



Assessment of the Practices and Challenges of Public Diplomacy Reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea

¹Takele Waktola

Corresponding author: **Takele Waktola**

Abstract

Over the last few years, public diplomacy has become a conduit of transformation in the international relations. As states are competing on every front, public diplomacy is helping them build and project their nation's soft power, viz. attractiveness and persuasiveness. In the same fashion, many countries have engaged in public diplomacy to promote their country's unique national identity. They are striving to leverage the unprecedented opportunities public diplomacy presents and address the challenges it poses to create, project and evaluate their country's national interest. Against this backdrop, this paper argues that the capacity of both states on bargaining of public diplomacy for future development. Public diplomacy has severely hampered the two states' branding endeavour. By employing the qualitative research approach this study has tried to address the problem stated to assess the public diplomacy that plays vital role in building the image and reputation. This study also identifies both internal and external challenges between the lingering contradictions between TPLF and EPLF, the absence of a clear agreement between EPP and OLF at moment. Furthermore, the finding of this research attested that the natures of Eritrean government that never allow the presence of free press and high censorship of media and restriction on human rights are hindering the efficiency of public diplomacy to practice in full range in Eritrea. Considering these challenges and predicating on the literature available on the role of public diplomacy in citizen-to-citizen diplomacy. If not transformed to be more open and dialogue-driven, it is ill-suited to the proper articulation and projection of both.

Key words: Citizen Diplomacy, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Propaganda, Public Diplomacy, Soft Power.

¹**Takele Waktola**, takewaktola52@gmail.com: Lecturer at Oromia State University, School of Leadership and Policy Studies

Introduction

The definition of public diplomacy has been broadened according to major developments in international relations and communications. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) argued that Public Relations (PR) and public diplomacy are very similar because they seek similar objectives and employ similar tools. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) defined public diplomacy as “the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government’s foreign policy decisions” 1992, pp.138. This innovative definition is important because it recognizes new actors and abolishes the distinction between public diplomacy and PR. It redefines the landscape of international relations by adding non-state actors and reflecting the growing interdependence among all actors. Second, the scholars distinguished between governments and other actors, suggesting that governments conduct public diplomacy, while companies and firms pursue international public relations. Signitzer and Coombs thought otherwise, and other PR experts followed them. Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1992, pp.409-410) defined International Public Relation as “the planned and organized effort of a company, institution or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the policies of other nations.”

In support of public diplomacy, policy makers use media to reach out to foreign publics; and government officials (Rawnsley, 1995). Based on goals and means of public diplomacy, Gilboa (1998, 2001, and 2002) asserted that through public diplomacy state and non-state actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence

public opinion in foreign societies. The new media environment also offers an opportunity to diplomacy whereby officials use the media to investigate and promote mutual interests, negotiations, and conflict resolution. As part of media-broker diplomacy, journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations. With the completion of the security transition in Afghanistan (2011–2014), the international community, led by the United States, lost most of its military footprint in the country. In many ways, this moment has structurally changed the international engagement with Afghanistan. As the international community gets closer to the end of the security transition process, the dominant military paradigm of the past twelve years which shift to round the table.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Diplomacy is the process of conducting communication through officially recognized representatives. It is a tool of communication to achieve a set of foreign policy goals through diplomatic agents via the accredited diplomatists (Henderson, 1998: 201). For many years, state had been the sole player of diplomacy as the highest political body with the authority to conduct diplomacy, and promote the image of the country in international relations (Henderson, 1998: 227). In fact, state is still the highest body in conducting the traditional or conventional diplomacy.

Public diplomacy is an interdisciplinary field and closely related to public relations, international communication and international relations (Gregory, 2008). Scholars and practitioners have employed a variety of confusing, incomplete, or problematic definitions of public diplomacy. In past definitions presented only general statements about goals. A

typical statement would describe public diplomacy as “direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments” (Malone, 1985). This definition does not say who controls this communication, probably due to the widely held notion in the 1980s that only governments use public diplomacy. The definition also suggests a two-step influence process: first, direct communication designed to create supportive public opinion in another state; and second, pressure by the informed public on its government to adopt friendly policies toward the country employing public diplomacy. Later definitions identified actors and content.

