

## CELEBRITY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOLS

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### Özet

Bir ülkeden diğerine resmi ziyaretler, yerleşik temsilcilikler ya da üst düzey devlet görevlilerinin görüşmeleri gibi daha kapalı, önceden çizilmiş üslupların ve iletişim yollarının titizlikle takip edildiği geleneksel diplomasiye karşılıklı iletişime, etkileşime ve ortak değer üretimine dayalı daha açık, esnek ve ulaşılabilir kamu diplomasisine evriminde, kitle iletişim teknolojilerinin rolü kaçınılmazdır. Özellikle dijital medya, diplomasiye sadece resmi aktörlerinin çevrimiçi temsilini ve daha kolay temasını mümkün kılmakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda toplumların her kesim ve düzeyinden yurttaşla etkileşim imkanı tanımıştır. Kendiliğinden bir kültürel diplomasi başarı hikayesine dönüşen Türk dizilerinin artık dünyaca tanınan oyuncularını da, sosyal medyada dünyanın dört bir yanından takipçileriyle etkileşim halindedir. Bu olgunun, Türkiye'nin yabancı kamuoyu ile temasında dijital diplomasi aracı olarak nasıl bir potansiyel taşıdığını anlamak için yabancı ülkelerde yayına giren "Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?" dizisinin başrol oyuncusu Beren Saat'ın Instagram hesabı incelenmiştir. Bu içerik analizi, uluslararası ölçekte tanınan dizi yüzlerinin dijital hesaplarının global bir mikro kamusal alan niteliği taşıdığını ve daha etkili dijital diplomasi iletişim stratejisi için verimli bir kaynak oluşturduğunu göstermiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Dijital diplomasi, kamusal alan, uluslararası şöhret, kamu diplomasisi, stratejik iletişim, Türk TV dizileri

### Abstract

The evolution of traditional diplomacy carried out during the formal visits or summits of permanent representative agencies or high level protocols in a relatively closed, neatly planned, and procedural environments to a more open, flexible, and accessible way of a public diplomacy, which is based on mutual communication, interaction, and creation of a common value would not have been possible without the transformation of communication technologies. Digital media, especially, has not only enabled the online representation of official actors but offered every citizen and non-state actors the opportunity to interact. Similarly, Turkish TV celebrities, the faces of the global phenomenon which became an example of cultural diplomacy by itself, have also had the chance to be in touch with their global fans. This paper aims to understand whether their social media accounts have the potential to function as a tool of Turkish digital diplomacy. To do this, the Instagram account of the famous actress, Beren Saat, has been analysed. The content analysis depicts that celebrity social media accounts have the characteristic of a global public sphere in a micro level and they have the potential to contribute to digital diplomacy and they can be used as a strategic communication channel.

**Keywords:** Digital diplomacy, public sphere, global celebrity, public diplomacy, strategic communication, Turkish soap operas.

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## Introduction

After a meeting in Paris in 2015, the writer of this article headed on the subway and was surprised by the huge billboards announcing the launch of a very famous Turkish series- “Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne?- What’s Fatmagul’s Fault?- with main actors on top of the movie posters. This was one of the rare moments where a Turkish TV production was made available to a French audience. After a while, when he was in a pharmacy which is located in a very chic neighborhood, the saleswoman realized his foreign accent and asked where he was from. When she learned that he was from the country where her favorite television series was produced, she started to say every single expression in Turkish that she learned from this series. Only soon after, when an immigrant cashier girl in a local supermarket shared her admiration towards Turkish series with a “thank you” in Turkish, he realized that the rest of that ordinary announcement on a subway wall was beyond his imagination. Parisians from different sections of the city were presenting their sympathy though political debates in familiar circles might not be necessarily positive about his country.

This personal anecdote shows why Turkish cultural products deserve a deeper focus in developing a perspective on public diplomacy. It is not only necessary to comprehend the increasing sphere of influence of Turkish celebrities worldwide and their affiliations but it is also a chance to gain an insight about the role of the non-state actors in connecting to foreign publics thanks to the transformative power of technology (Signitzer, 1992). This article aims to develop an understanding of the unintended role of Turkish celebrities in enhancing the country’s image and its potential to be used as a public diplomacy tool. To do this, first of all, the main definitions of the public diplomacy will be reviewed. After that, the parallel evolution of public sphere and public diplomacy under the favor of digital technologies will be discussed. Especially, the increasing ability of non-state actors in developing cultural ties with their foreign fanbases will be elaborated. Finally, the interactive digital presence of Turkish celebrities will be put on the table with the case of Beren Saat, the main role of the afore-mentioned series. Although there are many Turkish series broadcast worldwide with actors who become globally famous, as the leading actor of “What’s Fatmagul’s Fault”, Beren Saat deserves a specific attention. Having 4,1 million followers and being in interaction with fan pages from Germany, Ecuador, Czech Republic, Spain, Chile, Iran, Russia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Brazil, Ukraine, etc. on Instagram, she presents a remarkable global digital presence. Taken into consideration the rating records of Fatmagul- “attracting million viewers per episode in Spain despite being on a minor channel”\*, “holding the first place with an exportation in 149 territories”\*\* and “addressing a woman’s place in society who defeats

