**Evaluating National Images using Global Indices:**

**A New Methodological Approach to Measuring Public Diplomacy**

**Evaluating National Images by Global Indexes:**

**A New Methodological Approach to Measuring Public Diplomacy**

**Or**

**Evaluating National Images by Global Indexes:**

**A New Methodological Approach to Measuring Public and Corporate Diplomacy**

**National Image in the Digital Age**

Today, more than ever before, national image and reputation have become essential assets. Governments, corporations, and even ordinary citizens invest significant financial resources and time into how they are perceived globally. For states, managing their nations’ image in the eyes of the rest of the world is an especially crucial aspect of international relations. As early as the 1970s, public diplomacy was developing as a means to improve national image. However, new social media technologies that emerged in the era of globalized economies, politics, and societies have made projecting a positive image on the world stage critical for nations. Unsurprisingly, it is now an often-stated assumption that a positive image is no less important than military power, and it doesn’t matter how strong your army is but how strong your narrative is (Nye, 2013; Jervis. 2007).

As states’ need for a positive image is intensifying, image is also becoming increasingly multifaceted and multidisciplinary and, therefore, more complex to manage. In the digital age with no spatial or temporal limits, nation-states must constantly manage the abstract variable of their national image, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and beyond the borders of their territories. Moreover, all the multiple facets comprising a national image are portrayed as essential in the international arena, and nation-states must make public diplomacy efforts vis-à-vis the institutions advocating each of these aspects. These include a nation’s level of corruption, economic competitiveness, digital readiness, quality of life, journalistic freedom and media coverage[[1]](#footnote-1), and human development, to name only a few of the parameters examined every year by international corporations and organizations with various interests and ideologies.

Most researchers have discussed this phenomenon from a theoretical perspective. Scant academic attention has been paid to empirical research evaluating this phenomenon, although questions such as what corporate diplomacy activities look like and how they can serve a nation’s reputation are highly relevant. As Westerman-Behaylo et al. (2015, p. 400) emphasized, “There remains a need for empirical research to explore to what degree and in which situations corporations play a diplomatic, positive role in foreign relations, as well as when they do not.”

This book focuses on empirical studies with the aim of better understanding the advantages and limitations of various research methods in exploring aspects of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy research has been limited to certain methods and often fails to integrate multi-method research approaches. Further, digitization and the rise of new communication platforms highlight the need for new methodologies. Corporations increasingly utilize platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, which present more visual images than text, and therefore require a different analytical approach.

**International Indices and National Image**

Numerous annually published international measures or indices cover these issues, which receive significant media coverage and are used to conduct comparative rankings of countries worldwide. By assigning positive or negative scores to nations for the various issues under investigation, institutions can create international pressure regarding nations’ image, reputation, and international status. For example, receiving a failing or low score in the Global Competitiveness Index published by the World Economic Forum can have immediate and direct adverse effects on a country’s global banking, credit ratings, and foreign investments. Therefore, a country’s ranking on this index is crucial. Even negative ratings on a seemingly esoteric index such as the World Tourism Index, which examines the comfort and efficiency of a country’s tourism infrastructure, may be detrimental to countries whose economies depend on tourism. For countries such as Thailand, where over 22 percent of the economy is based on tourism (bringing in some 117 billion dollars in 2019) or the Maldives, where tourism represents over 30 percent of the gross national product, this index is evidently critical to their resilience in the global economy.

These indicators are also crucial in the realm of international politics and economics. For example, Israel, whose capital city and its physical borders are still under dispute, is making significant efforts to strengthen its perceived national image and legitimacy while combating nongovernmental networks such as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) that are trying to damage these soft power efforts. When the "Nation Brands Index" ranked Israel's positioning in last place in the world, officials in the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed deep concern that the nation’s resilience would be damaged and began investing significant resources into what they called the "Brand Israel project". Another example is the ongoing contest between the US and China over who will be the leader of the world economy. It is understandable why many experts and stakeholders wait anxiously for the annual publication of the World Competitiveness index, which has significant implications for all the world’s economies.

