Information and Communication Technologies and Organizational Culture in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1]

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide an insider's perspective on the mutually constitutive interplay between Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the organizational culture of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the last two decades. It is argued that the introduction of ICTs to work processes in the Ministry has been a set of reform attempts of senior bureaucrats to adapt the organization to the rapidly changing socio-political environment and to ensure the dominance of the Ministry in the information field of Turkish foreign policy. Reforms have targeted organizational behaviours manifesting the basic assumptions of the organizational culture, namely "hierarchy", "secrecy", "one-way communication with the public" and "the notion of the survival of the state". This case study indicates that the influence of ICTs is most profound in the communication style of foreign service officials, which has gradually been changing from one-way to two-way communication with the public. ICTs have also enabled foreign service officials to develop collaborative cross-agency relations with other public and private organizations. The article concludes that these changes have transformed the Ministry into a more efficient and credible public organization in foreign policy.

Key Words

Turkey, Foreign Ministry, organizational culture, technology, communication, public diplomacy.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a significant role in changing traditional diplomacy and the organizational culture of foreign ministries. The literature on public diplomacy offers a rich account on the role of ICTs in foreign policy processes.[2] However, except for a few valuable pieces of research,[3] it does not say much about the interplay between ICTs and organizational culture in individual foreign ministries. One of the reasons for this is that researchers look at the implementation phase of foreign policies with a narrow focus rather than adopting a broader perspective, including more challenging and less

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visible earlier phases such as decision-making and policy formulation within bureaucracy. The culture of secrecy dominating foreign ministries further exacerbates this trend by making it difficult for outsiders to have access to information about the inner functioning of foreign ministries.

This article focuses on the intensive application of ICTs in work processes in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter referred to as "the Ministry") by a group of computer-enthusiast senior bureaucrats to recalibrate the capacity of foreign service officials to handle more efficiently contemporary foreign policy processes over the last two decades. It provides a framework of analysis to answer the research question of how ICT applications have worked, and in time, served senior bureaucrats' endeavour to achieve an organizational transformation. The Turkish experience indicates that ICTs have consciously been employed to mediate changes in organizational culture within the Ministry by conditioning the actions of foreign service officials. Technological reforms have penetrated through social contexts that reproduce, maintain and change the basic assumptions of the Ministry's organizational culture, namely *hierarchy, secrecy, one-way communication with the public,* and *the notion of the survival of the state*. Changes have gradually become visible in the most profound manner in the attitudes

of foreign service officials in engaging with the domestic and foreign publics as well as their approaches towards cross-agency collaborative work at the national level.[4] Consequently, those changes have transformed the Ministry into a more efficient public organization in foreign policy.

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In conducting this research, the author holds the assumption that the underlying objective of ICT reforms was to ensure the dominance of the Ministry as a hub agency in the information field governing Turkey's foreign policy processes, which has long been challenged by new actors and power shifts in Turkish politics. This assumption was drawn upon various statements of senior bureaucrats in their advocating within and across the Ministry the benefits of technology in work places. In addition, the premises

of post positivist approaches have been adopted to accommodate the observer's being part of the observed phenomenon as well as the mutually constitutive nature of technology and social contexts, through which those technologies have come into being in the first place.

The article applies a research method that combines the professional experience of the author with the theoretical perspectives offered by the *technology enactment process* and *organizational culture*. While offering a unique advantage by combining theory with practice, it also carries constraints such as the preference to remain anonymous of foreign service officials, whose candid personal accounts made valuable contributions to the substance of discussions, and the preference of the author not to refer to the outcomes of occasional questionnaires conducted by the Ministry's Information Technologies Department as well as the contents of formal in-service instructions on ICT applications. Those constraints originate from the mainstream characteristics of institutional censorship and secrecy dominating foreign ministries operating in traditional diplomacy. Therefore, it suffices to state that the overall conclusions of this research are a thorough study of formal instructions circulating within the Ministry, the statements and presentations of those

senior bureaucrats who designed and implemented ICT reforms in the Ministry, formal staff meetings as well as small cafeteria talks among foreign officials about the merits and perils of ICT-induced changes in work processes.

In the following section, the article will develop a theoretical model framing discussions on the interplay between technology and the Ministry's organizational culture. Then the influence of ICTs on the basic assumptions of the organizational culture, which are identified as *hierarchy, secrecy, one-way communication with the public*, and *the notion of the survival of the state*, will be discussed. Finally, conclusions will be drawn on areas involving behavioural changes that are most profound among foreign service officials.

Concepts and Definitions

In this article, ICT is defined as computers (hardware and software), any form of connections facilitating Internet-based work processes, and social media technologies employed in foreign policy processes. In discussing ICT at the Ministry, it differentiates between *computer-supported work systems* such as DOC-ARCHIVE, BUDGET PROGRAMME, CONSULAR-NET and DIPLOMATIC PORTAL and *social media portal and technologies*

such as MEMLEKETIM PORTAL, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The first category includes software designed for collaborative use in a work environment, whereas the latter are popular media applications designed for individual use for business and social purposes. One should also recognize the hybrid characters of CONSULAR-NET and MEMLEKETIM PORTAL designed for interaction with and among individuals. These two programs include features supporting both collaborative use in a work environment and person-to-person interaction for social purposes through web-based communication networks.

Furthermore, following the line of Orlikowski and Robey, it is assumed that ICTs contain both social and material properties and that ICTs, by nature, comprise social products created by human action within a specific structural and cultural context.[5] Technology and institutional structures involve a process of mediating (enabling, constraining) human action, and through human action, contributing to producing, maintaining and changing social contexts. In other words, ICTs are social products constituted through institutional structures and, in turn, they contribute to the constitution of institutional properties of an organization by enabling and constraining human action.[6]

An explanatory cognitive model of two phases – *the technology enactment process* and *the transformation of organizational culture* – is offered to simplify various elements of intertwined arguments throughout discussions in this article. In the first phase, Fountain's *technology enactment framework* is employed to explore earlier processes involving the development, design, use and implementation of ICTs in the Ministry.[7] In the following transformative phase, priority is given to interaction between enacted technology and organizational culture in the Ministry.

Fountain differentiates between *objective* and *enacted* technologies in the technology enactment framework. She holds that objective technologies are hardware, software, telecommunication and other material systems as they exist apart from the ways in which people use them. Enacted technologies are the ways that a technological system is actually used by actors in organizations. Similar technologies may acquire different social meanings and functions, resulting in different organizational outcomes.[8] Two intermediating variables are identified in her framework: *organizational forms* and *institutional arrangements*. Organizational forms include both *bureaucracy* and *networks* in which civil servants operate interchangeably depending on the nature of their

engagement in work environments. They operate in bureaucracy to carry out policy-making and service delivery activities, and in networks to engage in cross agency cooperation and coordination in the public sector. Institutional arrangements are comprised of *cognitive institutions* (referring to mental habits and other cognitive models influencing behaviour and decision-making), *cultural institutions* (referring to shared symbols, narratives and meanings), and *government institutions* (denoting laws and rules framing problem-solving and decision-making). Fountain holds that these variables influence technology choices, individual responses to those choices, and the outcomes of enacted technologies. Similar technologies may produce different organizational outcomes depending on the formal structure of an organization or institutional arrangements.[9]

> Tension between the centre and the periphery of the society keeps the bureaucratic elite from directly communicating with the public.