Copeland (2009) defines public diplomacy to consist of “outwardly directed activities by national representatives aimed at identifying shared objectives and potential areas of collaboration with publics abroad”. As publics he distinguishes, for example, the general population, special interest groups, the media, and the civil society, and business and opinion leaders. Branding, advocacy, lobbying, and partnership building are related concepts that fall under the umbrella of public diplomacy (Copeland, 2009)

According to Dizard (2001, pp.5-7), public diplomacy is: “the influence of public attitudes in the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy, [including]: formation by governments of public opinion in other countries; interaction between private interest groups from different countries; informing people about international affairs and their influence on domestic policy; communication between those whose function is communication, such as diplomats and foreign

journalists; (and) the process of intercultural communication.”

In the same vein, Hans Tuch (2010) defines public diplomacy as a communication process of the government of a country with foreign audiences, trying to explain its ideas and ideals of respective nation, its institutions and its culture as well as national interests and policies. It is also the way national objectives and interests are disclosed to a foreign public through a variety of means, including international programs, cultivating journalists and foreign academics, cultural and educational exchanges, visits and conferences scheduled, and also publications.

Apolitical Joseph Nye (2004) describes public diplomacy as a political expression of soft power concept which he introduced in the early 90s. In international politics, power is the ability of an actor to influence another to perform certain actions which would not otherwise be undertaken. Thus, hard power is the ability of an actor to compel another to perform certain actions and tactics that include military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions. In contrast, soft power refers to the ability to convince the actor to take those actions. The combination of the two is the smart power, an approach that strategically uses the most appropriate tactics of the two aforementioned dimensions of power.

Theoretical Frameworks (Models)

Models are needed to develop knowledge because they focus on the most significant variables and the relations between them. Occasionally, models of diplomacy and foreign policy include superficial references to public diplomacy, but very few scholars

developed specific models of public diplomacy itself. Gilboa (2000, 2001) used five variables to distinguish among several models: major actors, initiators, goals, types of media, and means and techniques (page 43) This formula yielded three public diplomacy models: the Basic Cold War model, the Non-state Transnational model, and the Domestic PR model (page 1)

Basic Cold War Model

In this model states used public diplomacy in antagonistic relationships to achieve long-term results in foreign societies (Gilboa, 2000; 2001). The assumption was that if public opinion in the target society is persuaded to accept a favorable image of the other side, it will exert pressure on its government to alter existing hostile attitudes and policies. The idea was to provide the public in the target society with more balanced information on one's own country to counter the domestic propaganda of the target society's government. During the cold war, both the United States and the Soviet Union primarily used international broadcasting to shape favorable public attitudes toward their respective rival ideologies, a government uses its own means of communication, such as radio stations, to conduct public diplomacy. It has been primarily used against authoritarian regimes, while the other two, primarily the Domestic one, have been used in democratic societies. Today, the Basic model is being used against regimes such as those of the military junta in Myanmar, and the Ayatollahs in Iran.

Non-state transitional model

Gilboa (2000; 2001) states that the non-state transnational model is a theoretical concept designed to investigate public diplomacy activities of groups,

NGOs, and individuals using public diplomacy across national boundaries. These actors usually exploit global news networks and media events to cultivate global support for their causes. This model, for example, helps to explain the campaigns, such as those for prodemocracy in China, which aimed to force reforms on the Chinese government through external pressure. The Non-state Transnational model was observed in practice when an opposition group in China using global communication to mobilize public opinion in the West to actively support their cause.