**The Increasing Power of International Social Institutions and Corporations**

The international indices sponsored by corporations, institutions, and other non-state actors prove that the days when public diplomacy activities referred exclusively to states’ efforts are over (Ingenhoff & Chariatte, 2020; Melissen & Wang, 2019). Now, non-state actors, corporations, and institutions not only take positions on social issues but also try to exert direct international pressure on insubordinate countries by publishing rankings and performance scores on relevant issues. In this way, they can influence the global agenda and even the policies that countries implement through corporate diplomacy based on indices (White, 2020), which institutions promote and use as international diplomatic tools. At the same time, these indices may provide direction for states’ tactics and strategies in their public diplomacy. State actors can focus on an important and relevant issue and study it theoretically by looking at the field’s most influential institutions and indices. They can then accordingly design supportive public diplomacy that will strengthen their international relations and improve the tactics and strategies they use in terms of communication, target audiences, messages, and more.

**Challenges in Evaluating Public Diplomacy and National Image**

However, we face significant challenges understanding the multifaceted variable of national image, the multiple parameters of which it is comprised, and the relative weight of each. There are substantial shortcomings in assessing and measuring image in general and public diplomacy for several reasons. First, evaluating public diplomacy and its effectiveness is inherently difficult. There is a reason that some compare it to “a forester running out every morning to see how far his trees have grown overnight” (Cull, 2008, p. 44). Many strategies are built on baseless speculations of “someone said something.” Abstruse concepts related to public diplomacies, such as national image, standing, brand, and nations’ positive or negative influence, are all confusing and non-consensual, further hindering evaluation.

Second, there are many types of corporations (financial, political, social, cultural, and economic), and each promotes different indices and variables and uses different methodologies according to its specific agenda. Thus, there are methodological challenges to developing an “index of indices,” which is significantly required for normalizing the various indices and variables. Further, nations each have their particular interest in the multiple issues which supposed to generate different public diplomacy strategies and tactics. Third, most published studies neglected to propose research methodologies for evaluating corporate or state public diplomacy. The few studies that have done so emerged from differing and rigid disciplines and made no attempt to integrate other disciplines, as is currently expected in the field. The fourth, final, and most significant difficulty pertains to developing quantitative and qualitative methodologies that cover the multiplicity of fields and variables relevant to global national image and public diplomacy while simultaneously enabling collecting precise data, longitudinal follow-up, and identifying trends that will allow practical recommendations to be made.

**Key Approaches to Evaluation and Measurement**

To develop a united methodological platform, we first must understand the significant attitudes toward measuring national images and public diplomacy. The deficiencies and lack of clarity prevailing in the field of public diplomacy stem from the dominant approaches to evaluation and measurement.

Several main approaches to evaluating and measuring public diplomacy can be identified and compared. These include academic vs. professional, state vs. non-state, qualitative vs. quantitative, and positive vs. negative approaches.

***Approaches to Evaluating and Measuring Public Diplomacy***

Is it even possible to measure countries’ international images? This question has aroused much debate among public diplomacy researchers. Recently, many diplomats have expressed a desire for an improved ability to evaluate their public diplomacy work. Improved capacities in this regard would facilitate their reporting activities on diplomacy work being conducted. Furthermore, a better evaluation would help diplomats develop strategies for implementation and more effectively manage resource distribution (Carter, 2005). However, the lack of empirical studies on evaluation and measurement in this field presents a significant challenge. For example, a study that examined whether the US government has an organizational culture of measuring and evaluating its public diplomacy and the tools to do so found that the US has no strategy for conducting quantitative research on its public diplomacy efforts around the world and does not prioritize such research (Izadi, 2007).

Any discussion of methods for evaluating public diplomacy must consider operations research theory (Lieberman & Hillier, 1994). At its core, this theory addresses the need to find the most effective option within a limited resource environment to avoid squandering resources and improve efficiency. Operations research aims to reduce the data collected, develop mathematical models, and provide qualitative interpretations to reach the required solutions.

The three greatest challenges facing public diplomacy research are insufficient or ineffectively used resources, undefined goals, and the inability to evaluate effectiveness and feedback. Since countries have limited operating resources, they should implement systems to measure and assess efforts to improve their international image.