In this article, two modifications are made to the original technology enactment framework: first, actors are limited to *bureaucratic leaders* and *foreign service officials,* while the varying roles in the enactment framework of all groups of actors are recognized.[10] Bureaucratic leaders include a group of technology-enthusiast foreign service officials with unique political connections and the professional capacity to initiate and implement ICT reforms. *Turkish foreign service officials* include those who are primarily responsible for conducting foreign policy processes in the Ministry. Second, the concept of *organizational culture* replaces *institutional arrangements* to highlight fundamental changes in social contexts in which foreign service officials operate. While there are numerous definitions of culture,[11] the definitional and analytical framework of *organizational culture* provided by Schein allows us to differentiate between the levels of assumptions, values, beliefs and artefacts influencing the mind-set and attitudes of foreign service officials.[12] According to Schein organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions, differentiating the members of an organization from those of the others, helping members in their adaptation to the environment and consolidating in-group integration. He argues that organizational culture can be analysed at three different levels: (i) *basic assumptions* that are unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (ii) *espoused beliefs and values* that are the ways an organization justifies

what it does and (iii) *artefacts* that are visible organizational structures and processes.[13] Schein's approach allows one to highlight the definitional boundaries and functions of organizational culture. However, it does not say much about institutional sources informing basic assumptions, values, beliefs and artefacts of organizational culture.

Turkish bureaucrats in general, and foreign service officials in particular, differentiate between the concepts of the *state* and the *government* in running state affairs.

Batora's new institutionalist perspective provides the remedy in the case of foreign ministries. He argues that diplomacy is an institution comprised of a set of rules, norms and procedures defining appropriate behaviours for actors in terms of relations between roles and situations, and that it operates on the basis of three organizing principles: *hierarchy, secrecy,* and *one-way communication with the public*. Foreign ministries embody the organizing principles of this particular institution.[14] Batora shrewdly puts in place the link between diplomacy and foreign ministries, and highlights similarities in organizational structure and professional behaviours among

foreign ministries around the world. However, he falls short of explaining divergences in the mind-set and approaches of foreign service officials operating in the same professional field of diplomacy.

Batora's approach may further be developed by referring to the national–level sources of organizational culture. Apart from diplomacy, state traditions that are formed and sustained throughout centuries or millennia have an imprint in the organizational culture of individual foreign ministries. For instance, the Ministry, in the Turkish case, is not only the carrier of *hierarchy, secrecy,* and *one-way communication with the public* but also *the notion of the survival of the state* (*devletin bekası*) originating from the particular historical and political evolution of the Turkish state and society. Turkey has inherited the political and bureaucratic culture of the Ottoman Empire.[15] When the Ottoman government was abolished in 1922, the Foreign Ministry in Ankara recruited former foreign service officials who carried along their mental mappings of how to conduct foreign policy, and set the foundation for the organizational culture of the Ministry.[16] The most salient of those mappings is *the notion of the survival of the state,* which refers to the excessive occupation of Turkish bureaucrats, including foreign service officials, with the long term well-being of the state.

In this article, the notion of *the survival of the state* is understood as a concept with two dimensions: first, that *foreign policy is presumed to be supra-political,* and, second, that *the long-term well-being of the state is considered critical for the survival of the Turkish nation.* These two dimensions are interrelated and reinforce one another in organizational practices. In Turkish society, state affairs are traditionally considered above society.[17] They are treated as a cluster of security dominated issues about which only a handful of qualified elected representatives in the parliament, as well as military and civilian officials have a say. By not offering an effective channel of communication, society has been practically banned from discussing state affairs or influencing the official decision-making process involving foreign policy issues. The state dominates all aspects of social life. Tension between the centre and the periphery of the society keeps the bureaucratic elite from directly communicating with the public. Foreign policy is presumed to be a technical topic which requires special expertise and is therefore of no interest to the public and political party figures representing the narrow interests of certain cliques within society. This notion has long kept the Ministry autonomous in its actions and unresponsive to the public. First,

it legitimizes the exclusive nature of the hard-to-gain expertise of foreign service officials, second, it grants these officials immunity from liability of any kind in their actions in foreign policy.

Turkish bureaucrats in general, and foreign service officials in particular, differentiate between the concepts of the *state* and the *government* in running state affairs. From the 14th century onwards, the state began to separate itself from the sultan during the Imperial Era.[18] The core functions of the state had been institutionalized as hierarchically organized, strong bureaucratic organizations which operate on an exclusionary logic of the *adab* (manner) tradition.[19] According to this logic, the well-being of the state has been prioritized over the welfare of the society. The expectations of the society have been subjugated to an ambiguous concept of national interests. In other words, the organizational culture of the Ministry has been informed by not only the institution of diplomacy, but also state traditions exclusive to Turkish political life.

Drawing upon the deliberations in the preceding paragraphs, the rest of the article discusses the Turkish experience in a mental model of two consecutive phases of *the technology enactment process* and *the transformation of organizational culture.*

Technology Enactment Process

The Ministry is a traditional public organization that is broadly organized and functions in line with the principles of Weberian bureaucracy.[20] The main function of the Ministry is to conduct the foreign policy of the Turkish government. The Ministry has its headquarters in Ankara, five representational offices across Turkey, and more than 220 diplomatic missions worldwide. The number of missions has increased by approximately 40% from 2000 to 2015, following the policies of reaching out to Africa and Latin America, as well as other proactive initiatives, which required active involvement in foreign policy dialogues with the governments and the peoples of other states. The total number of foreign service staff is 6,414, 20% of whom are career officials, 13% consular and administrative officials, and the rest advisors, clerical and technical staff employed both at the headquarters and diplomatic missions. For the purpose of this study, career as well as consular and administrative officials are categorized as *foreign service officials*.

The Ministry had a certain degree of familiarity with technology over the course of many decades. The need to process diverse and large volumes of information over different time zones and vast geographical spaces and simultaneously ensuring secrecy in work processes encouraged the Ministry to establish a cipher bureau in the early years of the Republic and both the telephone and telegraph were widely used in the following decades. The first facsimile machine and few personal computers were introduced in the 1980s. In spite of a general awareness about the role of ICT in diplomacy, however, technology was only a part of the office routine of typing and transmitting information. Foreign service officials have been poorly skilled in handling technologies because clerical staff and technicians would carry out those tasks on their behalf. A review of memoirs of Turkish diplomats having served since the 1920s provides no reference to personal experiences involving communication technologies in either their public or private accounts.[21]

Foreign service officials curiously observed the ways other institutions deal with ICT in workplaces, and adapted those ICT practices which may be of some use in diplomatic communication within and across the Ministry.

