
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Digital diplomacy as a product of globalization and as a fruit of new public diplomacy is considered one of the major trends of the 21st century in diplomatic communication. Being under the influence of the extraordinary advancement in Information Communication Technology (ICT), the internet, and social media, the way of realization and presentation of diplomacy has been radically changed and is increasingly removed from the traditional diplomatic elements. This paper seeks to explore the definition, goals, and evolution of digital diplomacy in international relations. Methodologically, the paper used a qualitative method through secondary sources use to assess its benefits and risks. The paper argues that international actors are more than clear on how useful is digital diplomacy for achieving their goals in the international arena. However, the process of digitization is inseparable from cyber risks, as well as the freedom of the internet and social media is abused for various purposes that state and non-state actors may have. The concludes that although coupled with benefits on the one hand and risks, on the other hand, the risks of digital diplomacy are still covered by benefits, making it a key element for the realization of diplomatic activities in Africa and the world at large.

Keywords: Digital diplomacy, Foreign policy, ICT, International Relations, Globalization, Social media,

Introduction

The digital age of ICT, smartphones, and Twitter accounts has threatened to change diplomacy as one knows it earlier. With new technology providing access to instant information and interactive online communication, diplomats and government officials have begun to use this to their advantage. At present diplomats and various government representatives globally could communicate easily with the help of ICT tools without necessarily showing up their physical presence. Indeed, with the new technology initiatives for inter-states relations not only brings about transparency, accountability and development of various foreign polices but also help to improve global governance standard for various nation-states while making an important decision concerning their citizens.

However, although these digital tools could be strategically used to improve a country's international relations, they would never eliminate the need for humans in the field, traveling to foreign countries, analyzing information, and providing foreign policy suggestions. This means that those without access to these sophisticated required technologies would be neglected. Consequently, a divide between those with access to ICTs and those without would be created and likely deepen as e-diplomacy becomes more prominent (Norris, 2001 ; Van Dijk, 2009).

Further, compared to the technologies in traditional media, such as radio or television, new ICTs, particularly the Internet and mobile phones, provide diplomats with greater power of information personalization; in other words, retrieving information that is only in consensus with one's ideology and establishing relationships among others of nation-states. It is against this premise this paper seeks to examine how digital diplomacy is affecting international relations. The paper is structure as follows: definition, goals, and evolution of digital diplomacy, as well as the concept of digital diplomacy from an African perspective, benefits, and its risks. Finally, the conclusion seeks to put the findings into a larger context, explaining what digital diplomacy means for the future of international relations.

Conceptual Clarifications and Literature Review

Since digital diplomacy is such a new concept, there is little existing literature about it. Journal articles such as "Public diplomacy" by Melissen (2013) and "What is public diplomacy? Past practices, present conduct, possible future" by Roberts (2007) first explain the transformation from traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy. These sources highlight how public diplomacy reshaped foreign policy discussions from occurring only between elites to now occurring between government officials and other diplomats in the international arena.

However, there is debate amongst scholars as to how new digital technologies are affecting public diplomacy. Literature such as *Diplomacy in the Digital Age* by Hocking (2015) and "The digital diplomacy potential" by Lozev (2013) point out two different theories, with some scholars arguing that digitalization enhances public diplomacy, and others claiming that it completely alters it into something new, known as digital diplomacy.

Diplo Foundation, an organization that promotes more inclusive diplomacy, has been the leading source for discussions about digital diplomacy. Blog posts found on the organization's website have begun to popularize the topic by noting examples of its use. In *Twitter for Diplomats*, Sandres (2013) compiles a collection of tweets made by government officials to provide real-life evidence of digital diplomacy at work. In an attempt to assess the impact digital diplomacy has had on international relations, Twiplomacy, an online website, has conducted several case studies. However, it has ultimately concluded that digital diplomacy is too new to be able to measure any long-lasting effects. Even though scholars are becoming more interested in digital

diplomacy as it continues to evolve, gaps remain. This paper seeks to determine what effect digital diplomacy is having on international relations by analyzing the benefits and risks it presents.