There are two main opposing approaches to evaluating public diplomacy: negative and positive. The negative approach asserts that the complexity of public diplomacy makes it impossible to measure and evaluate. In contrast, the positive approach argues that not only can the components of public diplomacy be evaluated and measured, but that to prevent failure, it is necessary to do so.

**The Negative Approach**.

This pessimistic school of thought claims that measuring or evaluating public diplomacy efforts is impossible. Representatives from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office gave three primary reasons for the capacity to evaluate public diplomacy being so weak: public diplomacy usually has long-term goals; it is based on intangible variables; and the observed changes occur among a foreign population and are not under one’s control (Vinter & Knox, 2008). Such pessimism is also unequivocally expressed by the editors of the *Carter Review* regarding failed attempts to measure the UK’s international image: “At present, there is no standardized system for monitoring and evaluating the success of public diplomacy as a whole, which makes it difficult to determine whether collective efforts are delivering value for money, or whether overarching public diplomacy objectives have been met,” (Carter, 2005, p. 55).

These and other problems were exacerbated by major technological changes in the international political realm, such as independent bloggers gaining control over public opinion and interactive social media platforms that create an ever-increasing number of variables, making it more difficult to evaluate the field. Thus, governments often “fire off” messages to the world with no idea of their effectiveness or whether they will even reach the target audiences (Johnson, 2006, p. 46).

The negative school of thought is based on a perception that public diplomacy is too difficult to evaluate because it requires too long-term planning and implementation, and therefore its results only become clearly observable after many years. In the words of the Deputy Spokesperson of the US Department of State: “The results of this long-term strategy will probably not be apparent before thousands of ‘Fulbright’ students educated abroad have acquired positions of influence and millions of children exposed to cyber-diplomacy programmers will become adult voters and consumers,” (US Department of State, 2004, quoted in Pahlavi, p. 257(.

The negative school of thought offers five main reasons for the inability to evaluate and measure public diplomacy. The first is the lack of an empirical database. Assessments of public diplomacy tend to be based on hearsay rather than on solid facts. The severe lack of evaluative tools makes it impossible to define parameters and track them longitudinally (Steven, 2007, p. 14). Even the United States, a country that is relatively experienced in public diplomacy, currently has no system in place for assessing the results of its public diplomacy efforts around the world. A US government representative who wants to influence, for example, a target population in an African country has no measurement tools for determining whether or not the goals have been achieved.

A study conducted in 2004 on the ability to conduct diplomacy efforts on the internet (cyber-diplomacy) found significant shortcomings in this area. Many embassies worldwide still mail hard copies of their correspondence, do not have well-developed digital databases, and do not even attempt to create an organizational culture supporting cyber-diplomacy efforts. As Steven (2007, p. 50) states, “There is no single data standard, and tools for serious evaluation are so seriously lacking, that NGOs have begun to try and help them.” For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (created by the founder of Microsoft) offers research grants to develop tools for measuring countries’ success or failure in various fields. Experts warn that effective measurement and evaluation of public policy will not be possible until embassies begin to collect quantitative data and that no significant improvement can be expected in this realm.

**Fuzzy Goals bring clouded effectiveness**

The second problem is that measurable goals for public diplomacy efforts are not formulated, and therefore there is no standard for evaluating their effectiveness. The goals expressed by the US Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, for example, are vague: “to create a dialogue in the world”, “enhance mutual understandings,” and “tell the world the American story” (Pahlavi, 2007, p. 256). Clearly, such goals are not measurable. The US government has not defined what constitutes success for its goals, and there are no evaluation criteria or assessment scales.

This lack of clarity can also be seen in the case of the UK government’s stated goals, such as “to increase the influence of Britain in the world” so that it will be taken into account in international decision-making and “building long-lasting relationships with other countries” (Pahlavi, 2007, p. 257). While the UK’s goals are somewhat more well-defined than those of the US, they are still far from clear, and therefore implementing and evaluating them is not straightforward.

In 2007, the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy discussed these problems and presented its findings to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Subsequently, a program was launched to address the challenges characterizing US public diplomacy efforts worldwide. While the revised goals admittedly include measurable variables, such as documenting the number of public diplomacy operations implemented, this is not strictly relevant to the success of the diplomacy efforts (ibid).