Challenges and opportunities[22] that recent advances in ICT introduced to

the profession of diplomacy, as well as the diffusion of ICT through Turkish society and public administration, encouraged the Ministry to treat technology appropriation as an organizational policy priority from the mid-2000s. This approach gained further momentum with the e-Government Initiative.[23] The early introduction of ICT into the Ministry has been a typical practice of imitating similar practices of other foreign ministries to reduce uncertainty dominating the organizational field of diplomacy.[24] Foreign service officials curiously observed the ways other institutions deal with ICT in workplaces, and adapted those ICT practices which may be of some use in diplomatic communication within and across the Ministry. The first successful initiative was a consular project designed and implemented at the Turkish Consulate General in Chicago in the early 2000s. The project involved designing and implementing a consular website providing information for citizens and international visa applicants, an online mail box to be attended regularly by consular clerks, and a modest office network to enable consular clerks to process consular applications in a system of networked computers.

> Bureaucratic leaders who are personally involved in promoting the advantages of employing technologies in work processes, took part in the technology development and design processes.

The Ministry today provides ICT-supported public services to approximately six million Turkish nationals and many more internationals worldwide. Various forms of ICT-supported work systems and social media technologies have been added to the Ministry's technology basket. The hardware includes approximately six thousand computers (30% at the headquarters and 70% in the diplomatic missions), and approximately 700 physical and digital service providers worldwide. The Ministry currently operates an integrated network of multi-modular software applications, namely INTRANET (Dışnet), CONSULAR-NET (Konsolosluk.net), MEMLEMETIM PORTAL, DOC-ARCHIVE (Belge-Arşiv), BUDGET PROGRAMME (Bütçe Programı), DIPLOMATIC PORTAL (Diplomatik Portal), E-VISA (e-Vize), integrated WEBSITEs, and E-ARCHIVE.[25] An explanatory note on these software applications is included in the Annex.

Furthermore, social media technologies such as Twitter, Facebook,

Instagram, podcasts, Internet TV and blogging are increasingly becoming indispensable components of the Ministry's ICT technology basket. The Ministry issued an organizational circular in 2012 which required high ranking bureaucrats and heads of mission to use Facebook and Twitter actively for official purposes, to regularly inform their peers and the public about the foreign policy priorities of the Turkish government. Social media technologies diffused quickly among foreign service officials at all levels. Those tools carry all communication advantages of advanced ICT, such as being cost-effective, widely used, user friendly, and were already embedded in various social networks with high social capital for diplomats.

In the Turkish case, the technology enactment process exhibits dynamic characteristics from the beginning to the present. First of all, it was a top-down process. Ideas were formed in the minds of a group of technology-enthusiast bureaucratic leaders, technological choices were made exclusively by those bureaucratic leaders, and then put into use in accordance with instructions issued by the Information Technologies Department. In the early phases of the process, there were no prior consultations with foreign service officials, who were the main users of those technologies. The Department was not only closed to prior consultations but also feedback from users. Communication was limited to those installing ICT in work places. Otherwise, all users' complaints remained within the confines of offices. The Department's attitude can partly be explained by the one-way communication dominating the Ministry's organizational culture, and partly by a pragmatic policy choice of bureaucratic leaders to guard nascent reforms from discouraging critics. The Ministry has recently changed this attitude, with growing success stories in the technology enactment process over the last decade. The Information Technologies Department seems more eager today to interact with foreign service officials in designing and developing new ICTs than before. It does consultations and receives feedback through questionnaires, online platforms for informal exchange of ideas among users, face-to-face consultations and brainstorming sessions.

Second, technologies available in the market initially constituted the main source of ICT reforms in the Ministry. The technology market has continuously been monitored for opportunities to improve the technological software used in the Ministry. Bureaucratic leaders observed the current of technological developments and determined the way forward.[26] Priorities in the technology

enactment process are continuously re-moulded in accordance with opportunities that innovative ICT may offer. The consular projects were top priority in the early stages of the process. Later, attention was paid to office document management, archives, digital engagement with the public, and various other fields which had been unimaginable to realize two decades earlier. Since 2010, the Ministry has accelerated the ICT appropriation with a multi-modular approach and organization-wide blanket applications. In addition, one could observe a process of ICT hardware updates, network expansion worldwide, and the renovation of physical premises to reflect the new technology-enhanced make-up of the Ministry, both at the headquarters and in diplomatic missions abroad.

Technologies available on the market have been tailored for the work processes of the Ministry and the public service it delivers. Technologies obtained on the market were in Fountain's terms, "objective" technologies existing independent of the ways the staff at the Ministry use them. The objective technologies were re-designed, developed, and adapted to the organizational goals, structure, and institutional particularities of the Ministry. Efforts toward technology design and development included various consultations between bureaucratic leaders from within and ICT vendors and consultants outside the Ministry. At the early stages of the reform process, the bureaucratic leaders used to approach local and international consultants to develop ICTs suitable for the Ministry's work processes. Today, the Ministry receives numerous project proposals from local ICT consultants to be incorporated into its work processes.

Third, the Ministry has applied various policies in order to ensure the faithful and widespread appropriation of ICTs by foreign service officials over the last five years. Those policies include actively monitoring and recording ICT-related trends and statistics in work processes, intervening if those trends indicate directions other than those desired, stimulating staff members through reward systems (punishment of deviant practices, rewarding appropriate practices), providing in-service training and regular updates on ICT developments with special attention to success stories, and effective leadership in encouraging foreign service officials to contribute to the design and development of ICT. Among those methods, the most effective one is constant monitoring of ICT uses and delivering warnings for deviant behaviours since no staff member would like to be singled out for not complying with rules and procedures that are already in place and widely observed at the Ministry.

Last, effective leadership is another important characteristic of the technology enactment process at the Ministry. For the purpose of this study, effective leadership is interpreted as personal efforts and remarkable level of devotion of a group of senior bureaucratic leaders in advancing ICT reforms at the Ministry. A group of computer-enthusiast bureaucratic leaders constitutes the driving force behind technological reforms put in place at the Ministry. Bureaucratic leaders who are personally involved in promoting the advantages of employing technologies in work processes, took part in the technology development and design processes.[27] Those bureaucratic leaders were initially accessible only to those who wanted to take part in the technology development efforts. The author recalls email exchanges she had with the ICT team when installing the consular software at the Turkish Consulate in Melbourne in 2003. The ICT team was accessible for all enquiries and exchange of ideas on how to install and activate the consular application. She also recalls the personal involvement of then Consul General Koru in Chicago in overcoming challenges originating from the poor Internet infrastructure at the local level when creating the website of the Turkish Embassy in Addis Ababa in 2004. From this case, one may notice the selective nature of interaction between bureaucratic leaders and foreign service officials. The former group cooperate with those who exert efforts in advancing the technology enactment process of the Ministry.

