

# Journal of Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of a New Interdisciplinary Journal for an Emerging Academic Field

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Around the time when public diplomacy research began to take off, Bruce Gregory (2008) called our attention to the sunrise of public diplomacy as an emerging academic field. In the same year, Eytan Gilboa (2008) surveyed the potential of interdisciplinary research in this field in search of a public diplomacy theory. In a more systematic literature review, Sevin et al. (2019) found that public diplomacy has become multidisciplinary despite the lack of interdisciplinary engagement between political scientists and communication scholars.

As we enter the third decade in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, interest in public diplomacy continues to grow. A Scopus search of “public diplomacy” in title, abstract, and keywords shows that between 1965 and 2004, only 1.1 articles were published on average per year, increasing to 59.7 articles between 2005 and 2014, and then to 131.7 articles between 2015 and 2020 (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Public Diplomacy Articles in Different Time Periods

Period	1965–2004	2005–2014	2015–2020
Total Number of Articles	43	597	790
Average per year	1.1	59.7	131.7

Source: Author’s compilation

The same data suggests that the journals that publish most public diplomacy articles are in the United States or the United Kingdom. Only three other journals out of 11 published ten or more public diplomacy articles since 1965 and are Netherlands and Australia-based. Most of these journals are communication journals, followed by international relations journals.

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The only one that has “public diplomacy” in its title is Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (previously Place Branding), which is a strategy and management journal (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** The Journals that Published Ten or More Public Diplomacy Articles

Journal Title	Main Field	Country-of-Origin	Number of Articles
Place Branding and Public Diplomacy	Strategy and Management	United Kingdom	123
The Hague Journal of Diplomacy	Political Science and International Relations	Netherlands	88
Public Relations Review	Communication	United States	62
American Behavioral Scientist	General Social Sciences	United States	27
International Journal of Communication	Communication	United States	23
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science	Political Science and International Relations	United States	19
Diplomacy and Statecraft	Political Science and International Relations	United Kingdom	18
International Communication Gazette	Communication	Netherlands	14
Journal of International Communication	Communication	Australia	11
Global Media Journal	Communication	United States	10
Journal of Communication Management	Communication	United Kingdom	10

Source: Author’s compilation

It is common in social science fields to expect the best scholarship and theories to originate from the West. Until now, the scholarship in the non-West was limited to producing knowledge in the realm of empirical area studies, which Amitav Acharya (2014) expressed in his 2014 ISA Presidential Speech:

To many people outside the West, the history of IR seems like something of a replay of the world of the Sahibs and the Munshis at Fort William. To be sure, in teaching and research, there has been a great deal of interaction between Western and non-Western scholars and institutions. But it is the universities, scholars, and publishing outlets in the West that dominate and set the agenda. IR scholarship has tended to view the non-Western world as being of interest mainly to area specialists, and hence a place for 'cameras,' rather than of 'thinkers' (Shea, 1997), for fieldwork and theory-testing, rather than for discovery of new ideas and approaches.

Against this background, we are glad to introduce the Journal of Public Diplomacy (JPD), currently published by the Korean Association for Public Diplomacy (KAPD). To our knowledge, KAPD is the only academic society with a focus on public diplomacy. JPD aims to be part of the global conversation on public diplomacy, not only as followers but also

leading initiatives to help take the scholarship and practice of public diplomacy to the next levels. JPD, based in Korea, an underrepresented country in the production of knowledge on public diplomacy, will not be confined to Korean, Asian, or peripheral public diplomacy. As a global forum for interdisciplinary research and scholarship, JPD will deliver critical thinking at a critical time in the new and complicated century.

It is no coincidence that JPD originated in Korea. Korea was late to introduce public diplomacy as a foreign policy tool, despite having other related policies previously under different names. Public diplomacy became the third pillar of Korean diplomacy in 2010 (MOFAT, 2011). Korea enacted the Public Diplomacy Act in 2016 “to contribute to improving the Republic of Korea's image and prestige in the international community by establishing a foundation to strengthen public diplomacy and to enhance the efficiency thereof by providing for matters necessary for public diplomacy activities” (MOFA, 2016). The first Korean article with public diplomacy (*gonggong waegyo*) in the title, abstract, or keywords was published in 2006. Another followed in 2007, and five more in 2010, when Korea officially launched its public diplomacy policy (author’s own compilation based on Korea Citation Index; see also Ayhan, 2020).

Despite this short time, Korean public diplomacy evolved rapidly in the last decade. Many leading initiatives were born of this country that had previously remained in the public diplomacy periphery. Korea is probably the only country to have a Public Diplomacy Week dedicated to empowering citizens about what public diplomacy entails in practice through various events. It is likely the only country that allocated a budget to empower national universities to teach public diplomacy, publish public diplomacy textbooks, and organize events related to public diplomacy to strengthen its long-term public diplomacy infrastructure. Korea is probably one of the countries that most actively involve its citizens in public diplomacy programs designed and implemented by citizens and residents and sponsored by the Korean government.<sup>2)</sup>

As a new interdisciplinary academic journal, JPD will specialize in global research and practice in public diplomacy. JPD will serve as an intellectual bridge linking scholarship and public diplomacy practice, providing a venue for interdisciplinary research articles, policy articles, practitioner essays, forums, and book reviews, giving voice to diverse scholarship and practices from across the globe. In this way, the JPD will facilitate interactions and mutual understanding between academics and practitioners. While doing so, we will get most of our ideas and energy from our Editorial Board Members, our biggest strength. The list is almost like a Public Diplomacy All-Star team. We will also collaborate with other established organizations, such as the University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy and other public diplomacy-related journals, such as *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* and the *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, our partners rather than competitors in developing this academic field.

In this first issue of JPD, we publish articles from authors with diverse backgrounds in various fields of study based in different countries (Portugal, Sweden, and the United States).

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2) All three project examples here are managed by Korea Foundation.

Some are early in their careers, and others are senior scholars. We also have three book reviews for books written by well-established names in the field, who also serve on our board, and their books are reviewed by a top diplomat-turned-scholar, a practitioner, and a Ph.D. candidate.

We are looking forward to publishing high-quality academic manuscripts from our readers and experts on public diplomacy in future issues. We also anticipate proposals on special issues, forums, and book reviews. Stay tuned for excellent research and insights from JPD in upcoming issues.

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