The third problem relates to the lack of resources and wasteful use of existing resources. The effectiveness of public diplomacy and its evaluation was further weakened by largely unsuccessful attempts to develop evaluation tools, inefficient campaigns with unclear goals, and a lack of a systematic research method for assessing performance.

The lack of resources also prevents in-depth research that would develop the field. For example, one the famous measurement tool offered, the "Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index", since 1996 includes only six criteria, and no rationale for their selection is given[[2]](#footnote-2). This imprecision makes the index questionable as an evaluative method. Furthermore, all six indices are given equal importance in the final assessment, with no in-depth interpretation or weighting. As stated by a research director in the UK National Audit Office: “Public diplomacy is about building relationships between diverse nations and cultures, and these are constantly influenced by many external factors. And because the full effect of the [British] Council’s activities may only become evident after long periods, its changing impact is very difficult to measure year-on-year,” (Tim Banfield, quoted in Vinter & Knox, 2008, p. 163). The lack of resources also weakens personnel development and the ability to offer appropriate training programs. An unfortunate consequence is that local initiatives to train embassy employees are perceived as competing with other ministries and therefore destined for failure (p. 50).

The fourth problem is the limited research on public opinion[[3]](#footnote-3). The primary measurement and evaluation methods in the professional literature are public opinion surveys that only differentiate between countries that are perceived as loved or hated, as successes or failures. As a result, governments are unable to determine whether their public diplomacy efforts are actually influencing people in other countries or whether they are achieving their policy goals. For example, the GlobeScan (2007) index developed by the BBC and the University of Maryland assesses countries’ impact on the world as negative or positive without considering the spectrum between these two extremes. According to a former senior American diplomat (Johnson, 2006), it is tempting to think that one could rely solely on public opinion studies to carry out effective public diplomacy, but this is not possible, especially regarding public diplomacy efforts conducted among uncooperative and non-democratic countries (Fouts, 2006; Gilboa, 2008, p. 63). Public opinion studies consider only a limited set of factors that influence countries’ images and tend to rate them as either positive or negative, without considering the weight of variables between these two extremes. After all, every country has strengths and weaknesses and indicators for which they will receive positive and negative ratings. Therefore, the results of these studies are inaccurate and yield ineffective public diplomacy tactics. The fact that negative media coverage leads to negative opinions does not prove the opposite; positive coverage does not necessarily lead to positive views (Gilboa, 2008, p. 64). The gap between positive and negative ratings on a given index is a barrier to research in the field of measurement. It is impossible to accurately evaluate countries' international images without knowing which indicators lie between the two ends of the spectrum and the importance of each to national image. Although the annually published global public opinion surveys on various issues related to states’ images (for example, corruption, freedom of the press, etc.) get significant media coverage, there is not a single example in the professional and theoretical literature of efforts to assess their relative weight or importance to countries’ international images (Gilboa, 2008. p. 63).

In summary, the negative or pessimistic school of thought regarding public diplomacy argues that, despite its importance in creating countries’ international images, and the increasing need to develop tools to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts, no such model exists (Carter, 2005). As Pahlavi (2007, p. 255) concludes: “If a dramatic change in public diplomacy does not take place, it will continue to be distant from achieving its potential impact.”

**The Positive Approach**

The positive approach, in contrast, asserts that public diplomacy achievements and failures can be evaluated and measured and that states are responsible for managing their national image. It has been argued that “without the proper tools needed for a full assessment, despite their importance, all proposals remain pure speculation and nothing more” (Pahlavi, 2006, p. 276). Recently, some countries have begun to attempt to establish offices dedicated to evaluation and measurement. For example, in 2004, the US established the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs as a special entity within the US Department of State. In April 2007, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office founded a council dedicated to advising and planning public diplomacy. Its members include government officials (from this office and other government ministries), experts from the business sector, and members of the BBC’s research department (Vinter & Knox, 2008). Israel launched the Brand Israel project, which utilizes the services of the InterMedia company to evaluate the country’s image around the world (Brand Israel, 2006). These governments, among others, assume that the state must develop practical tools for evaluating and measuring its public diplomacy efforts.