One may draw the conclusion from the Turkish technology enactment experience that unlike the common misconception that bureaucrats constitute an impediment in the incorporation of information technologies into organizations, they have in fact played a critical role in technological reforms at the Ministry. This confirms the proposition that senior civil servants are not an impediment to organizational changes, rather they may become key players in government reforms. High-level bureaucrats are in a better position to work out details of critical importance to the success of technological reforms, and play a significant role in the enactment framework by combining deep tacit knowledge of policy and administrative processes with deep understanding of public service and the constraints it imposes on potential design choices for new ICTs.

Following the technology enactment phase, foreign service officials gradually experienced changes in intra-organizational relations both at the horizontal and vertical levels, relations with other organizations as well as in their interactions with the domestic and

foreign publics. With Schein's levels of organizational culture and Batora's propositions about the organizing principles of foreign ministries in mind, the following section will discuss those changes under four sub-headings: *hierarchy, secrecy, one-way communication with the public,* and *the notion of the survival of the state.*

Transformation of Organizational Culture
Hierarchy

Foreign service officials act in *bureaucracies* and *networks* simultaneously. The Ministry carries out policy-making in bureaucracy, and cooperating and coordinating diplomatic tasks in cross-agency networks at the national and international levels. These two forms of organizing require different logics of operation, a model of top-down decision-making and implementation through a unitary chain of command in the former, and a model of horizontal decentralization and coordination in the latter. However, foreign service officials tend to apply the logic of hierarchy to all forms of engagement within and outside the organization. This is even more so when it comes to the Ministry's relations with the business community in Turkey.[28] Therefore, the interplay between

ICT and the organizational form will be discussed with special attention paid to the Ministry's experience in collaborative networks.

The formal organizing form of the Ministry is hierarchy with a clear line of authority and non-permeable walls separating departmental jurisdictions from one another.[29] This form of organization has long been a source of prestige among foreign service officials who refer to the so-called "clockwork functioning" of the organization, the precision of which is comparable to that of the Turkish army. Hierarchical organizing provides predictability and stability to large-scale organizations with a considerable volume of routine tasks, in the Ministry's case, routine diplomatic correspondence and consular services. However, it falls short in handling emerging collaborative engagement across networks and democratic demands from within and outside the Ministry for effective public relations, transparency, and accountability.

The initial design and development of ICT programs, particularly DOC-ARCHIVE, BUDGET PROGRAM, and INTRANET, included features reflecting the existing line of bureaucratic hierarchy. A director is supposed to receive documents related to the jurisdiction of his/her departments via DOC-ARCHIVE, and distribute them to individual desk

officers in their units who administer a particular file. Desk officers produce appropriate outputs and submit them electronically to their closest supervisor, who sends them further up in the hierarchy to finalize the document. Following the formal line of authority, the document ultimately reaches the appropriate level and is endorsed to send to its final destination outside the Ministry. All official documents except for those classified above the level of *"restricted"* are processed through DOC-ARCHIVE.

> The introduction to diplomatic missions of ICT increased the frequency, speed and volume of correspondence between the headquarters and diplomatic missions.

In practice, however, the majority of directors request clerical staff to print all incoming documents that need to be processed. These directors review those documents and task a desk officer to process them, and place appropriate instructions on printed ones. Clerical staff members then take marked documents to desk officers who process them electronically and transfer printed documents to the closest supervisor for revision, endorsement or referral to an official of higher rank on the same jurisdictional line

of authority. At the final stage, a desk officer electronically signs documents on behalf of the authorizing official and sends them to their final destination outside the Ministry, with printed and initialled copies kept in files. In addition, BUDGET PROGRAM has been in use for a limited number of staff in charge of financial affairs. The experience of those staff members is similar to that of those using DOC-ARCHIVE. Due to the regulations which require a printed copy of documents with original signatures, the users of BUDGET PROGRAM complain about a cumbersome process of multiple printings, signings, and then sending documents to their final destinations by regular post.

On the other hand, communications regarding administrative issues strictly related to the functioning of the Ministry including relations between staff members and the human resources department have been carried out electronically with no printed papers involved. In addition, any communication calling for technical assistance for ICT use and maintenance of office machines is done electronically with no paperwork required.

The maintenance of beliefs, values, and practices producing hierarchical relations require routine face-to-face communication.[30] Foreign service officials use DOC-ARCHIVE to re-produce organizational hierarchy.

A director needs to see subordinates visiting his/her office on a regular basis to receive instructions, consult on how to process documents, and reassure one's loyalty to the superior. It is necessary for subordinates to secure the trust of the superior, to learn from the master the subtleties of diplomacy and to become acculturated into the community of foreign service officials. Routine conversations during the processing of foreign policy documents between superiors and subordinates carry the tenets of hierarchy as one of the basic assumptions of the organizational culture. Therefore, although DOC-ARCHIVE offers faster and more efficient ways of conducting business, foreign service officials resist using DOC-ARCHIVE in accordance with its original guidelines. However, they are more apt to use ICT in administrative and technical communications through INTRA-NET since those applications are related to secondary matters (though not necessarily less important), which fall under the jurisdiction of departments such as the Information Technologies Department, the Human Resources Department or the Financial and Administrative Department. This experience illustrates differences between objective and enacted technologies, and unexpected outcomes of the technology enactment process.

From this analysis, one may argue that political departments play a critical role in producing, maintaining and modifying the notion of hierarchy at the Ministry. Foreign policy issues are handled in these departments. The notion of hierarchy is strongly experienced through face-to-face communication between superiors and subordinates working for those departments. These observations illustrate differences in the appropriation of ICT in processing foreign policy-related documents and carrying out administrative and technical applications. Foreign service officials resist using DOC-ARCHIVE in the fastest and most efficient way while almost fully complying with guidelines in using INTRA-NET. The organizational culture of prioritizing political issues over technical ones prevents staff members from fully utilizing DOC-ARCHIVE while endorsing the use of other programs.