Domestic public relation model

The Domestic public relation model has been used in democratic societies when a state hires PR firms and even lobbyists in the target country to achieve its aims. A government preferring this method believes it is much more effective than direct government-sponsored public diplomacy and that it may help to conceal the true forces and the funding sources behind the effort. The establishment of a local support group or a movement in the target country could also strengthen the legitimacy and authenticity of the campaign. A local PR firm is likely to know best how to achieve the desired goals in a given political and cultural context, how to identify the weaknesses in the positions of the government interested in the campaign, and how to effectively deal with them. This model also includes using scientific knowledge and methods of public opinion research known as "strategic public diplomacy"

The variation of the three models

The three models can explain significant variation in perceptions of public diplomacy activities. The Chinese government saw the prodemocracy demonstrations as American use of the Basic Cold

War model: the use of international broadcasting to inspire public unrest in China. From the U.S. perspective, however, the prodemocracy campaign in China was an example of the Non-state Transnational model whereby an opposition group in China is using global communication to mobilize public opinion in the West to actively support their cause. Application of the models showed that the U.S. interpretation was the correct one. The Basic public diplomacy model has been primarily used against authoritarian regimes, while the other two, primarily the Domestic one, have been used in democratic societies. Today, the Basic model is being used against regimes such as those of the military junta in Myanmar and the Ayatollahs in Iran. It seems that the Domestic PR model has become the most popular one. Each of the three models has significant implications for the government, the media, and public opinion. Systematic application of the models may help to further validate them and to generate insights on the conduct of public diplomacy in different settings.

The relevance of these three notions to the concept of public diplomacy has not been wholly overlooked in public diplomacy, instead conceptual features and the practices of public diplomacy that we have opted to focus. For this paper non-state transnational model has been primarily used since it is initiated by individuals. The reason why this paper did not use the domestic public relation model is that it is used by democratic states, which is difficult to take both Ethiopia and Eritrea as democratic states. The basic cold war model also used by authoritarian states. Similarly, Ethiopia has not been defined totally as authoritarian; as a result, non-state transnational model had been employed for this paper because of individuals' initiatives.

Methodology of the Study

This study is qualitative in nature and has used both primary and secondary data for the analysis of major themes and issues related to the study. The primary data were collected through multiple data gathering techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observations and field notes. The secondary data were collected from books, books chapters, journal articles and reports of the governments of Ethiopia foreign affairs, culture and tourism ministry, peace ministry and Eritrean embassy in Ethiopia. The collected data have been descriptively analysed and presented in this paper as direct quotations, summaries and interpretations. This paper has not incorporated the extensive version of primary data findings such as interviews due to some ethical reasons. However, the opinions and perspectives towards the Practices and Challenges of Public Diplomacy Reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea collected from the primary sources are summaries in this paper under the thematic findings. Ethiopia and Eritrea were selected as the study site to assess the activities of Practices and Challenges of Public Diplomacy Reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea for how it affects the people-to-people relations. Accordingly, Ethiopia and Eritrea are marked by friction and wars Secondly, Ethiopia and Eritrean marked by the focus of super powers competition on red sea because of their geopolitics and Ethiopia would work continually to achieve win-win politics thus she had no sea port and nearest outlet. The red sea issue needs further research and open for scholars to work on again.

The following section summarizes major findings of this study under different thematic topics.

Major findings

The research questions raised by this study were aimed at addressing pertinent issues related to: -

1. The practices of public diplomacy reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea since sep.16, 2018.
2. The challenges of public diplomacy reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea on sep.16, 2018.
3. The status of public diplomacy practices between Ethiopia and Eritrea from sep.16,2018.

Accordingly, the findings of the analysis of data from the interviews and literature review are organized under 3 major thematic areas followed by a revealing and reflexive conclusion. During the interview sessions, the questions were posed to the respondents in a spirit of establishing rapport with them, encouraging them to be more open. Priority was also given to the natural ideal flow of the respondents rather than strictly adhere to the sequential flow of the research questions drawn. This rapport system has encouraged the respondents to respond to questions may tend to be politically sensitive, and which under normal circumstances they are not at liberty to discuss.

