

The Overseas Promotion of National Identity by France and Japan for Global Outreach: A Comparative and Discursive Analysis of Their Narratives on Public Diplomacy since the End of the Cold War

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Abstract : The construction of Nation-States is a historical process that produces a type of national identity and culture that States nowadays mobilise for global outreach. National culture, as a set of norms and values influencing individuals' actions and decisions, produces a type of policy making of various strategies that impact how a Nation is promoted overseas. The 1990s were marked by a resurgence of the debates on national identity. This period is believed to have paved the way for nationalism and witnessed increased attention to analytical approaches to identity. Public diplomacy is a concrete example of how national culture is mobilised to project a favourable image of a Nation abroad, especially in the narratives on national identity mobilised by diplomatic actors. Public diplomacy is understood as providing tools for States to build and project strategic narratives that represent events and identities in an attempt to influence domestic and foreign audiences, be they domestic or foreign. France and Japan received little attention on the matter. This research hence aims to investigate how France and Japan have mobilised narratives on national identity since the 1990s in the context of their public diplomacy. To understand how identities are framed, qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis has been performed on a corpus of various speeches held by French and Japanese political actors in which they present their diplomacy goals, as well as official documents provided by both Ministries of Foreign Affairs. This analysis showed that the French discourse integrates a narrative on France's universal vocation, relying on the expression of a Nation whose model is worldly applicable and has the legitimacy to influence international decisions. The Japanese discourse does not concretely emphasise Japanese or Asian values, except for some narratives integrating Confucian and Shintō values. It rather revolves around the need for Japan to ensure its citizens' security and prosperity, hence the need for the Government to contribute to peace in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Keywords : comparative politics, culture, discourse analysis, narratives, public diplomacy

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