Another dimension of hierarchy at the Ministry is the hierarchical relationship between the headquarters and missions abroad. Diplomatic missions are subordinated to the headquarters in their conduct of foreign policy processes. The introduction to diplomatic missions of ICT increased the frequency, speed and volume of correspondence between the headquarters and diplomatic missions. Particularly DOC-ARCHIVE,

CONSULAR-NET and E-VISA enable diplomatic missions to directly communicate and exchange documents, not only with the headquarters but also with other public organizations, such as the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the autonomous branches of those organizations. In addition, diplomatic missions have secured access to the national data banks of records of birth, death and marriages as well as penal records of Turkish citizens. An increase in the frequency and speed of communication between diplomatic missions has reduced down time lapses and distance between various agencies. While the headquarters' control and monitoring over diplomatic missions has increased, the latter has secured more freedom of action in proceeding with their routine tasks. The headquarters receives daily activity reports from missions, carrying out all communications, and providing instructions in response to emerging new conditions more quickly. Diplomatic missions don't need to wait for days for a response or confirmation from the headquarters, which reduced significantly the reaction time of missions in responding rapidly to emerging foreign policy issues in host countries.

The third dimension of hierarchy at the Ministry is related to the perceived hierarchical relations between the Ministry and other public organizations. This dimension falls in the category of networks as a form of organization. Foreign service officials have maintained a hierarchical professional culture which prioritizes the realm of foreign policy over other areas that fall in the jurisdiction of other public organizations. This cultural attitude stems partly from the profession of diplomacy, and partly from the Ottoman and Republican state traditions which equate foreign policy to security policy.[31] Foreign service officials identify themselves as the guardians of an upper realm in state affairs and display corresponding organizational behaviours in the public sphere. This practice perpetuated a hierarchical relationship between the Ministry and other public organizations. Despite the law, which does not decree a relational hierarchy between the Ministry and other Ministries that carry out the core functions of the state, the former has sustained a culture of hierarchical relations by exclusively mediating relations between the national and the international, producing strictly formal correspondences with other public organizations, paying special attention to meticulous customs in face-to-face engagement with those outside the Ministry and, most importantly, displaying an image of a class of foreign service officials with distinct high culture.

However, the rapid diffusion of ICT and social media technologies throughout Turkish society has brought about new opportunities for various public organizations to obtain information, familiarize themselves with new professional networks, and engage in trans-boundary relations independent of the Ministry. This is most evident in the cases of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, and Treasury, which have made efforts to provide linguistic, professional and cultural training for staff members to pursue ministerial tasks at the international level. With the emergence of new opportunities that have been seized by other public organizations, the facilitator role of the Ministry has decreased dramatically since the 1990s. Formal correspondences are transmitted without any involvement in the substance of the jurisdictions of other public organizations. The Ministry has faced challenges in conducting business as usual, and has to revise its hierarchical engagement with other public organizations. As a remedy to this, the

introduction of ICT to work processes at the Ministry provided an interesting opportunity for foreign service officials to transform relations with other public organizations from self-perceived hierarchy to collaborative network relations that provide the Ministry with the upper hand in reaping social capital from those networks. The Ministry has actively promoted the extension of its software service networks to other public organizations.[32] It signed protocols to implement DOC-ARCHIVE in the Office of President, the Ministry for EU Affairs, and the Undersecretariat for Defence Industries. The Ministry produces organizational replicas by transferring those technologies to other public organizations, and creating collaborative networks. Cooperation with other public organizations not only makes ICT reforms sustainable within the Ministry, but also encourages further ICT reforms and legitimizes demands for more funds for new software programs. The Ministry uses ICTs as strategic products to be tradable for securing the partnership of other

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organizations, creating networks where the Ministry holds an upper hand in reaping social capital originating from network transactions, and most importantly reclaiming dominance in the knowledge field of foreign policy and technological innovation in the public sector. Although the new form of relations between the Ministry and other public organizations is far from being hierarchical today, it still displays a characteristic where the Ministry re-defines its role as a hub agency playing a unique, innovative and indispensable role in the public sector. This, in turn, reinforces the self-perception among foreign service officials of being a distinctive community with exclusive qualities in the public sector.

Secrecy

Following the line of Batora,[33] *secrecy* is taken as a basic assumption of the Ministry's organizational culture. The interplay between ICT and secrecy will be discussed in terms of *access to information* and *information security*. Both dimensions are governed by the traditional *need-to-know principle*, which implies that an officer has access only to those files that directly concern his/her daily work. Access to information within the Ministry is regulated through strict rules and procedures. Information is compartmentalized within departments. Each department

adamantly guards the boundaries of its jurisdiction and pays particular attention to avoiding infringements from within and outside the Ministry. Information is managed and archived by authorized foreign service officials working at those departments with corresponding jurisdictions. Information exchange between departments is made through a written request that is drafted by the department requesting information and authorized by high-ranking officials in the line of authority. Holding information and expertise on a foreign policy topic is a source of power for individual foreign service officials, therefore the need-to-know principle is strictly adhered to at all levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Individual foreign service officials traditionally prefer a minimum level of disclosure of foreign policy information to the lowest number of authorized officials from within and outside the Ministry.

Information security constitutes the external dimension of secrecy. Official correspondence between the Ministry and diplomatic missions abroad is conducted through secured communication lines. Information is secured because of the sensitivity of the content that is related to the national interests of the state, a moral responsibility to keep any confidential information belonging to other states, or a precaution to avoid leaking information which may call into

question the legitimacy of the Ministry. Risk avoidance is a policy choice resulting from the need-to-know principle at the Ministry. If there is high risk in using certain communication method, then it is avoided for the sake of information security.

The introduction of ICT to work processes at the Ministry has not changed the appearance of traditional rules and procedures on the management of and access to information within the Ministry. Information is still compartmentalized among various departments and access to information depends on a written authorization. However, the boundaries of information to be disclosed within the Ministry have been re-drawn to allow the construction of semi-permeable walls within and outside the Ministry. The volume of unrestricted information increases as their contents are disclosed by other sources than foreign ministries in mainstream or social media. Most of the time an outbreak of armed conflicts elsewhere in the world is disclosed in the mainstream or social media hours before a secured correspondence is completed between a particular diplomatic mission abroad and the headquarters in Ankara. Therefore, foreign service officials have relaxed internal access to information, and become willing to share more information with other stakeholders.

A gradual policy change could be observed in information security at the Ministry over the last two decades. It was a change from risk avoidance to *risk management*. In the past, the Ministry would communicate confidential information via the cipher bureau, in which diplomatic cables were coded, transmitted through the communication lines to the final destination, and decoded for foreign service officials to read the content of the cable. Today, the cipher bureau is still in use for confidential information.[34] However, as the volume of unrestricted information sent electronically has increased dramatically, so is the risk of leaking information to unauthorized third parties. Instead of banning the use of ICTs and social media technologies, the Ministry applies a policy of free usage of electronic communications on the condition that users strictly follow information security guidelines. Drawing on lessons learned from the WikiLeaks scandal involving the disclosure of sensitive foreign policy information of the U.S. State Department, Deputy Foreign Minister Koru has stated that such leaks could happen any time in any country, including Turkey, and no one can claim that their country will not ever face such challenges. The purpose of the information security policy of the Ministry is not to eradicate the possibility of leakages, but to minimize

such incidents. He referred to a series of meetings held at the Ministry to review the current infrastructure of ICT following the WikiLeaks scandal.[35]

> The concept of risk management enabled bureaucratic leaders to put into action the long awaited E-ARCHIVE project, in which documents in the diplomatic archive covering the period of 1919-2008 are de-classified and re-catalogued for the public eye.

