperation, and analysis.*” The newspaper used contextual themes,

providing information surrounding the incident, such as covering the attack at the art exhibition, focusing on the attacker, who was an off-duty police officer, and further reporting news from the local media and receiving details of his life. Moreover, it went on to describe how the Turkish president called his Russian counterpart and briefed him about the attack. Furthermore, it connected the events to when Turkey shot down the Russian warplane and how Putin called this act a “stab in the back.” The coverage also referred to an apology letter that the Turkish president wrote to Putin. Most of the coverage related to contextual themes emphasized the mentioned subjects. However, there was one interesting point that the newspaper covered was that during the night of the assassination, President Putin had “planned to see the play *Woe from Wit*, written by the poet and diplomat Alexander Griboyedov, who was murdered by a mob when ambassador to Tehran in 1829” (December 19, 2019).

Regional policies themes are actively being used in relation to the Syrian conflict, the establishment of the peace process in the region, and where Turkey, Russia, and Iran have started “to work on a new plan to resolve the Syrian conflict” (December 20, 2016). An important thing that was being emphasized with regional policies is that “Putin plans with Turkey and Iran to prepare his own Syrian peace roadmap.” and “the Gulf States, Europe, and the US are excluded from the process” (December 21, 2016). Thus, regional policy themes can be an indication in showing that the power dynamics of the region have shifted.

Bilateral relations and *cooperation* themes are used together in the news. The newspaper focused on the Russian and Turkish relations as a result of the attack. As for bilateral relations the news stressed how both countries are “over a rocky period in Russo-Turkish. When Turkey shot down a Russian fighter plane in November 2015.” Moreover, it covered the words of President Putin stating: “The crime that was committed is without doubt a provocation aimed at

disrupting the normalisation of Russian-Turkish relations”(December 19, 2016). On the other hand, it was reported that the assassination is going to make “bilateral ties more asymmetrical than they already are.” As for the theme of *cooperation*, the newspaper shared the statement of the Turkish president: “our cooperation and solidarity fighting terrorism should be even stronger” (December 19, 2016). In another news story, it was noted that “Russia and Turkey put on a united front on Tuesday, insisting that the killing of Moscow's ambassador in Ankara would not affect bilateral relations, or cooperation over Syria”(December 20, 2016). Lastly, the theme of *cooperation* was stressed, as shown in this example: “Officials from both countries have been quick to stress their desire for cooperation in the aftermath of the attack and insist the killing will not lead to a downward spiral in relations. Instead, both countries emphasised their joint work on Syria and said they were committed to fighting terrorism” (December 20, 2016). As examined in the analysis, the news stories emphasized joint action of both countries and focused on bilateral relations.

The last dominant theme in The Guardian is the *analysis* theme where the newspaper investigates events by studying their parts. The Guardian covered a few analytical pieces on Russia and Turkey. In one of the stories, it referred to Turkey itself, mentioning that “Turkey itself is internally divided. There is a strong Eurasianist group around Erdogan that want to cut their losses with the EU after years of being rebuffed and lack of gratitude for housing millions of Syrian refugees. Others say Europe remains the only viable route to economic modernisation.” Another analysis piece delves into the analysis of the assassination of the ambassador and before switching the focus to the Turkish government's actions. This news story states that “Erdogan's AKP (Justice and Development party) has increasingly sharpened the crackdown on its critics, starting with journalists, writers, editors, cartoonists and intellectuals. Today, the country is the

world's leading jailer of journalists, surpassing even China” (December 21, 2016). Both of the news stories bring attention to the seriousness of the situation in Turkey.