The positive school of thought offers various approaches to measuring and evaluating public diplomacy and its outcomes. The first focuses on the extent to which results were achieved. The Performance Institute advises the US government on public diplomacy research and emphasizes the need to evaluate results: “Performance measures are critical to gauging agency progress and ensuring that all elements of a strategic plan are producing results. These performance measures must track ‘outcomes’ of government programs, as well as provide efficiency and quality metrics for day-to-day management decision making” (The Performance Institute, 2009).

In the spirit of the positive approach, the UK government took an important step by hiring the River Path Associates consulting agency to improve how it handles changes in public diplomacy. The agency’s experts focused on relationships between decision-makers and emphasized that results must be evaluated through concept-based research, not arbitrarily. Their basic premise was that systematic management is necessary since the goals of new public diplomacy (Gilboa, 2006) have become more complex than was previously the case (Steven, 2007, p. 3).

The second approach in the positive school is quantitative. According to this approach, the main obstacle to evaluating and measuring public diplomacy is a lack of quantitative data that objectively reflects its effectiveness. Large and diverse databases must be developed, enabling quantification and measurement processes that are as accurate as possible. Pahlavi (2007) suggested weekly data collection among participants in public diplomacy programs, such as numbers of educational program participants and graduates, listeners, viewers, visitors to internet sites, people registering for websites, and more. Such data collection could produce a platform for broader, deeper and more effective measurement.

Using digital infrastructure for feedback and measurement purposes will become necessary as government representatives begin to use electronic channels for communication with the public exclusively to send invitations to events, press releases, interactive social media and websites, etc. (Johnson, 2006, p. 48). Constructing large databases that cover a variety of parameters pertaining to target audiences can yield three main results that are crucial for improving evaluation capabilities: ongoing monitoring, increasing budget and resource allocation, and developing an organizational culture that includes performance review (Pahlavi, 2007). **For example, a survey conducted in the UK counted 290 million people worldwide exposed to British public diplomacy weekly, while 100 million individuals were counted for the USA and 95 million for France. Following the establishment of the Al-Jazeera media outlet, 75 million individuals were counted as having been exposed to Qatar’s public diplomacy efforts. However, there was no in-depth analysis regarding whether and to what degree diplomatic efforts succeeded in influencing these individuals’ positions.**

A third approach focuses on analyzing target audiences as the most important way to evaluate the effectiveness of public diplomacy. This approach encourages using market share analysis as an indicator reflecting the effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts. According to this approach, evaluation should assess the extent to which the state successfully recruits target audiences as potential customers that will “purchase” them in a competitive global market. The research variable is “audience awareness,” which is evaluated according to specific areas for the program being implemented (Pahlavi, 2007). A distinction is made between audiences that were “potentially exposed” to a message and those that were “definitely exposed”. This highlights the gap between the desired and the actual situation and differentiates between the technological success and effective success of message transmission. That is, the fact that a message was transmitted does not mean it was actually received.

A UK government report showed that it is possible to evaluate diplomacy programs, such as student exchange programs, by documenting the number of students coming from abroad and taking part in organized visits, participating in business conferences, and participating in social networks operating on behalf of the UK government, etc. Similarly, the American Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) bureau uses performance research methods to assess key aspects of program impact on participants: personal experiences during the program, post-program activity, and program impact on participants’ lives. These data are entered directly into the government database. This is just one example of the digital revolution, with many governments hiring data analysis experts in various measurement techniques to document performance research using computerized databases.[[4]](#footnote-4)

A fourth approach suggests examining the parameters of states’ images in the international media. Previous studies have indicated how important this is (Grundig, 1993; Hanson, 2008). Many countries now employ experts in public relations and national branding to improve their images in global media channels. For example, a US government educational institution hired the media specialist company InterMedia and regularly consults with the Gallup polling company. The interim government in Iraq contracted the services of a UK-based public relations company Bell Pottinger.