every hardship as she fights for”\*\*\*- it became a global phenomenon where gender equality issues in Turkey can be followed and therefore Beren Saat’s personality becomes more of an issue.

## Research Design

Beren Saat is an internationally known non-state figure who represents her country’s women especially because of her role in “Fatmagul”. Therefore, the content of her Instagram account deserves to be studied as a case, since a case study is “describing and analyzing an individual matter or case...with the purpose to identify variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation”(Mesec, 1998). Moreover, it coincides with the definition of Simons (2009) which emphasizes the examination of particularities and multidimensionality of any structure in “real life”. Furthermore, a case should be considered with its time, place, and the events preceding and following it since it is an ongoing process (Sagadin 1991). As any social media account, Beren Saat’s Instagram page offers a variety of content from her real life: Videos, photographs, written messages, hashtags, emojis and comments. While number of comments, likes, regions, fan profiles provide a certain quantitative data, the texts are convenient for interpretation. A content analysis which is not concerned with meanings (Berelson, 1952) can be elaborated with the interpretation of what is being posted in which context, with a qualitative perspective (Krippendorff, 2004). The way a Turkish actress interacts with her global audience online and the reactions she receives in different contexts could offer a chance to understand if this medium and its celebrity users have the potential to be used as a digital diplomacy tool. With this object in mind, a content analysis will be done. Since the communication taking place on Beren Saat’s Instagram page cannot be repeated, it requires a second look of an independent expert opinion, indeed a comparison is necessary to strengthen the reliability of the research (Mesec, 1998). In the light of these compared findings, the opportunities of using celebrity social media accounts as a digital diplomacy tool will be discussed.

## Public Diplomacy: From Diplomats to Citizens

Public diplomacy is a tool of communication among states which has brought a different

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\*Marshall, Alex (2018), “Can Netflix Take Turkey’s TV Dramas to the World?” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/27/arts/television/turkish-tv-netflix-the-protector.html>, Erişim Tarihi: 25.09.2019

\*\*Pensario. (2018), “Turkey: A Booming Industry Eyeing for its Future”, <https://www.prensario.tv/novedades/1962-turkey-a-booming-industry-eyeing-for-its-future>, Erişim Tarihi: 25.09.2019

\*\*\*Bhutto, Fatima (2019), “How Turkish TV is Taking Over the World”, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/sep/13/turkish-tv-magnificent-century-dizi-taking-over-world>, Erişim Tarihi: 25.09.2019

perspective to develop relationships between them especially after the cold war. It has been seen as the final step of a long international relations history, which had begun with ad hoc visits of diplomats in the ancient Greek (Tuncer, 1995), and which then turned into permanent representations of nation states in the host country to preserve the “balance of power in Europe” after the Westphalia Treaty (Sen, 1976). Until the end of the First World War, this way of diplomacy reigned the scene of international relations (Acar, 2006). To be more precise, this long tradition represented a dialogue between the elites of state parties such as presidents, diplomats, ministers of foreign affairs, and related bureaucrats. In other words, other actors such as NGO’s, academics, artists or foundations were excluded in this process of making the country heard by the people of another country. However, the transformation of mass media allowed for establishing relatively independent relationships with them. To be specific, propaganda techniques during the cold war served to disseminate ideologies of two different polars, in this way, different channels of communications entered the scene as diplomacy tools. Rather than declaring the position of the state on any issue in official level, this allowed them to come out with expressing their interests through culture, art, science, sports, etc. In other words, diplomacy became multi-dimensional, including multiple actors and channels who play an important role in determining the character of the relationship among states (Yağmurlu, 2007). According to Nye (2013), the cold war era is unthinkable without the use of culture as “soft power”. He separates culture from military or economic tools in any state’s attempt to increase the sphere of influence in distant regions. In other words, rather than forcing other nations to support their legitimacy, they use culture as a mean of attraction (Yörük&Vatikiotis, 2013). In this way, states are able to gain the hearts of foreign populations, and their consent to follow certain politics (Nye, 2005; Armstrong, 2009). Therefore, the use of culture in public diplomacy seeks to create a desire in people to be like them, an envy to act like them, a motivation to attribute similar values in their ordinary lives (Nye, 2004). Of course, this strategy also applies to the cooperation between NGO’s, common projects of universities, opinion leaders who collaborate with foreign institutions to touch upon a social issue, etc. This way of connecting to foreign publics on a cultural basis has largely been facilitated by technology (Cull, 2009). Thus, the shift from traditional to public diplomacy can also be described as a shift from rigid, tough and close communication to a more open, diverse and softer one.