The Ministry's risk management policies have three dimensions: first, the Board of Response to Cyber Incidents was established in 2013 to assess risks arising in cyberspace and formulate measures to be taken in handling cyber incidents. The Board comprises high-ranking foreign service officials and representatives of the Information Technologies Department. It plays a critical role in reviewing the Ministry's current communication infrastructure and developing guidelines and procedures to be followed to minimize the impacts of cyber incidents. One may observe an institutionalization process involving rules and procedures on how to reduce unauthorized disclosure of foreign policy information, and deal with cyber incidents related to the diffusion of ICT within the Ministry

and missions abroad. Second, the Ministry's Information Technologies Department often issues circular notes in which foreign service officials are requested to be extra careful in communicating foreign policy information, and to be vigilant in bringing to the Department's attention any infringement of the Ministry's communication infrastructure. The Information Technologies Department deals with thousands of cyber-attacks each day. Third, the Ministry takes an active role in drafting national laws and regulations on cyber security, proactively sharing its experience on cyber security with other public organizations, and promoting international cooperation between Turkish authorities and international organizations such as the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), the Task Force-Computer Security Incident Response Teams/Trusted Introducer (TF-CSIRT/TI). The Ministry hosted the D-8 Information Technologies Workshop in Ankara in April 2014, and facilitated the conduct of the International Cyber Shield Exercise in Istanbul in May 2014.

Furthermore, the concept of risk management enabled bureaucratic leaders to put into action the long awaited E-ARCHIVE project, in which documents in the diplomatic archive covering the period of 1919-2008 are de-classified and re-catalogued for the

public eye. The introduction of ICT into the diplomatic archive enabled foreign service officials to get key documents in a shorter period of time and assess current foreign policy issues with sound background knowledge. In addition, E-ARCHIVE is used to facilitate the re-branding of the existing paper-based diplomatic archive and institutionalized the public access to digitalized documents. This allows the Ministry to reinforce its position as a hub agency in the knowledge field on the foreign policy of Turkey.

One-way Communication with the Public

The historical evolution of diplomacy resulted in a centralized public communication function in foreign ministries. All messages were drafted and disseminated by the Department of Information at the headquarters. In addition, the communication style between the state and the public has usually been one-way and ex-post in nature. In other words, the public was informed only if it was deemed necessary by the state, and only after events occurred.[36] There have been no channels for state consultation with the public in the process of foreign policy-making or implementation.

The introduction of ICTs to work processes at the Ministry has influenced communication patterns in interactions

among foreign service officials as well as their communication style with the public. It is the assumption of the author that foreign service officials' communication style with the public is strictly related to and influenced by intra-organizational communication patterns prevailing work processes at the Ministry. Therefore, both dimensions are discussed within this section.

As to intra-organizational communication, one may observe two lines of communication simultaneously operating among foreign service officials at the organizational level. The first one is the formal communication line that follows the line of authority and regulating processes involving foreign policy decision-making. The second is the informal communication line in which the formal line of authority has been mostly ignored. Informal conversations dominate the discourse and play a complementary role to the formal communication line involving foreign policy decision-making and a much greater role in administrative decision-making. In the latter form of communication, a network of people with converging interests is in operation. These informal networks are constituted of people with similar educational backgrounds, familial ties, political and religious affiliations or a constructive work experience generating personal trust.

Participants interact with one another as long as social capital in the networks serves their individual interests.

In both the formal and informal communication lines, an authoritative-benevolent tone prevails in the language of superiors while a submissive and reverent tone is the norm on the side of subordinates. The converging attitudes of benevolent authoritarianism and submissiveness originate from socioeconomic environments, such as family structure, education, and state traditions, where the mode of *master-apprenticeship* is the primary source of socialization and organizational learning. Organizations replicate authority structures of families where fathers acquire the highest level of authority and others occupy lower levels. The education system perpetuates those tendencies in families and in society.[37]

In addition, the mode of master-apprenticeship plays a critical role in socialization and organizational learning at the Ministry. Since diplomacy is treated as a delicate art of negotiations, senior foreign service officials are considered masters from whom subordinates should learn necessary qualifications. It is the duty of subordinates to create a trustworthy environment by exerting the highest quality of service, and showing absolute loyalty to superiors to obtain valuable insights about the art of diplomacy. This mode accentuates the hierarchy in communication between superiors and subordinates at the Ministry.

In order to adapt to the new media landscape, bureaucratic leaders encouraged foreign service officials to use social media technologies in crafting messages for the public, with a particular interest being vested in input from the public.

The introduction of ICTs to work processes at the Ministry had an impact on the mode of master-apprenticeship as the primary source of socialization and organizational learning. First, information has been partly freed from the grip of foreign service officials holding key positions in the organization. This was because a wide array of alternative information resources has become readily available online both within and outside the Ministry. Second, the diversification of information resources removed conditionality between access to valuable information as well as professional expertise by junior staff members and their absolute loyalty to superiors. This paved the way for previously unimaginable constructive exchanges of ideas along the horizontal and vertical lines of authority. Both superiors and subordinates constructively exchange views without evoking a sense of threat or challenge to superiors. Furthermore, better informed subordinates are able to

develop viable arguments which enrich political discussions in foreign policy making.

Organizational patterns of communication among foreign service officials are similar to their communication style with the public both at the national and international levels. In the mind of Turkish foreign service officials, the traditional media landscape positions the Ministry at the centre of the communication network. The public receives messages crafted and disseminated unilaterally by the Ministry in a one-way and ex-post fashion. This model of communication between the Ministry and the public has been profoundly challenged by the new media landscape painted by Shirky.[38] In order to adapt to the new media landscape, bureaucratic leaders encouraged foreign service officials to use social media technologies in crafting messages for the public, with a particular interest being vested in input from the public. The use of social media has diffused rapidly throughout various departments and diplomatic missions. Social media technologies provide foreign service officials with the opportunity to present the contributions they have made in foreign policy processes, enabling them to interact with colleagues around the world, exchanging experience on how to put into practice foreign policy

instructions received from the Ministry, and most importantly, attracting attention to their personal attributes, preferences and knowledge.