The Washington Post had less coverage of the incident, with the prominent themes being “*regional politics, bilateral relations, cooperation, and analysis.*” *Regional politics* theme is the main emphasis in the news stories focusing on the Syrian conflict. It was highlighted that Russia, Turkey, and Iran were negotiating “a settlement to the Syrian war” which would “exclude the United States and assert the three powers as the region's most vital players” (December 21, 2016). Additionally, the statement of the Russian's foreign minister stated that as a way to “overcome the stagnation in efforts on the Syrian settlement” was seen as a “dig at the United States, which was absent from the Moscow meetings despite its own involvement in the Syrian conflict” (December 21, 2016). Another article on *regional politics* similarly focused on the “The United States' absence” which is “not only of the stalemate of the U.S.-Russian talks over Syria but also of the bad blood in the relationship as a whole” (December 24, 2016). The regional conflict not only emphasized the Syrian conflict but it also pointed out how the U.S. was left out of the talks.

Another theme in the coverage was the *bilateral relations* theme, where the newspaper emphasized the statements by Putin and Erdogan and suggested that, even though both countries had experienced difficult times due to the shoot-down of a Russian warplane by Turkey and supported opposing sides in the war, the news story emphasized that “the assassination may not disrupt their budding convergence of interests” (December 21, 2016). The *bilateral relations* theme functioned together in relation to the *cooperation* theme where both countries worked to investigate the assassination incident. After the assassination “Moscow and Ankara have made a show of their willingness to work together” (December 24, 2016) on issues related to terror and

the Syrian conflict. Through the cooperation theme the focus has been on the “struggle against terrorism” (December 20, 2016).

The last theme identified by the study was the *analysis* theme, in which the newspaper covered analytical pieces on Russia and Turkey issues. The analysis focused on the “frictions between Russia and Turkey over the war in Syria” and the assassination of the ambassador (December 21, 2016). Additionally, there was a comparison of both leaders who are working on the cease-fire in Syria through the “Moscow Declaration,” where both leaders face different difficulties over the Syrian conflict. For Putin, it was stated that “Syria holds mostly geopolitical meaning and helps Russia project power while keeping a foothold in the Middle East.” As for Erdogan, it was reported that Turkey is “shaken by the war across its border, which has brought millions of refugees into Turkey, as well as the rising threat of militant attacks” (December 21, 2016).

Public Diplomacy as a Tool for Crisis Communication

Public diplomacy is defined as “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about an understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). Building on this, the overarching question of the dissertation was whether the public diplomacy functions used by governments (Fitzpatrick, 2010) differ when confronting a crisis. It also questioned if these functions vary when utilized on a digital platform, such as Twitter, versus on a government official website during a crisis. Furthermore, the study sought to understand how traditional media frame and interpret both crises. The aim of studying these elements is to examine how public diplomacy can be used as a tool for crisis communication during times of crisis. As mentioned in chapter two, the functional categories provide a basis for how public diplomacy is

used in sending messages. The six message strategies, including “*advocacy / influence, communication / informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political,*” are used to influence foreign audiences.

This study collected three different types of data to examine and identify the type of message strategies used by governments during a crisis. The first two types of data were official press releases and the Twitter accounts of the Russian and Turkish governments. The third type of data was from four prominent international newspapers. The aim of the first two data was to see whether governments used functional message categories during the crisis. This dissertation contributes to the existing literature by analyzing the use of functional messages by governments, a concept previously supported, but not studied specifically during times of crisis. Additionally, an analysis of the articles from the four newspapers examined how the media interpreted both crises in their coverage. The newspapers’ analysis examined how crises are framed in the news and investigated the patterns that are presented. Additionally, sought to observe if there are any frames that are presented by the media that may share common messages. Thus, the collected data allowed the study to cross-check the consistency of the data, confirming the message strategies. Although some differences were noted, the findings provide evidence that the conceptual framework observed of the data is consistent with the literature (Fitzpatrick, 2010; White & Radic, 2014; Dood & Collins, 2017), however with the minor differences that are discussed below.

Official Press Releases

The analysis of the official press releases data confirmed that the themes of *bilateral relations, cooperation, and communication / informational* were used by both governments in four of the accounts regarding the first case study. Conversely, the *blame attribution* theme is

analyzed for shooting down the warplane. Two emerging themes were identified by the study: *justification* and *apology*. The Turkish side used the *justification* theme for the breach of airspace, while the Russian side expected an *apology* for the death of the pilot.