## **2. The Transformative Role of Technology**

The transformation of diplomacy cannot be considered without the state of the art, especially after the spread of Web 2.0. Digital technologies created an environment where each citizen has access to global social networks. New channels of media such as blogs, vlogs, social media, and other online forums thrilled techno-determinists (Papacharissi, 2002; Oates, 2008; Dahlberg, 1998; Bennet& Segerberg, 2012; Benkler, 2006), and they welcomed digital media by emphasi-

zing its ability to a more open, interactive, simultaneous, global, fast and accessible communication. This many-to-many communication, which eliminates filters such as editors, producers or agencies, offered a new generation public sphere function, a concept which had been inherited by Greek agoras or Enlightenment Age cafes by Habermas (1989) and encouraged scholars to improve the role of the conventional media for better democracies. Indeed, the interconnection of diverse actors online has a huge potential for the realization of public sphere (Castells, 2008); although pessimist scholars draw attention to the danger of over-fragmentation (Sunstein, 2001), manipulation of search-engine algorithms in relation with states and corporations (Schaefer, 2015), and lack of a real impact of political expressions (Papacharissi, 2002). From the point of public diplomacy, Cull pointed out the inevitable consequences of “online virtual environments which allow geographically remote users to interact” (2007, 53) in his examination of its future. Indeed, online participation of global citizens influenced the way public diplomacy has been approached. Referring to the metaphor of Nye who describes soft power as “a dance that requires partners” (2011, 84); digital media allows citizens to dance freely in any political context. It is a sphere of plural views where international relations are not limited to official actions of governments but their citizens. Therefore, modern public diplomacy which is based on de-centralized communicative actions among various interdependent actors (Signitzer, 2008) would not be as applicable as it is today without all these technological advancements. In fact, this era is named as digital diplomacy which corresponds to the inevitable role of the technology in new way of diplomacy (Köse, 2017). To be more specific, it is beyond the official online announcements, or video captures of diplomatic summits but it is the natural and equal communication on social media, the circulation of ideas, values and policies and their interpretations by the opinion leaders, citizens and foreign publics.. Furthermore, this produces and reproduces a more down-to-earth, more friendly, more open, more equal language on the contrary of official declarations. In fact, this cannot be fully comprehended without Marshall McLuhan’s famous phrase that “the medium is the message” (1964), a techno-determinist statement which foresaw the transformative power of electronic media in global social actions. As citizens of a “global village” (McLuhan, 1964) formed by this new technology, more and more people get into touch with each other, sharing their ideas about their their countries’ foreign policies, expressing their opinions about other nations’ actions, forming public opinion in favour or against them. They co-act online independent from hierarchical, formal and ceremonious relationships. In other words, it is a more transparent, interactive, pluralist, individual and even emotional way of making diplomacy (Straus vd. 2015). In brief, this new era is a scene where governance steals the role of government, and co-action replaces one way action, it is where the state acts more and more like a single citizen, adding some sense of humour to its twitter messages, while individuals act more and more like a state, organizing with like-minded people all around the world to promote a certain opinion.