The Practices of Public Diplomacy in Ethiopia

State-to-state relations have historically been conducted through designated state representatives. States conduct diplomacy to establish understanding and galvanize support to their foreign policies. States follow a set of established practices and protocols dictated by international legal instruments such as the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Following the Congress of Westphalia in 1648, missions as in today's embassies were institutions mandated to conduct international business between sovereign states (Denza, 2008). Sole actors of

international relations were sovereign states and the players for the conduct of state-to-state relations had mainly remained to be diplomats and designated state envoys (Melissen, 2005). Following the end of World War II, a bipolar world was created along ideological lines of Socialist and Capitalist camps led by the Soviet Union and the United States respectively. Deep ideological confrontation between the two camps prompted both sides to explore ways of directly addressing each other's public. Public diplomacy practiced at this stage mainly used radio broadcasting (e.g., Radio Free Europe) and cultural diplomacy as a major tool to reach-out to people in communist countries (Nelson & Izadi, 2009; Schnieder, 2005). When it comes to foreign relations, countries will always pursue their national interests. A different method has been applicable to do this, including the use of soft power and hard power is indispensable to diplomatic success. In the information age, soft power, this is the ability to shape what others want and projecting a positive image, stands tall as a technique to help achieve foreign policy goals.

public diplomacy through the employment of soft power has helped countries communicate values and achieve foreign policy objectives. during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie Ethiopia maintained diplomatic relations with many capitalists' world and public diplomacy became the center of activity at that time. During the military regime, the internal crisis and diplomatic wrangling with its neighbors had consumed the efforts and resources of the state. Hence the country's foreign policy used to operate in part to address those challenges and the tarnished images originated from its bad human rights records. The terminology and usage of public diplomacy in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon and has been used

to generate investment from abroad to offset its economic hardships. In recent times, the objective of public diplomacy of Ethiopia is to building trust and fraternal relations between the peoples 'of Ethiopia and Eritrea. It comprises of prominent academician's, former ambassadors, religious leaders, artists and other prominent personalities drawn from various sectors. It is expected that the oct.2019 visit of the Ethiopian Public Diplomacy to Eritrea makes vital role in strengthening people to people relations between the peoples of two nations and conveying Ethiopia's desire for mutual growth, strong bond and genuine cooperation to several Eritrean officials and religious leaders (Taylor, 2010).

The Practices of Public Diplomacy in Eritrea

Since his appointment in 1993, President Isaias Afwerki has been the head of the legislative organ (the Transitional National Assembly) and the executive (the State Council), thereby making separation of powers less distinct. The Constitution, which was ratified in 1997, has still not entered into force. There is no a semblance of democracy amid the indefinite postponement of the presidential and parliamentary elections. While assessing found that the Eritrean public diplomacy mostly rests on hard power. Despite criticism from abroad, the regime is supported by various countries including China because of its geographical location on the Red Sea and its natural resources. Nevertheless, the European Union has maintained a critical posture vis-a-vis Eritrea and provided limited support. In 2016, Eritrea slowly opened the door to foreigners after a long period of isolation. Several foreign journalists were given visas, Finn Church Aid was asked to improve the quality of education and members of the Swiss Parliament visited Eritrea at the latter's initiative.

Changes in Eritrea's international relations – which are related to the conflict in Yemen and Eritrean migration to Europe – lifted the country out of its diplomatic isolation to some extent (COI Report on Eritrea, February 2017, pp. 6-7). The UN news on 14 November 2018 under Peace and Security discussion states that, it was hailed by UN Chief António Guterres at the time as an example of “a wind blowing in the direction of peace”, and relations have consistently improved since then.

As part of the agreement, Ethiopia pushed for the Security Council to lift the sanctions, which were concerned with arms embargoes, travel bans, asset freezes and targeted sanctions focusing on certain groups and individuals. The Eritrean Permanent Representative to the UN, Mr. Amanuel Giorgio, hailed the lifting of the sanctions as marking the end of a difficult period for Eritrea and the region: He adds: “On this historic day I am humbled to congratulate the people of Eritrea, who have endured persistent existent pressure...Eritrea as a nation is committed to work with all its neighbours. The peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the tripartite agreement between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, mark the beginning of a new dawn.” The Representative further revealed that “it is the time to redouble efforts and work closely with neighbours to build a region at peace with itself.”