The second case study identified *condolences*, *politics*, *bilateral relations*, and *cooperation* as themes that are used for message strategies. Both *bilateral relations* and *cooperation* categories correspond to Fitzpatrick's *relational* message category, which promotes the cultivation and preservation of mutually beneficial relationships. Therefore, both parties are focused on fighting against terrorism and collaborating in that field.

Twitter

The common message strategies of the MFA of Turkey and the presidency account were *communication /informational* and *relational* oriented. Moreover, the analysis identified *blame attribution* as a theme that both accounts used to blame Russia for the violation of airspace. On the other hand, the MFA of Russia had the following common message strategies in conjunction with the Russian Presidency account: *communication/informational*, *blame attribution*, *advocacy /influence*, *relational*, and *condolences*. The analysis was able to locate the *justification* theme in the MFA of Russia's account that focused on Turkey's involvement in illegal oil trade and showed a radar map to prove it did not violate Turkey's airspace. Conversely, *apology* was not observed in either of the accounts of Turkey for the downing of the warplane.

The analysis of the second case reveals that the common themes for both countries in all accounts are the theme of *condolences* due to the death of the ambassador which is congruent with the given situation. Similarly, *bilateral relations*, *cooperation*, and *political* themes are used in relation to the Syrian conflict, as well as partnering in the fight against terrorism.

Newspapers

All four newspapers for case number one had the following common themes discussed: “*bilateral relations, regional politics, event effects, international community support.*” Coverage was not only focused on Turkey shooting down Russia's warplane; it was intertwined with extensive coverage of *regional politics* and *event effects* themes (that focused on Turkey's economy). The Guardian and the NYT followed a similar pattern in their in-depth coverage. The Washington Post focused on the US and regional players with less depth, and The Times opted to provide a descriptive narrative in an informative manner. Overall, bias was not observed in the analysis and words of the narrative were selected carefully to reflect the crises. All the newspapers presented the reactions and concerns over the warplane incident. Also, the Turkish government was portrayed as adopting a conciliatory approach in order to rebuild the relations with the Russian government. Lastly, The Guardian and The NYT covered both countries' presidents under the *leadership* theme by portraying their characteristics.

For case number two, the main focus of the newspapers was how the attack was perceived as a key incident that brought Russia and Turkey closer together. However, for this incident, all the newspapers presented the idea that both countries stood together to fight against terrorism and collaborate to bring peace to the Syrian conflict. Additionally, the newspapers commented on saying how the U.S. was left out of the resolution in the Syrian conflict. The common themes that are identified in all of the four newspapers are *condolences, bilateral relations, and cooperation*. *Regional politics* is one of the prominent themes because it focuses on the regional issues and interests that connect the countries together.

One point to mention is that, even though there were deaths in both case studies, interestingly, the human-interest frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) was not the focus of the

newspapers. The NYT and The Guardian were contextual in news and delved into the analysis of the possible causes that led to this situation. Lastly, all of the newspapers made references to government sources and used experts for comments.

The analysis of the newspapers helped to identify how crises are interpreted in the news media and which frames are prominent in the news. The study found that in times of such political crisis, newspapers are focusing and covering *bilateral relations, cooperation, and political* aspects more. Specifically for case one, the theme of *event effects* was strongly emphasized because event effects for Turkey meant *economic sanctions, banning free visa entrance which affects tourism, and freezing millions of dollar worth of government agreements*. The results of news analysis, translated into studying crisis communication specifically in the messages, help public diplomacy to form message strategies during crises. The results of the news indicate how messages are perceived and crafted by the news media, which have an influence on the audience and shape their perception of reality. Therefore, it is important to consider how public diplomacy messages are crafted in times of crisis, as crises can be exacerbated or alleviated depending on the message strategies.

