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Introduction: The European refugee crisis: Organisational responses and communication strategies
James Pamment, Alina Dolea & Diana Ingenhoff

In 2015, Europe faced the unprecedented challenge of hundreds of thousands of refugees seeking safety after being forced to leave their homes because of war and/or persecution. This resulted in a political crisis for the European Union and its members, with conflicts arising within and between countries over their willingness and capabilities for humanitarian assistance. The communications aimed at these refugees, migrant groups and other European countries reflected those political conflicts, typically asserting negative images, abrupt policy changes or mixed messages in a bid to make countries less attractive as safe-havens for migrants in need. Yet, this contradicts the burgeoning debates into public diplomacy, nation brands and place brands, which over the past 20 years have shaped how territories seek to manage their overseas image in order to attract potential tourists, investors, businesses and students.

This special issue of the *Journal of Communication Management* explores the contradictions emerging from an international actor's urge to attract and the urge to repulse in conjunction with the refugee crisis. This collection of seven articles examine the relationship between communication management, public diplomacy and nation brands in the context of the refugee crisis. How do these

different parts of a country's image and messaging fit together? What institutional and organizational factors shaped these activities? In what ways did different actors attempt to use communication strategies and tactics to manage the situation via the media, public opinion, political systems, etc? In what ways do these activities strengthen or tarnish a place's reputation?

Public Diplomacy as Communication Management
The term *public diplomacy* as we know it today was used for the first time in 1965 by Edmund Gullion with reference to the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. According to Cull (2008), there is a general agreement within the academic area of public diplomacy that Gullion, the dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a former diplomat, was first to coin the term in its modern usage at the opening of an Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy. In Gullion's definition, "public diplomacy . . . deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications" (Cull, 2008, p. 19).

While most definitions of public diplomacy have been about promoting positive aspects of a country to foreign publics, Melissen (2005), Fitzpatrick (2010), Pamment (2013) and others have argued that the field has moved away from overtly promotional methods and towards *engaging* with foreign audiences, under the concept of *new public diplomacy*. Melissen argues that the new public diplomacy is much more than a mere technique, and is rather part of "the fabric of mainstream diplomatic activity" and "will be an increasingly standard component of overall diplomatic practice and is more than a form of propaganda conducted by diplomats" (p. 11). It is no longer a one way communication to promote positive aspects of a country to foreign publics, but a two-way communication process drawing upon public relations, strategic communications and branding techniques in support of foreign policy agendas.

It is in this context that scholars have shifted their focus towards conceptual development and theory building in public diplomacy. The work of Gregory (2008) and Gilboa (2008), for example, have explored the need for multidisciplinary approaches to public diplomacy. Scholars from fields as diverse as political communication (e.g. Entman, 2008), public relations and communication management (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Wang, 2008; Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015) and place branding (Van Ham 2008) have started to show interest in public diplomacy, exploring the potential of different theoretical approaches. In response to overtly functionalist and normative research, there has been an emergence of critical thinking in public diplomacy from global media studies perspectives (Hayden, 2012; Pamment, 2013, 2016; Comor & Bean, 2013), public relations (L'Etang, 2009; Dolea, 2015; Ingenhoff & Buhmann, 2017) and nation branding (Kaneva, 2011; Aronczyk, 2008; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011). Taken together, these developing interdisciplinary discussions suggest that the field of public diplomacy is ripe for analysis from the perspective of communications management.

Overview of the Special Issue
This special issue is grouped into three main themes that express significant overlaps between the communication management and public diplomacy fields. The first area is in the management of

public diplomacy activities from the perspective of governments, their objectives, and the teams who conduct public diplomacy. In the first article, *The response of Swedish and Norwegian public diplomacy & nation branding actors to the refugee crisis*, James Pamment, Alexandra Olofsson and Rachel Hjorth-Jenssen compare the communication management of the Norwegian and Swedish governments during the 2015-16 refugee crisis. Placing these negative campaigns in the context of long-term public diplomacy and nation branding strategies aimed at attracting global capital, the article explores the similarities and contradictions between new public diplomacy approaches aimed at engagement, and those designed to inform on the closing of the countries' borders.