Since early 2018, the governments of both Ethiopia and Eritrea have taken positive diplomatic gestures to overturn the hitherto hostility dominating their interstate relationships for nearly two decades. A good part of it is expressed by both states' leaders' initiatives to end the hitherto border-related disputes in a peaceful way. This necessitated both governments to sign two agreements in Asmara

(Eritrea) on July 9, 2018) Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia” and in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) on September 16, 2018, an” Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea”. Indeed, the signing of the agreements could be regarded as a sign of commitment to settle the dispute between both states and it was very important for the beginning of public diplomacy. but this rapprochement should be followed by the closer relationship of both states’ citizens who stay apart for more than a decade and look each other ahead come together to shake hands. Furthermore, this has also given an opportunity to cultural exchanges.

The various agreements between Eritrea and Ethiopia gained pace, and on 11 August 2018 the leaders of the two countries opened road communications through two border checkpoints. The first was on the south-eastern common border of Debay Sima-Bure, which connects the Eritrean port of Assab and the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Following the symbolic opening of the road, a hectic round of road repairs got under way, so that traffic could actually commence. The second route was opened along the south-central common border of Serha-Zalambesa region, which connects the capital of Eritrea to Tigray region and on to central and southern Ethiopia. The two leaders flew from the Debay Sima-Bure area to open the Serha-Zalambesa road. The opening of road links was part of the implementation of the provisions of the 9 July 2018 Agreement and is intended to facilitate the movement of goods and people. Since these road links opened, there has been a massive movement of people, goods and trucks in both directions. The national cultural troupe comprising of Sibrit and other legendary and young

musicians and singers staged performance on 16 February, 2018 in Bahr-Dar, on 17 in Adama and on 19 February, 2018 in Hawassa.

The bilateral relations between the two states have resumed by reopening their respective embassies, and started their regular activities related to issuance of passports, establishing missions, nominating ambassadors and diplomats. Since 2018, based on the agreements reached between both states, officials of both parties come together for many times to discuss the issues to facilitate and to elaborate the collaboration. For example, both states embassies at this moment try to develop the binding rules on economic, cultural, political, diplomatic and other related issues to sign bilateral agreement between both states. As per the joint agreement document of September 16, 2018 of article 7, a high-level joint committee and the subcommittee established and it is on progress to set ground rules that will lead both states to bilateral agreement.

Through an assessment of the documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it emerges that Ethiopia works to engage in public diplomacy with Eritrea. As the statement of interview shows, the agreement was the base to practice public diplomacy even if the challenge is there. The area on which this rule preparation focused were the customs of both states, the port utilization system since Ethiopia is a land-locked country, the transport system and others as stated in the agreement document. The analysis of this paper shows that some of the articles were in practices but because of non-establishment of joint institution that works on the execution of all the articles, so the practices and challenges of

reciprocated public diplomacy would fail under non-achieved.

Another interview also indicates the two countries will prepare the same stage for cultural exchange and exhibition in which large number of citizens will participate from both states than ever before. Know it is the time for politicians, diplomats, ambassadors, experts, notable peoples, religion leaders and others to participate. The Eritrea embassy envisaged the issues that were going on good track that will lead both states to good collaboration in social, economic, political and diplomatic domains.

Internal and External Challenges Facing both Countries

General challenges

A. Eritrea; internal challenges

As the universal periodic review's working group in august 2014 report, Eritrea is a presidential republic. President Isaias Afwerki is head of both State and Government. Eritrea has not had a national or presidential election since independence. Eritrea rejected calls by a number of countries to allow internationally monitored multi-party elections. Eritrea does not have a national human rights institution that complies with the Paris Principles. In its response to recommendations made Eritrea rejected calls by a number of countries to establish such an institution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead government agency on human rights issues. Within Eritrea, the government tightly controls the content of print media, the journalists who produce it, and the matters they may cover.