Apology / Apologia

The unexpected discovery of an apology theme was confirmed by the analysis, showing that apology is a way of mitigating a crisis and it can serve as a new message strategy. However, there are two concepts that need to be explained: apology and apologia. Both of these concepts are used in crisis response situations in crisis communication when organizations seek to justify their actions (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). On the other hand, it is important to clarify that in the crisis communication literature there is a response strategy referred to as “apologia” which comes from the Greek word meaning “speech in defense” (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021) while

apology is described a statement acknowledging something and expressing regret.

Coombs et al. (2010) noted that these two terms can be confusing when studying crisis communication, as both are used in the literature of crisis communication. Apologia is defined as a "specific mode of discourse generated in response to a certain exigence" (Kruse, 1981, p. 291) and as a "rhetoric of self-defense" (Coombs et al., 2010). Additionally, Ware and Linkugel (1973) stated that an apologia is a response to "an attack upon a person's character... [that] does seem to demand a direct response" (p. 274). For example, when the Russian President blamed Turkey and described the act of shooting down the warplane as a "stab in the back, carried out by the accomplices of terrorists," he was blaming the other country for it. On the contrary, the response of the Turkish president was an act of apologia where he generated a response to that certain discourse and in his tweet, he stated, "Those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize." As observed in this response, "apologia is discourse generated in response to an actual situation in which one's character is attacked or is perceived to have been attacked" (Kruse, 1981, p. 290). Thus, "[a]n 'apologia' is not an apology (although it may contain one), but a defense that seeks to present a compelling, counter description of organizational actions" (Hearit, 1994, p. 115).

The concept of apology is studied in crisis communication (Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, & Johansen, 2010), and scholars have analyzed apologies made by individuals, corporations, politicians, and governments (Benoit, 2015). The literature confirms that deciding when and how to apologize is a strategic move (Benoit, 2015; Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Coombs, 2007). On the other hand, apology in crisis communication is used in crisis response strategies and is described as an "expression of regret and request for forgiveness for one's actions" (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021, p. 215). Apology also aims to "bring an end to an unfortunate incident and

convince the outside world that it is over" (Hearit, 1994) and is an act of showing regret and asking for forgiveness from the other party who has been offended (Benoit, 2015; Goffman, 1971; Tavuchis, 1991).

Apology is one of the most "complex and perhaps controversial of the crisis response strategies" (Coombs, 2019, p.155). Not giving a full apology is considered as an expression of regret. On the contrary, if the party gives a full apology, it means it is accepting the responsibility for the act. However, this has its downside because for the side apologizing means fully accepting responsibility and thus having the risk of facing a legal case. Therefore, the literature of crisis communication in apology states that organizations try to avoid apologizing to avoid such legal disputes (Coombs, 2019). On the other hand, organizations, governments, etc. prefer and try to use non-apologies that imitate apologies. For instance, expressing regret like the Turkish president's letter to the Russian government stated. Additionally, an "expression of sympathy for the crisis victims" (Coombs, 2019, p.155) was utilized in the Turkish president's letter where he stated that "I once again express my sympathy and profound condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed and I am saying: 'Excuse us.'"

This study finds that *apology* can be used as a new message strategy. In the thematic analysis, it was observed that Russians expected an apology from the Turkish side, and that Turkey did not present a clear apology for shooting down the warplane. The data indicated that Turkey did not fully apologize; instead, the Turkish government justified the act as a defensive measure to protect their borders. However, an apology implies expressing regret, and research indicates that countries which apologize (Kitagawa & Chu, 2021) tend to increase their approval from the recipient country. However, the analysis showed that in case one, the Turkish president did not fully apologized and sent a letter and the Russian government posted that in a tweet

stating:

“The President of Turkey expressed sympathy and deep condolences to the family of the killed Russian #Su24 pilot ”(June 27, 2016) referring to the Turkish Presidents letter continuing “...I once again express my sympathy and profound condolences to the family of the Russian pilot who was killed and I am saying: ‘Excuse us.’ I share their grief with all my heart. We look on this Russian pilot’s family as we would a Turkish family and we are ready to undertake any initiative that could lessen the pain and severity of the damage caused.”