### 3. Digital Diplomacy and New Actors

Even before the digital facilities, the sphere of public diplomacy had enlarged by the entrance of actors such as NGO's, academics, news agencies, opinion leaders, global companies, globally known movie stars or international broadcasting (Seib& Çevik, 2015; Cull 2009). According to Signitzer (1992), they can either be charged by the state itself, to promote their ideologies and/or legitimize their policies or they can mobilize independently. While the use of internationally acknowledged jazz musicians as cultural diplomats to fight against communist ideology by the United States of America illustrates the direct and full state involvement (Von Eschen, 2009), UN's celebrity ambassadors like Danny Kaye, Audrey Hepburn or Angelina Jolie exemplify the promotion of an international organization's agenda (Wheeler, 2011). On the other hand, Bridgitte Bardot's fight for animal rights is an entire individual action without any official involvement of France. Although "celebritization of diplomacy" (Köse, 2017) has been criticized in terms of elitism, ethnocentrism and America-centric political marketing (Wheeler, 2011), it is credited as an attention-getting public relations technique which serves to the awareness of any diplomatic cause. (Kellner, 2010). Whether it is state-involved or not, culture is the basis of this approach. To illustrate, various musicians have been collaborating as an "unofficial individual voluntary initiative" (Demir, 2017) to strengthen the commercial and touristic ties between Israel and Turkey, two countries of which politics might become harsh and tense. Here, music is used as a diplomatic tool and the initiatives of non-state actors contribute to empathise with the other nation. These efforts address the feelings of the citizens of the counterpart, although the visible actions of political actors might become severe.

Before social media, all these works to use culture as a diplomatic means required a conventional media channel to be seen, to be heard, to create the empathy and sympathy that is aimed. This attempt to develop a dialogue through artists, projects, initiatives, performances, cultural products; all of them needed a gatekeeper to be passed. For example, the state determines what kind of an agenda to promote and which artist to put forward, decision-makers from pressure groups, foundations, editors, PR agencies, communication departments, etc. were at issue. However, after the rise of social media, each influencer has gained direct access to communication on any global or local matter with their diverse followers. Most importantly, they acquired the ability to create their own content and to share it with limitless numbers of online peers. Therefore, it is beyond single-acting formal diplomatic performances which take place in the rooms of ambassadors or in front of the cameras (Seib, 2012), it is even beyond two-way mutual efforts of non-state partners (Zaharna, 2010) but it is a matter of participation of any citizen who uses social media to promote his/her position about any political issue. In other words, the target audience of previous public diplomacy activities became the addresser of diplomatic messages by means of social

media (Zhong&Lu, 2013). Thus, the transition from closed governmental propaganda to culture-focused open-public activities has become the shift to a diplomacy “done by everyone, everywhere and anytime” (Yücel, 2016). From a different viewpoint, celebrities have become their own agencies via their social media profiles. Instead of being tasked with promoting the agenda of certain governments, entities or civil campaigns, they obtained the chance to call attention to any subject they wish, as any other social media user. Of course, their sphere of influence, which means the number of followers in this context, is larger and more diverse. Thus, social media has become the new scene of celebrity diplomacy.

#### **4. The Global Recognition of Turkish Actors**

Turkey’s public diplomacy is compatible with all trends mentioned above, from educational entities like Yunus Emre Institute to larger international broadcasting hinterland of the state television, or internationally acclaimed exhibitions organized in foreign countries; a more open, non-traditional and culture-focused actions are taken (Yağmurlu, 2007). In addition to offline organizations and events, more and more state actors have been using social media in multiple languages individually and/or at institutional level. Separately from more flexible and up to date formal governmental diplomacy, Turkey has also had attention-grabbing individual success stories from award-winning artists at Cannes Film Festival, to the Nobel Prize, or Eurovision Song Contest to achievements of sports clubs. All of these have been contributing to the national brand value of the country, which is closely associated with public diplomacy as a tool of strategic marketing (Szondi, 2008; Potter, 2009; Cull, 2009). Among many others, Turkish television series have become an international phenomenon for a decade, broadcast in 75 countries in 4 different continents, with an estimated revenue of 543 million dollars for 2019 (Özalpman, 2017). Its success obtained considerable coverage on global media entities such as BBC, New York Times, The Independent, The Guardian, Foreign Policy and academics turned their attention to the fact that there is a growing sympathy towards Turkish culture even in countries with conflicts in historical background (Sancak, 2016). Furthermore, it increased the number of tourists who want to see the places where all the famous scenes were taken (Yörük& Vatikiotis, 2013). In addition to increasing touristic visits, these series aroused interest in Turkish culture as well, from the trend of giving Turkish names to newborn babies in Balkan countries to the rise of the number of in Turkish learning students (Demir, 2012; Arbatlı&Kurar, 2015). therefore, they function as an effective cultural diplomacy tool which nourishes from popular culture by disseminating national image (Çevik, 2014). Moreover, they are capable of creating emotional ties between the foreign audience and the country, for Arab audience for example, they symbolize an “accessible modernity”(Kraidy&Al-Ghazzi, 2013) holding similar traditional values to theirs. Despite the current political conflicts and tense memories from the past, they succeeded to win the hearts of Pan-A-

rab public (Kaynak, 2015). Although some scholars hesitate to label this success as an example of Turkey's soft power (Kraidy&Al-Ghazzi, 2013; Yörük&Vatikiotis, 2013; Özalpman, 2017), some underline its potential to turn its cultural influence into a soft power tool (Sancak, 2016; Çevik, 2014). However, most of them agree that they sparked a cultural attraction and attachment with very positive contributions to its image (Kaynak, 2015; Salem, 2011; Purtaş, 2013).