Desalegn Abraha Gebrekidan (2015) has examined and found out that the implementation and

achievement of the economic-, political-, social, cultural vision, the economic policy and which economic model the government promised to develop the economy of the country. The findings showed that none of what was promised in the charter (visions) and government policies was implemented which shows that they were only empty words and promises to help those in power to maintain, consolidate, strengthen and prolong their political power.

One of the main reasons for the failure to implement the vision was due to lack of authentic, effective and legacy building leadership. It is difficult to conclude that the failure to implement the vision and to achieve the objectives was due the lack of competent leadership. This is because if the leadership was incompetent, it wouldn't have prepared and declared the charter and its contents in a convincing manner as it did. The finding indicates that the diplomatic roles and activities of the Eritrean authorities unequivocally stated that they don't make use and apply the theories of cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and the public and classical diplomacy of the holy see which makes the practice of public diplomacy challenged. The Eritrean state government should establish institution those can work on public diplomacy and should give full power to citizen-to-citizen diplomacy. Soft power, hard power and the smart power strategy are the alternative strategies of diplomacy discussed in the literature if a country is going to achieve success in its diplomatic moves. Accordingly, one has to start with soft power and if soft power doesn't generate the results expected one has to apply a smart power strategy, i.e., a strategy that combines both soft power and hard power. Eritrea not fully follow soft power or a smart power strategy and they try to apply a hard power strategy

that is coercing or forcing others to think what you do think and to follow your strategy, approaches and intentions in the field of the local, regional international diplomatic strategies and moves.

B. Internal challenges in Ethiopia

Notwithstanding the measures of reform in the wake of 2018, Ethiopia has been suffered from some form of political unrest unfolding in some quarters of the country. In spite of the change of leadership, the unrest has continued under the new prime minister, too. There are several reasons for this based on the interview collected from the informants.

Firstly, As- A1 from Ethiopian foreign minister and A3 from Ethiopian culture and tourism minister (2020) statements the disarming of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) combatants who have returned from Eritrea has also become a difficult issue to the Oromia National Regional State. It seems the OLF leadership wants to make sure that the combatants are properly integrated before committing itself to disarming.

Secondly, the informants A1 and A2 (2020) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the general directorate for public diplomacy argued that another challenge is related to the internal conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia and the southern as well. Bringing these forces under the political control of the incumbent prime minister has proved a real problem. In recognition of this challenge, the prime minister immediately enforced change in the leadership of the security and military forces, retiring senior officers, including the army chief of staff (Zelalem 2018).

Third, A3, during the interview it was stated that the main challenge, indeed, came from the Tigray People

Liberation Front (TPLF), which administers the government of Tigray region. The TPLF, which was the core of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), administered Ethiopia for twenty-seven years as the dominant partner in the ruling coalition. In a thinly veiled threat, the deputy president of Tigray region told a public gathering in Mekele, the capital of the region, on 28 July 2019 'we either respect each other or disintegrate'. Many interpreted this as a signal that the TPLF could invoke Article 39 of the constitution, which allows the right to self-determination up to and including secession. The TPLF-led regional government regards the continuation of the unrest as evidence of the unfolding chaos in Ethiopia, saying it is the outcome of lawlessness, violation of the constitution and dislocation of national institutions (Maru 2018). In general, blamed the government in Addis Ababa for its "incompetence and inability" to run the country. These contradictory stances are making the tension to prevail between the federal government and the regional government.

As the interview held with A1, statement the extremism and border issue could only be resolved through negotiations, given the fact that the interests and concerns of the local populations affected by the border demarcation should be taken into considerations. This creates uneasiness on the side of the federal government which is supposed to manage interstate relations. A demonstration throughout Tigray was officially called in support of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace and Friendship Agreement, but in reality, was turned into an opposition demonstration against the reforms in Ethiopia: there was not a single mention of the Algiers border decision by the demonstrators and leaders of the TPLF who addressed the demonstrators?