This statement was accepted as an *apology* from the Russian government as indicated in its official press releases. However, The Guardian newspaper focused on the apology concept in a news story that covered the incident:

“Even tough guys have to say sorry sometimes, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan is no exception...the regrets expressed...by Turkey's famously stubborn president over last November's shooting down of a Russian military plane...” (June 28, 2016).

Also, the newspaper reported that “in June Erdogan penned a letter to Putin that stopped short of offering a full apology for the incident...He also wrote that Turkey "never had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian Federation's plane" according to a Kremlin statement. The Kremlin accepted Erdogan's letter as an apology...” (August 9, 2016).

On the other hand, the research identified no official statement that it fully apologized for the incident and only stated that it regretted it. As Lui states (2007):

“politicians are more likely to offer partial apologies than full apologies after crises. When providing full apologies, politicians admit responsibility for a crisis and offer a formal apology. When providing partial apologies, politicians allude to their responsibility, but do not formally apologize. For example, Bush offered a partial apology in speech five by stating that Americans had the right to expect a more effective federal response to Katrina. Partial apologies, however, may not have the same positive effect on the public as do full apologies” (p. 47).

Kitagawa and Chu (2021) found that apology-making increases approval from the recipient country. However, they also found that the apologizing country is likely to receive strong backlash from its domestic public, meaning leaders of countries tend to risk adverse reactions at home.

This may be the one of the reasons why the Turkish president did not make a public apology, but rather preferred to say he regretted the death of the pilots. Additionally, authoritarian leaders tend to communicate behind closed doors, so it is not possible to know what is being discussed. However, the analysis of the official statements show that the MFA's and the two presidents mostly communicated via phone which indicates that Turkey and Russia intensely used traditional diplomacy, leader-to-leader diplomacy. On the other hand, for the assassination of the ambassador case, the Turkish president communicated directly with the Russian president and the outcome of the talks was stronger cooperation and bilateral relations.

Building mutually strong beneficial relations in public diplomacy is important. This refers to the relational message strategy of public diplomacy. However, because Turkey did not offer an open public *apology* in the warplane case, it exacerbated the crisis. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to discuss the reasons for Turkey not offering an open apology. Thus, past research shows us that not apologizing can create huge political crisis. For instance, the publication of the prophet Muhammad's cartoons in a newspaper escalated the crisis in Denmark (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011). The government at the beginning did not interfere; however, when the Muslim community in Denmark protested, the Middle Eastern countries boycotted Danish products and the government had to ask help from the EU.

This thematic analysis attempts to examine the message strategies used in public diplomacy when confronting a crisis and their use in crisis communication. In terms of the

outcomes of the thematic analysis, there are commonalities in previous studies regarding the findings of the message strategies of *relational*, *advocacy/influence*, *communication* /*informational*, and *political* (Fitzpatrick, 2010; White & Radic, 2014; Dood & Collins, 2017). On the other hand, the functional message strategies need to be updated with the inclusion of crisis communication. This thematic study identified the theme of *apology* as a new message strategy to be used in public diplomacy in crisis communication. It is important to assess the diverse applications of these themes in other scholarly work. Therefore, there is a need for analyzing other countries as well.

It is important to acknowledge that the distinctive nature of these two crises may have potentially provoked a major confrontation in other nations. However, in the case of Turkey and Russia, the personal dialogue and strong bond between both presidents helped to navigate these crises behind closed doors, which had not been exposed to the public. The study is only able to confirm the available phone calls between both countries that are often announced in either the official press releases or respective Twitter accounts. This dissertation showed authoritarian leaders who have a similar and close relationships can avert any escalation of conflict. Thus, diplomacy and relationships between leaders are crucial for mitigating political and diplomatic challenges.