Following a similar approach, Falk Hartig's article, *Deterrence by public diplomacy: the negative dimension of international political communication*, explores public diplomacy techniques that seek to make countries less attractive to select target groups, in this case potential refugees. Using examples from Germany and Australia, the analysis compares positive and negative public diplomacy and branding initiatives. Together, these two articles explore the tensions and contradictions between public diplomacy, propaganda and the national interest, including how values and credibility built up over several years of public diplomacy and nation branding activities can be caught in sudden policy shifts that reorient the same communications apparatus to alternative ends.

The second main theme of this special issue follows on from the question of credibility raised in Hartig's work. In *Exploring citizens' judgments about the legitimacy of public policies on refugees: In search of clues for governments' communication strategies*, Maria Jose Canel, Evandro Oliviera and Vilma Luoma-aho develop a theoretical framework for assessing public sector legitimacy as an intangible asset for use in public diplomacy initiatives. By comparing the views of young adults in Finland and Spain regarding the legitimacy of governmental and EU policy toward Syrian refugees, the authors make recommendations about how to deploy legitimacy as a support for strengthening engagement between governments and publics.

For the fourth article, *Corporate social responsibility accounting for arising issues*, Florian Weber and Ulf Larsson Olaison analyse German and Swedish corporate reporting of their CSR during the migration crisis. In doing so, the article develops a comparative approach to CSR, by identifying a typology of indifferent, cynical, altruistic and realist responses. The results are discussed in relation to corporate diplomacy and government-led public diplomacy, suggesting greater potential for coordinated collaboration between public and private sectors when approaching major societal challenges. Together, these two articles develop a normative, ethical dimension to communication management and public diplomacy approaches, and suggest fruitful avenues for further research in these areas.

The third theme of this special issue builds upon an area of research known as mediated public diplomacy, which focuses specifically on how public diplomacy messaging becomes integrated into media content. In the fifth article, *Between sealed borders and welcome culture: Analyzing mediated public diplomacy during the European migrant crisis*, Marc Jungblut compares the news frames promoted by Hungarian and German public diplomacy actors. It assesses how their messages and preferred frames are reproduced by two major transnational outlets, Al-Jazeera and CNN, via an analysis of government-produced information subsidies and their reproduction in news discourse. The article finds that although Hungarian actors packaged their informational subsidies in a desirable manner, the news outlets were likely to reject their framing. German framing was more likely to be reproduced, suggesting that these messages resonated better with the expectations of the news outlets.

In *A quest for soft power: Turkey and the Syrian refugee crisis*, Efe Sevin and Senem Cevik discuss the frames used in Turkey's public diplomacy used to promote its humanitarian response to the Syrian civil war. Positioning these approaches within the country's long-term image politics, the authors identify efforts to brand Turkey as a moral superpower deserving of greater international influence. However, limits to the communication approach – particularly in terms of a lack of interaction with audiences, frequent criticisms of the West, and a lack of measurements and evaluation – suggest that a positive impact outside of the domestic and regional spheres is unlikely to have been achieved.

In the final article, *#Migrantcrisis: "Tagging" the European Migration Crisis on Twitter*, Ioanna Ferra and Dennis Nguyen analyse over 4,200 tweets in order to examine the formation of transnational discourses of the migration crisis during the closing of the Balkan Route in February 2016. This data is used to explore the most influential actors conducting digital diplomacy on the issue, as well as the frames they used to try to shape perceptions. The study finds that the most central online actors were in fact those with strong offline networks such as news media agencies, and that the emphasis of the tweets was less on humanitarian concerns than on social and political issues. At the same time, links to racist and xenophobic hashtags was prevalent, suggesting that marginalised actors used the crisis, and digital diplomacy techniques, as an opportunity to mobilise support.

Together, these seven articles serve to demonstrate some of the many ways in which communication management and public diplomacy can be studied together in order to better understand advocacy and branding in relation to major crises. Rather than representing the final word on the topic, hopefully this special issue can demonstrate the areas of mutual interest and open the fields for greater interdisciplinary dialogue.

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