This approach is based on the assumption that countries can improve their international image by utilizing mass media and tactics gleaned from the realms of advertising and branding. Evidence supporting this assumption comes from the experiences of transnational corporations, such as Coca-Cola, which face image problems on the global stage, just as nations do. The measurement tools used in advertising, marketing, and public relations can provide immediate solutions to the problem of evaluating public diplomacy. These tools can measure short-term results, such as improving the opinions held by people internationally, as well as long-term results, such as the number of people “purchasing the brand,” which can be assessed, for example, by the country’s tourism rate.

The fifth approach, branding, measures public diplomacy using marketing concepts. Countries are perceived as consumer products. The branding approach gave rise to the Anholt Nation Brands Index (Anholt, 2006), a pioneering initiative in evaluating and ranking countries’ international images, albeit with shortcomings (NBI, 2006). The basic premise of this index is that countries today must compete for investors’ interest, tourists, respect, business ventures, and more. In this way, they are like consumer brands. Therefore, it is not the country’s image that must be measured but rather the prestige of its brand worldwide. A country’s brand prestige may be expressed through selected variables that reflect a country’s attractiveness to people internationally.

**“It’s the Rating, Stupid” – How Corporations Rate and Influence Countries**

Additionally, it is necessary to pay attention to trends and changes emerging from another perspective, namely that of non-state institutions and corporations. The role these entities play in public diplomacy has been growing in recent decades, reflecting the digitized and global era in which we live. To create a supportive business and social environment for themselves, corporations invest significant resources in creating “positivity” and “calls to action” among the public worldwide.

One manifestation of this trend is that corporations, national and international organizations, and governments use global indices to monitor various aspects of countries’ economic performance and their populations and assess progress. These indices have been valuable tools for communication, engaging in constructive dialogue about policy, and as inputs for decision-making and policy-making.

A wide range of contemporary, international indices of diplomacy efforts is used to compare countries regarding economic development and wellbeing. Examples include the OECD Better Life Index, the Gini Coefficient, the World Health Organization’s Gender Inequality Index, the Global Energy Security Risk Index, the Big Mac Index, the National Risk Index, the Corruption Perceptions Index, and the Global Terrorism Index.

Aside from these general and economic indices, which are relatively straightforward to measure, there are less-easily quantifiable indicators based on interpretive and perceptual issues such as freedom of the press, level of democracy, heritage and culture, national branding, soft power, and more. Institutions and corporations can criticize countries through ratings and scores on various issues via these indices. This can bring state actors and corporate actors into conflict. Countries need to gain legitimacy, economic cooperation, and political support from prestigious international organizations. Their need for favorable ratings on these indices convinces governments that soft power has a clear economic value. At the same time, businesses and social corporations want to increase their influence in the international sphere, communicate with populations and civil societies around the world, influence countries’ policies and regulations, and get publicity in traditional and digital media channels.

**Measuring States' National Image and Public Diplomacy's Efficiency: The Proposed Research**

**Based on the above**, this chapter addresses the diplomatic conflict in the international arena between state actors’ growing need for a positive global image, and corporations’ desire to increase their involvement and influence that promotes their own interests. This conflict is expressed through corporations and organizations’ ability to use these indices to rank, criticize, and pressure countries regarding issues they wish to promote according to their interests and ideologies.

Therefore, we view international indices and measures as research tools for examining corporate and state public diplomacy. First, Google Trends[[5]](#footnote-5) data from 2022 is used to identify the most widely publicized and discussed indices. Subsequently, we build individual typologies\* for each index, with information on the founding organization, platform, field being addressed, methods used, and the conclusions the index seeks to promote in the international arena and global discourse.

**Case Study: United Arab Emirates**

This chapter proposes an innovative and experimental method to reduce the prevailing shortcomings in this field. To that end, we selected one country as an instructive case study. Using one selected index, we collect data on the chosen research variables. Using the Global Soft Power Index for 2022, we identified the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as an interesting case. According to international indices, the UAE’s national image has significantly improved, and it is often mentioned in positive contexts in news media outlets. For example, in the Global Soft Power Index, the UAE rose to 15th place in the world, first among Middle Eastern countries, and the Global Competitiveness Report ranked the UAE 25th in the world. In addition to its high and improving scores on these recently published indices, the UAE recently agreed to normalize relations with Israel; it will be interesting to examine further the effects of this in terms of the indices chosen for this chapter.