To conclude, public diplomacy can be a feasible approach in crisis communication to help nations mitigate crises. As public diplomacy involves building relationships and engaging with the international community, its analysis in the context of crisis communication can help the field to enhance its use in crisis communication. The messages that are examined in this dissertation may contribute to the examination of public diplomacy in crisis communication. However, in order to have a comparative analysis, further research is needed in the analysis of

political crisis.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Summary

The term "public diplomacy" was first associated with former U.S. diplomat Edmund Gullion in 1965. The field emerged in the 1970s, but its importance and use by governments was not considered to be that significant until the 1960s, when the United States Department of State and Tufts University's International Studies program advanced the concept as a form of soft power strategy (Nye, 2008). Originally, many countries considered public diplomacy as a form of propaganda and not all countries employed it. From the analysis conducted for this dissertation, it was observed that public diplomacy is still a theoretical model in a state of development. Furthermore, this study states that public diplomacy is in search of its identity, uses, and is seeking theories from other fields in order to remain valid and operational. Moreover, as scholars in the field began to recognize its significance and conducted more studies demonstrating how the concept of public diplomacy is essential for governments, the field is still trying to evolve and consolidate itself. In addition, its connection with communication and media studies is absolutely fundamental as public diplomacy cannot function without a form of media reach. As the concept grows the addition of crisis communication is also necessary as discussed in this dissertation. Undoubtedly, public diplomacy is growing and contributing more in terms of its applications and is becoming increasingly relevant to analyze.

Public diplomacy has been given many definitions depending on one's point of view. Some scholars have described it as "a way of communicating foreign policies to other countries' citizens" (Pamment, 2012). Others, like Tuch, described it as a "government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about an understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies" (1990,

p. 3). Based on these concepts, this dissertation sees public diplomacy primarily as governments' international public relations, which can be in any area, that wants to build and positively influence foreign publics.

The focus of this dissertation is to examine the potential of public diplomacy to benefit from crisis communication in mitigating unpleasant conflicts between nations. The study argues that public diplomacy can be used as a feasible approach in crisis communication in the analysis of an international crisis, such as the Turkey-Russia case. There are two case studies in the dissertation: the first case study analyzed was the shooting down of the Russian warplane that occurred on November 24, 2015. The Russian Su-24, upon crossing the Turkish airspace, was downed by the Turkish air force, resulting in the death of two pilots. The second case analyzed was the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara on December 19, 2016, while he was attending an art exhibition. He was shot by an off-duty police officer. Both of the studies were analyzed using a thematic analysis.

Building on these two case studies, the overarching questions of this dissertation sought to answer the following: Do the public diplomacy functions (advocacy/influence, communication/informational, relational, promotional, warfare, and political (Fitzpatrick, 2010)) used by governments differ when confronting a crisis? Do the public diplomacy functions (Fitzpatrick, 2010) used by a government differ when used in a digital platform (such as Twitter for this study) and on a government official website during a crisis? Lastly, how did the traditional media frame and interpret both crises? These questions were analyzed using thematic analysis on the data collected from official press releases and Twitter accounts of the governments of Russia and Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its presidential accounts, and the main circulation newspapers of the United States (The New York Times, The

Washington Post) and the United Kingdom (The Guardian, The Times).

Analysis of the research found that, in addition to some current message strategies, apology in crisis communication literature can play a significant role in utilizing public diplomacy in crisis communication. Therefore, apology should be added to the message strategies. The analysis also indicates that traditional diplomacy between leaders and behind-the-door diplomacy are influential in mitigating crises. To conclude, public diplomacy can be a feasible approach in crisis communication to help nations mitigate crises. As public diplomacy involves building relationships and engaging with the international community, its analysis in the context of crisis communication can help the field to enhance its use in crisis communication. The messages examined in this dissertation may contribute to the examination of public diplomacy in crisis communication. However, further research is needed in the analysis of political crises in order to have a comparative analysis. It was concluded that public diplomacy can be a viable approach in crisis communication to help nations mitigate crises. Additionally, from the analysis, it was observed that public diplomacy is still in search of a theory and is using other theories to consolidate and continue growing, helping governments to increase understanding and responsive communication.