## 5. Instagram of “Fatmagul”

These series have a secondary channel in terms of developing cultural and emotional ties with the audience. In addition to international broadcasting of them, the stars of these productions meet the viewers on their social media accounts, there are millions of followers from different continents interacting with other fans or even with the celebrity sometimes. In other words, Turkish celebrities do not only enter to the homes of foreign public via television but also they are present on their smartphones, pads, computers. There are fan-pages or unofficial accounts based on the role of the celebrity, who also share posts about the celebrity's private life, repost his/her media coverage, create videos or albums in his/her name, chat on special forums and multiply the star-effect of the artist. Thus, the effects of the rise of the Turkish series in other regions which coincided the rise of the social network sites can be examined by having a look at their social media profiles. Indeed, it functions as a laboratory to detect the outcomes of this new type of star-fan relationship and the particular interactions which indicate the way the foreign followers attach to Turkish culture in addition to their personal admirations toward the artist.

One of them is Instagram, where users post their photos with their followers with hashtags which connect countless users into each other among any chosen subject even if they are not friends. It is one of the most actively used social network sites of celebrities, interacting with millions of followers and sharing their ideas, opinions, actions about any personal, social, even political issue. While the numbers of posts, reposts, followers, comments, languages in interaction provide a vast source for any quantitative research; the content of photos and videos, the way they are presented, the hashtags, titles, phrases and emoticons used in the post and in its comments, the temporal and spatial context offer substantial data for qualitative analysis. For example, Beren Saat's Instagram account gives a chance to understand the scope and quality of the interaction of a Turkish TV celebrity and his/her international audience. Saat, the main role of Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?- What's the Fault of Fatmagul- which has been broadcast in 149 countries and one of the most famous actresses in Turkey, has 3,8 million followers. She only follows 278 accounts including her fan pages from Brazil, Puerto Rico, Russia, Argentine, France, Spain and Italy. She has 33 posts in 2019 including agendas, hashtags and expressions about global issues and/or sensitivities.



One of them is her post about International Pride Day on 17 May 2019. It is a photo with rainbow flags with a message of “love is a terrible thing to hate” on it and hashtags of “united-nationshumanrights, standup4humanrights” below it. This post has taken 46.691 likes, with 20+ replies from the artist to her foreign fans and there are 2498 comments of fans from Middle- East, Kosovo, Pakistan, Ekvador, Spain, Perou, Lebanon, Iran, India, Germany, Dominique, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Paraguay, USA, Russia, Greece, Australia, Switzerland, Egypt and Algeria. Most of them present their support and gratitude, especially from regions relatively sensitive to the issue, however, there are those who declare that they are going to stop following her and criticize her from a religious point of view. The supporters and from-then-on haters start to discuss among themselves and use her post as a public sphere, they exchange their ideas about this issue which becomes more and more controversial in the global political agenda.

A second post which also touches on a global event is her video about the International Dance Day on 30 April 2019, watched 1.729.680 times and has taken 2019 comments from Saudi Arabia, Greece, Iran, Egypt, Albania, Iraq, Spain, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Argentina, Ukraine, France, Russia, Lebanon, USA, Mexica, Jordan, Dominique, Ecuador, Denmark, Chile, Germany, Australia, Pakistan, Brazil, Bahrain among others. On this video, a woman-the artist-dances lonely and freely on a balcony with a beautiful view behind. It shows a woman’s freedom to move, to dance, to act freely and with a unique artistic expression in Turkey. There are comments from foreign followers who celebrate this special day, some of them put Turkish flag close to their country’s flag. Some of them praise the beauty of the view and ask her in which part of Turkey it had been taken, some of them underlining the woman rights. One follower from Columbia, who wrote in Turkish, shares with her that he/she started to read the Turkish novel from which Fatmagul was adapted. Remembering the plot of the novel and its TV adaptation which is about a young girl who was violated by men and learns how to stand alone in spite of patriarchal culture, this post coincides with her character, inspiring women to express themselves freely.