**Research Procedure**

1. **Identification:** identifying the most widely discussed and cited indices for 2022.
2. **Filtering**: selecting the five broadest indices that cover the largest number of countries.
3. **Typology**: building a typology of organizations based on the identified and selected indices while focusing on methods used and the platforms they promote.
4. **Selection of a case study**: selecting a country as an informative case study to shed light on the evaluation and measurement of public diplomacy.
5. **Score weighting**: performing normalization on the country’s scores for the selected indices
6. **Identifying** trends, strengths and weaknesses for the selected country’s national image.
7. Offering conclusions and **practical suggestions** regarding media strategy and public diplomacy efforts for the selected country (United Arab Emirates).

**Study's main challenges and Contributions**

The reality in today's digital diplomatic arena is more complex and multidimensional than ever before and, therefore, difficult to manage for any international actor. Furthermore, in our current age of social media and digital networks allowing influence beyond the physical and territorial barriers, the power of "national images" and "reputation" is increasing. A positive image of an actor allows him room for maneuver and a reasonable basis for establishing international relations that can yield economic, political, and cultural outputs.

Hence, among multiple actors operating in the arena, this chapter focused on the state actor who is the most sensitive to having a "favorable national image" and positively answering the question, "what does the world think of it." Our study focused on the groeing necessary for A positive image which is essential for managing its international standing - which is required in our global and competitive world. It needs it for the sake of international politics (and votes in critical international institutions), to manage a global economy, to deal with global problems, and more. The necessity for a positive image increases around international events and conflictual arenas in the international arena, where the country urgently needs legitimacy and international recognition to continue its policy.

As we demonstrate in this offered research, states' need to deeply understand the world of their "national image" encounters a professional theoretical gap that is absent from methods that combine different fields, variables, and dimensions of research. More and more diplomats are confessions that they do not have any way to know about their public diplomacy' efficiency, as clearly heard by the British government in its failure to measure its image in the world:

*"It is difficult to determine whether collective efforts are delivering value for money, or whether overarching public diplomacy objectives have been met…." It was felt that more could be done in this area" (Coles, 2005, p. 55)[[6]](#footnote-6).*

The inability to understand the abstract and unknown world of "national images" prevents her from understanding the public diplomacy efforts she is exercising, with the constant need to understand whether the message was conveyed, and the goals set were indeed achieved.

Therefore, our examination seeks to present an integral methodical approach based on the study of the performance of results and goals. It seeks to increase efficiency over the dispersal of resources concerning public diplomacy efforts. The solution was in the form of developing a universal, qualitative and mathematical aid - an index, which can assess the image of a country being tested worldwide. The advantage of the index lies in the fact that it starts with identification. From there, it moves on to formulating the need for the parameter it checks. After that, it provides a comparative weighting for the country. These are the three most significant problems in the study of the images of countries: the problem of identifying the indicators that build them, formulating the weak indicators in it, and providing an applied solution to improve them.

A primary challenge of this research is the normalization stage, in which we will assume that all the selected indicators have equal importance to the weighted score (the “index of indexes”). However, when put into practice in the real world, decision-makers will need to conduct in-depth research through preliminary questionnaires to clarify and define for themselves the goals of their strategic communication and public diplomacy efforts during the chosen period. In addition, it will be necessary to compare several other case study countries, including a Western country. Comparisons should be made longitudinally to identify global and national trends.

Despite these limitations, this research will practically contribute to state and non-state actors (from corporations and institutions) engaged in public diplomacy work. At the same time, it will shed light on the evaluation and measurement of global indices.

At the level of the theoretical contribution, we revealed that the field of national image and reputation management suffers from a dispersion of content and many unanswered questions. There was no similar attempt in the research or empirical literature that seeks to weigh a diverse number of international indices to evaluate the image of countries worldwide. Instead, the professional literature reads many models, each of which digs into its world and does not allow the combination of different worlds and tools as digital reality dictates in our world. A country that does not know how it is perceived in the world will not be able to understand its ranking and how institutions, organizations, and citizens see it around the world. This way could allow an analysis of the public diplomacy efforts undertaken by the state. On the other hand, it would also be possible to examine the agendas of the institutions and corporations and how they carry out corporate public diplomacy.