A1, A2, A3, A5 also argue that ‘‘It would seem that it is to give the TPLF time to come on board that both governments have opted to delay implementation the Peace and Friendship Agreement – the border issue at the end of the day, it is the federal government that decides. Although the delimitation occurred in November 2007, the TPLF rejection stood in the way of implementation; now that the federal government has conceded acceptance, the matter of the occupation by and withdrawal of the army poses practical problems.’’

Indeed, the interests of the present residents of Badme also need to be resolved. The challenge remains in place so long as the TPLF continues to reject implementation of the border decision.

Debretsion who is also a deputy President of the Tigray state blamed Addis Ababa of disrupting the peace process and failing to facilitate conditions to resolve Ethio-Eritrea border disputes (Ethiopian Reporter, February, 2020). The issue of this disagreement rose as a challenge and hence it can set a high impact on this public diplomacy. Apart from the not-yet concretized agreements between the neighbouring states, a serious disagreement between the regional states of Amhara and Tigray over the contested territories of Welqait and Raya have also posed formidable challenge to the modus operandi of public diplomacy. It goes without saying that these bordering areas, which are currently the bone of contention between the two regions, were previously incorporated into the Tigray regional state following the displacement of the Dergue regime in the aftermath of 1991 years. The political controversy has increasingly assumed a dimension that goes beyond territorial claims and that could be described as having become a symptom of a deep-seated

mistrust between the ruling elites of Amhara and Tigray. Indeed, the deputy president of Tigray’s statements and threats against unspecified enemies that were ‘defeated before’ is a worrying sign and would continue to reinforce the existing division. The finding of this research indicates the challenges affect the practice of public diplomacy between Ethiopia and Eritrea internally for which the Ethiopian government and scholars should search solutions for and also some of them are recommended under chapter five of this paper.

Respondents also look at the challenge that globalization put on public diplomacy externally, Globalization has contributed largely to the decline in the relevance of foreign relations, as it has neglected the role of diplomats. Public Diplomacy is a ‘dependent variable’ of foreign policy and as such must be operated along the original norms and practices in order to achieve its proper objectives (Kleiner 2008). Diplomats are now saddled with the burden of shrinking as much information as possible in order to aid effective decision making and foreign policy formulation. It may have been inappropriate for some to assume that public diplomacy is not strictly the work of diplomatic agents, but that it spreads across multiple platforms (Faizullaev 2014). However, public diplomacy should be left uninterrupted by externalities. Resulting from globalization, diplomatic practice has suffered much openness and should be treated with discretion to human practice constituent of representation, negotiation and necessary manipulation. The circumvention of foreign ministries and the relegation of diplomats in the current political atmosphere may owe to the will of individuals to engage more directly with the outside world without having to depend on state bureaucracy. It is also true

that global interdependence significantly affects the way and manner government's structure foreign policy and diplomatic practice (Flores, 2009).

C. External challenges for Eritrea

The Chairperson of the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), Deberetsion Geberemichael, stated that his administration is ready to resolve the border dispute with neighboring Eritrea based on international laws and relevant provision. Briefing journalists in connection with the 45th founding anniversary of TPLF, he stressed the need for leaders of Tigray, Ethiopia, and Eritrea to come to a negotiating table to resolve the border issue and work for ensure real peace among their peoples.

The Tigray regional state sets challenge on practices of the reciprocated public diplomacy since 2018, thus for two years (2022-2023) was war between federal government of Ethiopia and the TPLF which in adverse sets difficult on Eritrea on the other hand. For these two years the borderline closed and number of things fails back.in addition the extremist conflict and the claim of Ethiopian federal government to protect the rule of law fires gun which is not less than conventional war.

Discussions

To practice the reciprocated public diplomacy between Ethiopia and Eritrea since sep.16,2018 there was fertile ground. Such as, The presence of joint agreement document between Ethiopia and Eritrea (July 6, 2018, Asmara and September 16, 2018, Jeddah), The presence of modern technology such as telephones, Facebook, websites, Skype, telegram ...etc.to facilitate public diplomacy implementations, The preparedness of both states' governments to implement joint agreement in Asmara and Jeddah,

The establishment of high joint committee from office of Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia to implement the joint agreement.