The introduction of ICTs, particularly software such as E-VISA and CONSULAR-NET as well as social media portal and technologies such as MEMLEKETIM PORTAL, Facebook and Twitter formed online communication lines with the public both domestically and internationally. The Public Diplomacy Department was formed in 2010 in order to deal with input from the public, and to coordinate the public diplomacy initiatives of diplomatic missions abroad, as well as the headquarters' public relations.[39] Diplomatic missions are requested to take into account the public diplomacy dimension of their activities, and regularly report on diplomatic activities involving public diplomacy and advocacy initiatives since 2012. The Human Resources Department and the Diplomacy Academy offer a diverse set of in-service training for foreign service officials. Those courses involve seminars and workshops to improve the communication and public engagement skills of foreign service officials. The burgeoning literature refers to the potential of generating soft power through an active engagement with the public. This has raised awareness among foreign

service officials about the benefits of constructively engaging with the public. The creation of new channels has enabled the public to contribute to foreign policy processes by conveying their requests and expectations in advance and constituting viable public pressure on foreign service officials regarding policy choices.

The two-way communication emerging out of the technology enactment process indicates the change of mind-set among foreign service officials. Although the Ministry occupies a central position in the media landscape in the thinking of foreign service officials, it no longer displays characteristics of outdated hierarchical relationships between a dominating organization and a passive audience. The public is now considered an active and legitimate contributor to foreign policy processes. The Ministry today cares more than ever before about how many followers each Facebook or Twitter account of diplomatic missions has, and includes public diplomacy as a substantial agenda item in the Annual Conference of Turkish Ambassadors. Furthermore, the dismantling of the model of master-apprenticeship as a form of socialization and organizational learning accelerates social media-enhanced communication trends suitable to the new media landscape.

The Notion of the Survival of the State

The idea that foreign policy is supra-political has been rendered untenable following socio-political changes experienced in Turkish society. Those changes include the pro-active involvement of the AKP government in foreign policy processes,[40] the decoupling of foreign and security policies with the emergence of economic factors as a key determinant in policy choices[41], and the rise of interest in foreign policy issues in the society in general, and among think tanks and universities in particular, since the 1990s.[42] Those changes have influenced the Ministry in two ways: first, actors influencing foreign policy processes increased in number. The Ministry needs to coordinate foreign policy processes with various actors ranging from business associations to influential lobby groups. Second, those actors have become more influential in determining a particular policy choice serving their interests. For instance, foreign policy papers published by business associations such as the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD), inform the public about the business priorities of those associations and offer policy suggestions for the Government.

Third, the diffusion of democratic ideals through Turkish society forces public organizations to be accountable to and receptive towards demands from the public.

In the new socio-political environment, foreign service officials are encouraged to become constructive interlocutors negotiating with the public in working out particular policy choices in foreign affairs. Therefore, in this social context it is rather difficult to identify how ICTs have influenced the tenet of foreign policy as being supra-political, in a socio-political environment that has already been in a radical transformation in recent decades. However, one may observe that ICTs provided the Ministry with ample opportunities to constructively engage with other public organizations through technology and data transfer and the joint use of software such as INTRA-NET, E-VISA and CONSULAR-NET. The newly forged collaborative networks reinforce the Ministry's role as the leading public organization mediating relations between public organizations and their peers internationally, as well as its primary role in foreign policy processes at the domestic level. In addition, there are new avenues available for engagement with influential actors in Turkish society. The Ministry effectively uses its valuable expertise and information by allowing the public to access the information it holds. Furthermore, as in the case of E-ARCHIVE, the Ministry recalibrates foreign service officials by encouraging them to use social media technologies in public engagements, providing inservice training to improve communication and negotiation skills for them. The Ministry actively weaves networks, which may contribute to its adaptation to the changing socio-political environment, in other words, the emerging information society.

> ICTs provided the Ministry with ample opportunities to constructively engage with other public organizations through technology and data transfer and the joint use of software such as INTRA-NET, E-VISA and CONSULAR-NET.

However, the introduction of ICTs to the Ministry has not made a visible difference in the mind-set of foreign service officials regarding the differentiation between the concept of the state and the government. It is strongly believed that the state is the permanent and sacred one while governments are temporary and may change in parliamentary elections. This traditional line of thinking has

increasingly been questioned from within and outside the Ministry over the last two decades. In fact, the well-being of the state includes a complex assessment involving the past, present and future of Turkish society with a particular emphasis on the well-being of society at present. It would not be misleading for one to conclude that the Ministry is becoming more responsive to public opinion and the views of other stakeholders involving foreign policy processes following the recent social and political changes in Turkish society and rapid changes in the communication capacity of individuals, thanks to the diffusion of ICTs through societies at the national and international levels.

Conclusion

Recent developments in and rapid diffusion through society of ICTs have unleashed diverse discussions on the very nature of ICT, as well as its impacts on individuals, social institutions and organizations. Similar discussions have increasingly taken place in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This article has tried to elaborate on how ICT has been understood and internalized in work processes within and across the Ministry. The objective was two-folded: first, to reveal how ICT applications have functioned in transforming the organizational culture of the Ministry; second, to identify if there are any changes in the mind-set and communication patterns of foreign service officials in carrying out their routines in foreign policy. A thorough analysis on this matter is, in fact, a prerequisite to make sense of Turkey's public diplomacy practices, especially those carried out by diplomatic missions abroad.

The introduction of ICTs to work processes at the Ministry has been based upon a conscious decision of a group of computer-enthusiast senior foreign service officials to transform the organization. The underlying motivation for this initiative was to adapt the Ministry to the rapidly changing socio-political environment, and restore the Ministry's traditional dominance in the information field of foreign policy of Turkey.

This article concludes that the continuous introduction of ICTs to work processes has resulted in a gradual transformation in the basic assumptions of the organizational culture, namely, *hierarchy, secrecy, one-way communication with the public,* and *the notion of the survival of the state,* over the last two decades. Although it is difficult to determine precisely to what extent those changes were caused by ICTs, while various other factors have also been involved in work processes, an analysis of ICT-intensive social processes provides a

set of credible evidence to establish a link between ICTs and changes that occurred in the basic assumptions of the Ministry's organizational culture. Behavioural changes are more visible in the communication style of foreign service officials with the public and their approach towards cross-agency collaborative work. An approximation between national and societal interests have also been observed with the growing recognition among foreign service officials that the well-being of the state cannot be defined without a reference to the current interests and concerns of the public. However, it is too early to identify the extent to which those changes emanated from ICTs and the extent to which they were related to the transformation of the socio-political environment in Turkish society, which has itself been undergoing a major transformation on a much wider scale.

This case study contributes to the literature in three areas: first, it enriches the literature, which lacks case studies involving interactions between technology and public organizations. Second, while providing insights on some aspects of the technology enactment process of the Ministry, it calls for new questions on the roles of ICT in foreign policy processes as well as the public diplomacy of Turkey. It invites students of public diplomacy and foreign policy to carry out comparative analyses on the adaptation processes of foreign ministries to the emerging information society. Last but not least, this article puts to test the explanatory power of the technology enactment framework applied to analyses involving interactions between technology and public organizations. Students of public diplomacy and ICT studies are encouraged to engage further in the basic premises of the main argument in this article through alternative studies in public organizations and diplomacy.