In the immediate term, the index will make it possible to reflect on the current state of the country's image in the world that participated in the index. In the long term, countries can strategically monitor and explain trends in their national image worldwide. The management may be carried out based on the new ability created by the index: obtaining a relative rating for the country according to the strength of its national image, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the national image; the possibility of identifying recurring trends in the country's national image; Routing the limited resources towards the weak of the state's images. In an environment with limited resources that prevails among the countries, this index may be an essential work tool, increasing the effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts undertaken to improve the national image.

As a senior American diplomat explained: "because foreign ministries around the world realized that in the absence of a quantitative tool that is not based on subjective speculation, it would not be possible to measure the effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts (Johnson, 2006). Our research is essential in building a database that gathers indicators necessary for the image of The country in the world. (Steven, 2007, p.14)

 The country's image consists of what the world thinks of it. Therefore, it is not for nothing that it has already been said that a national image may be a gift, but it may also be a poison (Baliey, 1971). The challenges facing the nation-state are so complex that they require politicians to dramatically change their attitude toward the importance of the national image. Our research work, which seeks to extract data from important international indices and produce an umbrella index from it, enables the ability to manage in a controlled and efficient manner the images of countries in the world. This strategic management may increase the country's national image score and strengthen its position in the world:

"Being able to measure the successes and failures of different programs, even if only approximately, would allow them to operate more constructively and make public diplomacy a fundamental strategic tool for foreign policy. (Pahvili, 2006, p. 279).

Eventually, we can conclude our main study's contribution: by offering a new methodological approach for an existing tool, tracking global indexes, by data-collection perspective to track and evaluate "national image" as one of the most comprehensive assessments of public diplomacy. The. The chapter emphasizes the state's necessity to gain "good scores" from those indexes published by multiplying powerful global corporates.

Our development of the "index of the indexes" opens up an entire world which explains to us more about the "diplomatic clash" between corporateseratives and states over winning legitimacy and producing successful public diplomacy to promote their goals. Since a final overall score will be formed for the chosen country, a multi-dimensional compression with other relevant countries will be allowed too.

Another contribution of this chapter is to provide a pioneering typology for the chosen indexes for our analysis and explorations, which will help put more light on the public and corporate diplomacy made by powerful nonstate actors making it to influence overseas. To maximize our practical contribution, we have chosen a unique case study, The United Arab Emirates, in which we will demonstrate our indexical method to explore it is the national image and public diplomacy around meaningful events which happened in the last year and may affect its unusual climbing favorably in these incidences.

We believe that our findings will be highly beneficial for both theory and practice of public diplomacy and the method to measure its core goal, "national image."

1. For example, as for the media coverage see: Segev, E., & Blondheim, M. (2013). America's global standing according to popular news sites from around the world. Political Communication, 30(1), 139-161. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2021-05/Anholt-Ipsos.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example see Pew Center's report on "Views about the state of the nation" : <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/06/06/views-about-the-state-of-the-nation/> . [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. US Department of State, ECA, The Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program Outcome Assessment (Washington DC: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, October 2005). This evaluation, conducted by SRI International, is based on a 2003 survey conducted among 1,894 Fulbright alumni from sixteen countries (Pahlavi, 2007, p. 260). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=global%20index%202022> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **"The Lord Carter Coles Public Diplomacy Review"**  
   December 2005: 1-77. (Accessed 1 Feb. 2010).  
   *The 2005 Lord Carter Coles review of UK public diplomacy is a follow-on to the 2002 Wilton review of PD and the 2004 Phillis Commission Report on government communications. The Carter review examines all aspects of UK public diplomacy, including a useful delineation of the differing roles of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the British Council, and the BBC World Service and, while citing improvements in PD since 2002, notes that more needs to be done, specifically in the areas of strategic planning and coordination, performance measurement, and the development of new PD tools. Among its recommendations, the review calls for the adoption of a Public Diplomacy Board, a PD Laboratory, and a new definition of public diplomacy itself.* <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/research/Eval_Resource_Guide_Online> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)