As per the joint agreement document of September 16, 2018 of article 7 the high-level joint committee and the subcommittee established were on preparing the ground rules that would lead both states to bilateral agreement. Between 2018 up to 2020 both states opened their respective embassies and has practiced their formal activities such as issuing passports, establishing missions, nominating ambassadors and diplomats for all fields occurs.

The analysis shows that, this joint agreement document starts to be changed to practice by all representatives of both states in Ethiopia and Eritrea, which needs smoothing all issues of internal conflict in Ethiopia for full range achievements.

The challenge of Low practice of public diplomacy to bring full implementation: for instance, absence of continual training, open discussions, and public speeches, because of the above phenomena the embassy and consular didn't know in what rate that public diplomacy between both states going on now. The current Ethiopian government gives high attention to the internal turmoil that can affects public diplomacy between Ethiopia and Eritrea, so not to get full time to follow up and to implement the joint agreement.

Recommendations

To tackle the foregoing problems that hinder public diplomacy implementations reciprocated between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the following

recommendations are proposed in the view of the findings: -

Both states should give high attention than ever before because they do have internal and external challenges that can hinder the achievements of the reciprocated public diplomacy which should be achieved via their agreements. Specifically, Ethiopia should resolve all internal conflicts that affects the achievement of this phenomenon, unless this internal conflict resolved in peace deal and national dialogue it affects the achievement of this agreement now and onward, so Ethiopia should solve it primarily. From the side of Ethiopia, the issue of red sea may rise again thus to have outlet, so the Eritrean government should be ready to give positive response that will not lead back again to war and Ethiopia should follow the win- win game to achieve article three of the agreement which says'' The two countries will develop Joint Investment Projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones''

All diplomats' ambassadors from both states should initiate journalists, think-thanks, civil societies, religion leaders, bloggers, activists and others to contribute for achievements of the agreement.

- For scholars

Further longitudinal studies by scholars in the fields of public diplomacy, international relations, and communications based on this research are needed. This could help elucidate these concepts and document trends thereby shedding more light on the general picture of its practice at the MFA (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs) of Ethiopia and Eritrean embassy in a global and regional context.

- For Policy Considerations

Considering the absence of clear policy guidelines on how to conduct public diplomacy between both states, preparing holistic engagement strategies with clearly stipulated goals and expectations through the active participation of the people, the Ethiopian government, think-tank, and consultancy firms would be advantageous in providing a sense of direction to the practitioners and the policy makers.

- On the Need to institutionalization of public diplomacy

It is advisable if the MFA of Ethiopia and the Eritrean embassy works collaboratively to traverse and improve their unsuitable bureaucratic context. This could boost the morale and creativity of its diplomats thereby resulting in better outcomes. Here it is also in the MFA of Ethiopia under general directorate of public diplomacy and embassy of the state of Eritrea in Ethiopia under consular of Ethiopian Eritrea relation advantage to build the capacity of its diplomats through trainings in public diplomacy.

Abbreviations

CPJ-Committee to Protect Journalists, DAFT-Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, EC-Ethiopian Calendar, EPRDF-Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPP-Ethiopian Prosperity Party, EPLF-Eritrean People's Liberation Front, GERD-Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, IGAD-Inter-governmental

authority for development, IR-International relations, IPR-International Public Relations, MFA-Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NISRG-National Independent Scientific Research Group

NGO-Non-governmental Organization, OLF-Oromo liberation front, PR-Public Relation

PFDJ-People's Front for Democracy and Justice, RWB-Reporters without Borders, TPLF-Tigray People's Liberation Front, UN-United Nations

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Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate the accepted ethical standards have been met in the research process, as well as during preparation of the manuscript for publication. The researcher followed appropriate behaviour in conducting the research with regard to the right of respondents who will participate in this research. Informed consent of participants, the willingness to participate and the extent of sharing information are personal right of participants while the survey was observed.

Consent for publication

The author has agreed to publish the manuscript.

Competing interests

No competing interests have been declared by the author.

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