Despite the abundance of research in the field of crisis communication, there remains a dearth of literature on major political, social, economic, environmental, and health crises. Consequently, this dissertation seeks to provide a valuable contribution to the field of public diplomacy studies, which is also a largely unexplored area in terms of major crises, especially international ones. As highlighted by Auer (2016, p.119), the lack of research in the realm of international relations crises, public diplomacy presents a unique opportunity to reduce misunderstanding, misinformation and disinformation. Thus, these new avenues of theory

development provide a greater understanding of how communication plays a role in these circumstances. This study is therefore positioned to make a meaningful contribution to both crisis communication and public diplomacy studies.

Contributions of the study

This dissertation has made several contributions. Firstly, studies related to public diplomacy have primarily focused on the West, and there is a need to understand how public diplomacy functions during crises in other parts of the world. Therefore, this dissertation, by analyzing the Turkey-Russia crises, has contributed to a non-West focus. Secondly, examining public diplomacy in relation to crisis communication is another contribution; this dissertation aims to help the field, as there is a lack of literature and studies in the area. Thirdly, finding apology as a message strategy and identifying a new message strategy theme was another contribution. Fourthly, analysis of using three different data sets (official press releases, Twitter, and newspapers) was conducted by cross-checking the messages in each data set to see whether the messages and themes were consistent in the identification of the new message strategy. Fifthly, this study contributes to the analysis of political crises, which is an area that has been criticized by some scholars in the field (Auer, 2019; Olsson, 2013). Lastly, this study enables one to see how governments use or convey messages and communicate during times of political crisis through their official webpages and social media platforms.

Implications

As stated, the study identified a new message strategy, which was different from what other studies had found, as they were not related to political crises. This means that the implications of this study can be used to mitigate crises between two countries. The findings of the study can benefit government officials, practitioners, and advisors who form or prepare

official press releases, Twitter posts, and press bulletins for the public. By carefully crafting message strategies and using them in a timely manner, countries can mitigate crises before they escalate and prevent any further hostile dialogue that could cause further damage to relations.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The sample size was small –given the actual numbers found in social media and the press; so, in fact, the study analyzed the total of information available. It is clear that communication use by the governments, and four newspapers for two international crisis case studies may not be sufficient. Therefore, studying newspapers from other countries could produce different results. However, due to language barriers, the study was unable to analyze newspapers from Russia, and as well as those in Europe and the Middle East, which may have added different perspectives to the analysis of news framing. This study should not be seen as a definitive outcome as public diplomacy in crisis communication may differ based on the crisis. Therefore, more research is needed to analyze the message strategies. Lastly, due to the nature of qualitative thematic analysis, the results are not generalizable.

Future research

Future studies may expand their research data and apply it to other platforms, as well as newspapers from other countries. In order for public diplomacy to function more effectively during times of crisis, it is essential to conduct more studies on public diplomacy message strategies in political crises. Future research could investigate various message strategies in relation to political crises, such as the Syrian conflict, the Ukraine-Russia war, and immigration and border issues in the context of public diplomacy in policy communication (Chavez & Hoewe, 2010). Additionally, they could attempt to understand how public diplomacy messages

shape the audience's perceptions and responses during times of crisis by analyzing social media platforms and improving the public diplomacy messages based on the feedback. This feedback and the outcome may help to generate new message strategies and aid researchers in advancing public diplomacy in crisis communication.

Future researchers could conduct a study on the followers of all the Twitter accounts during the two cases, analyzing what they shared and also looking at their comments, as another approach to studying and understanding the perception of the audience. Thus, from the reactions of the audience, other potential message strategies can be generated for public diplomacy during times of crisis communication. Yet, there is a need for new conceptualizations of public diplomacy and crisis communication that offer a blending or a bridge between them is necessary in order to further our fields and provide tools to countries that are likely to face another international crisis.

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