Annex

INTRANET is a software application designed to provide standardized and up-to-date information to foreign service officials employed at the headquarters and diplomatic missions abroad. It also allows staff members to process routine human resource-related applications online. There are online platforms where staff members may exchange ideas, and coordinate group actions.

CONSULAR-NET is the earliest and the most advanced technology application. It includes a website and a secured software application that allows integrated information processing by all the Turkish Consulates worldwide. CONSULAR-NET has multiple functions: first, it provides citizens abroad with pragmatic and procedural information on consular matters. It provides those services through websites, call centres, mail boxes and consular TV. Second, Turkish citizens are able to fill out certain consular applications online and complete those processes without being present in person at the Consulate. Third, it links Turkish Consulates to the headquarters and key public organizations such as the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and in doing so, enables fast and secure data transfer between those public organizations. While it used to take up to three months to issue a penal certificate for an applicant through a paper-based correspondence between diplomatic missions abroad and the law enforcement authorities in Turkey, it takes only 2-3 minutes today to provide this service thanks to the online access of Consulates through CONSULAR-NET to the database of those authorities.

MEMLEKETIM PORTAL is a web-based social networking site for Turkish nationals abroad and those of Turkish and Turkic background around the world. The portal aims to build stronger communication ties within the Turkish diaspora and enhance their connection with and interest in Turkey. It includes a web-based communication network, online shopping, e-education, youth programs, and a Turkish FM online radio channel disseminating the most up-to-date information about cultural, economic and political life in Turkey. Since being launched in early 2015, the number of members has reached 4,733 in total. There are occasional convergences of information to be provided through CONSULAR-NET and MEMLEKETIM PORTAL since the target audience is Turkish nationals and Turkish speaking communities around the world. However, the function of the former is more one of official communication between citizens and the state, while the latter is less formal in tone and prioritizes networking building within the target audience.

DOC-ARCHIVE is a web-based document management and archive application. It was designed in 2001 to process documentation and unclassified data transmission between the headquarters and diplomatic missions. The functioning of this application follows the logic of hierarchical authority and a formal communication line. This application oversees the process of drafting documents, sending them for endorsement, endorsing those documents via an e-signature application by an authorized superior, sending the endorsed documents to the designated department or organization, and finally saving the document in the electronic archive. DOC-ARCHIVE constitutes the backbone of the communication and information processing system of the Ministry. Approximately 12 million official documents have been processed and archived electronically since 2001. The application was revised and further developed in 2008 and 2013 to take advantage of technological advances to improve organizational efficiency in information processing and transmission. This application has been replicated for the use of public organizations such as the Secretariat General of the Presidency, the Undersecretariat for Defence Industries, and the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Directorate General for Civil Aviation, and the Secretariat General of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Parliament). These organizations use similar document management systems to process information and exchange documents online with the Ministry.

DIPLOMATIC PORTAL is a web-based document management and transmission application launched in July 2013. This application is designed to electronically process formal communication between the Ministry and foreign diplomatic missions in Turkey.[43] It has two properties: a web page, which provides up-to-date information about the Turkish foreign policy, diplomatic procedures and ceremonial practices, and an innovative communication channel, which allows the drafting and transmission of official papers online between foreign diplomatic missions and the Ministry. This application also incorporates an electronic archive, which offers data storage and allows electronic searches. In April 2015, the new face of DIPLOMATIC PORTAL was introduced. It features an interactive platform where information on cultural activities is exchanged regularly between the Ministry and foreign diplomatic missions. The Ministry takes a proactive role by broadcasting news or announcements about its activities, which may be of interest to the diplomatic community in Turkey.

E-VISA is a web-based visa application system launched in April 2013. It provides a simple and straightforward visa application process and service for citizens of approximately 100 countries. This application has so far received encouraging feedback from visa applicants and the business community in Turkey. The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and the Turkey Information

Technology Foundation's technology award for "e-services from public organizations to citizens" went to the Ministry for its E-VISA application in 2013.

In addition, the Ministry was one of the earliest public organizations to launch an official Internet website in the 1990s. In the following years, diplomatic missions abroad launched individual websites in English and other languages. The websites have been standardized and interconnected to provide a unified frame for disseminating information on Turkish foreign policy since 2010. As part of the standardization process, departments at the headquarters and diplomatic missions abroad have been required to only use official email addresses provided by the Ministry.

E-ARCHIVE is another technological initiative that the Ministry has embarked upon. The diplomatic archive of the Turkish state from 1919-2008 is kept on the Ministry's premises. It includes more than 65 million documents in paper format. Those documents are poorly catalogued and kept in dusty files that are out of reach of the public. To bring those documents to light the Ministry launched the E-ARCHIVE project in January 2015.[44] More than 200 specialists are taking part in the project. A total of 25 million documents were scanned and electronically catalogued in 2015, and according to the Department of Archives, the number will increase to 65 million by the end of 2016. This project has been warmly welcomed in Turkey.[45]

Endnotes

1   The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The author thanks Dr. Manabrata Guha, Mr. Denis Cunningham, and Mr. Haldun Koç for their thorough review of the earlier drafts of this article.

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8   Ibid.

9   Ibid.

10   Mentioned in Fountain (2004): Hirokazu Okumura develops the technology enactment framework by adding three groups of actors who take part in the enactment process. He argues that (i) vendors and consultants, (ii) key decision makers of technology systems within the organization, and (iii) policy makers, managers and staff members play roles with varying degree of influence in the technology enactment processes.

11   Geerth Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations,* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2001; Andrew M. Pettigrew, "On Studying Organizational Cultures", *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 24. No. 4 (December 1974), pp.57-581.

12   Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3rd ed., San Francisco, John Wiley & Sons, 2004.

13   Priority is given to basic assumptions that are related to the most fundamental elements of organizational culture, namely its goals and missions, means to be employed to

reach those goals and missions, and organizational identity. Beliefs, values and artefacts are referred to as they contribute to elaborations on the basic assumptions of the organizational culture of the Ministry.

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16   Gurpinar, *Ottoman Imperial Diplomacy: A Political, Social and Cultural History,* 2013.

17   Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 1985; Heper, "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics", 2000; Mardin "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?", 1973.

18   Heper "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics", 2000.

19   Carter V. Findley, "The Legacy of Tradition to Reform: Origin of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1970), pp. 334-357.

20   While assuming that the Ministry is formed and operates in accordance with the ideal model of Weberian bureaucracy, it is acknowledged that this simplification falls short of illustrating administrative particularities emanating from the political culture of the Turkish bureaucracy. However, this simplification will be kept to provide an analytically understandable organizational structure in discussions.

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