“OMG! I’m Mexican and I really can’t believe that my favorite Turkish actress knows Frida Kahlo, she is a part of our contemporary story, a true artist, I hope that someday you will come to Mexico” comments one of her Mexican fans after a photo of Frida Kahlo that Beren Saat shares on 21 April 2019. Below the iconic pose of the famous artist, she uses a citation of her, “let’s try to convert pain into spring”, and uses a hashtag of “my true ancestors”. With 78.233 likes and 866 comments from countries such as Chile, Iran, Tunisia, India, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, USA, Brazil, Bulgaria, Spain, Ecuador, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Australia; but especially from Mexico, it functions as a global micro public sphere as well. Mexican fans put flags of the two countries, with expressions of love, invitations to their countries,

and chat with other Turkish fans. For example, the citation used above is replied by a Turkish fan, telling that Frida is well-known in Turkey and an exhibition which took place in Istanbul was an unforgettable one. The Mexican seems very interested and requests further information about it. An Iranian woman comments that both Frida and Beren are idols for her as strong women. On the other hand, a woman from France comments that she is surprised by Beren's admiration toward Frida and she is happy to hear that. Similarly, lots of messages in Spanish say that the recognition of Frida in Turkey contents them. Moreover, another Mexican fan declares that Frida is not a good model for feminism and invite others to investigate further in order to understand feminism better. The hashtag she uses also becomes praises which indicates a sense of cosmopolitanism which glorifies internationally common codes, figures, icons and current of thoughts.

## Conclusion

These are examples taken from the most frequently used social media account of a globally famous Turkish TV celebrity showing that what they post matter to the international audience. First of all, they display that followers from different parts of the world do not hesitate respond enthusiastically to every post of the artist. They are not only keen on expressing their admiration toward the artist but they also are very responsive to social, political and cultural issues. Moreover, these reactions are not limited to the comments posed directly to the artist. More importantly, the comment section becomes immediately a micro public sphere where they exchange ideas, interact with others, approve or disapprove previous comments. They even advise each other links and sources to learn more about their culture or about the position they take about the social issue discussed. There are also expressions of foreign followers showing that they develop a sense of Turkey through the representation of the artist on the posts. Some of them are surprised by the level of modernity represented in the message, some of them appreciate the way women live in Turkey, some of them share their sympathy for the cultural openness and diversity. Indeed, each of these three examples represent the way certain, if not all, Turkish people look at things, interpret social issues. What becomes visible on her Instagram profile becomes a part of the social reality of Turkey. Thus, they do not only connect to the artist but at the same time, they construct a meaning about Turkey. While the first example shows that gender issues are speakable in Turkey, the second is a representation of modernity on a body of a dancing woman. The final one exemplifies the common inspirational icons of modern art connecting distant citizens of a global village.

As a matter of fact, social media should be used more efficiently for a more effective public diplomacy (Manor, 2017). Indeed, celebrity accounts have the potential to be used as a public diplomacy channel with foreign fanbases. Since public diplomacy is a way of building mutual relationships especially with the help of digital technologies (Zhong&Lu, 2013), this medium of

non-state actors could be regarded as an alternative channel which supports an integrative public relations strategy of any country. This is consistent with the idea that governments should largely benefit from digital facilities of to improve their public diplomacy (Storie, 2015). In other words, public diplomacy should be compatible with the complex structure of online communications (Pamment, 2013) and celebrity accounts appear as strategic platforms to enhance their efficiency online. If one of the main roles of public diplomacy personnel is building a strategic communication with people and that they “should have one foot in the organization and one outside” (Signitzer& Wamser, 2006, 192) as any other public relations specialist, then these platforms could be a right place to be. First of all, one can gather valuable information about the way his/her country is perceived in terms of any social, political or cultural issue. This would provide an insight about the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats about the country image. Moreover, interacting with fans either as an institutional account or an independent agent, could contribute to the discourse which has been constructed on other communicative levels and to diffuse the messages and arguments from the country’s perspective. That is to say that micro communicative actions as suggested here would support the stories that countries’ have been narrating in different channels for a certain period. It might prevent the misunderstandings or incoherencies and strengthen the arguments which constitute the formal stories of the country. As Fitzpatrick (2007) points out, “relationship management” is essential in public diplomacy and taking online diplomatic action in this sense on celebrity accounts offers a chance to develop effective relationships with foreign publics.

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