Digital Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the “engine room” of international relations (Cohen, 1998). It is the established method by which states articulate their foreign policy objectives and coordinate their efforts to influence the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiations, and other such measures, short of war and violence.

As a recent development, digital diplomacy has been interpreted, defined, and understood in different yet similar ways by researchers and practitioners alike (Sotiriu, 2015). Digital diplomacy is diplomacy equipped with a range of new tools. The main tasks of diplomacy are still to observe, analyse, report and act to promote a country's interests (*Stockholm Initiative for Digital Diplomacy, 2014*). In short, digital diplomacy is about using the Internet to meet the goals of diplomacy. The task is still to gather and analyse information of importance to a country's foreign policy positions and communicate these, safeguard your own country's economic, political and commercial interests abroad and help your country's citizens in emergencies. Obtaining information, which traditionally takes place via embassies, permanent delegations, and temporarily posted diplomats, can now be helped along by digital information sources, such as social networks, microblogs, and search engines. Digital channels could also be used to inform governments, international organisations, and others of a country's position on a certain issue.

However, there is no widely accepted definition or framework that covers the concept. It would, thus, be safe to assume that current studies have only begun to scratch the surface of what digital diplomacy means and how it works. This explains the absence in the current literature of a reliable conceptual framework for assessing the effectiveness of social media for public diplomatic purposes (Bjola & Jiang, 2015).

Social media have become another important tools of diplomacy. This worldwide embrace of online channels has brought with it a wave of openness and transparency that has never been experienced before. Social media provide a platform for unconditional communication and have become a communicator's most powerful tool. There is a wide range of social media that international actors use, but the most popular ones are *Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Periscope, and Snapchat*.

Media Diplomacy: the use of media to articulate and promote foreign policy objectives of a given nation. It refers to the uses of the media by leaders to express interest in negotiation, to build confidence, and to mobilize public support for agreements concerning domestic and international issues of a state.

Methodology

Several different methods were adopted to collect data on this topic. With ICT, the internet, and social media being such a new concept in the discussion of public diplomacy, it makes it a difficult task to extract adequate and reliable information. However, qualitative methods such as; collection and selection of academic literature, scientific journals, and the internet, as well as a description of the collected materials and applied methods were used to analyze and determine the effect of digital diplomacy on international relations.

Theoretical framework

Communication and information revolutions of the 21st century have fundamentally and irreversibly changed the meaning of inter-state relations, the making of foreign policy, and the conduct of diplomacy. To explain these revolutions of digital diplomacy; this paper adopts communication theory as guides to discuss the importance of communication flow among actors of inter- states relations. The term communication was borrowed from the concept of '**cybernetics**' which means 'steering'. Norbert Weiner developed the concept of cybernetics in his famous work *Cybernetics*, to signify the control of communication in the political system. Cybernetics is “a body of theory and technique for the study of probabilities in different but analogous universes such as certain types of machines, animals, individual human beings, societies and nation-states and how message transactions function to control such universes”. Communication is treated as the cement that makes organizations. It alone enables a group to think together, to see together, and to act together. All social sciences require the understanding of communication.

Historically, communication theory in international relations was developed by Deutsch in his celebrated work *The Nerves of Government: Model of Political Communication and Control*. In this book, Deutsch applies the concept of the theory of information, communication, and control to problems of political and social science borrowing from Weiner's concepts of 'feedback', 'channel capacity, and 'memory'. From these, Deutsch developed his concept of “consciousness”, “will” and “social learning”. Since the 1960s, the communication approach became popular in social sciences, and terms like 'feedback', 'steering', and 'learning capacity have become a common usage while analyzing political systems. For Deutsch, communication in the true sense of the world is the nerves of government. A government is analogous to the steering of a ship and it is a form of administration of communication channels: Control of steering is central to the problem of steering. A government, which could lessen the uncertainty of the international environment, has an advantage and can steer clear in the troubled waters of international relations.

For this, the **main component is information** which is vital to the state's decision-making, both present, and future, vis-à-vis other states as well as non-state actors about their present and future courses of actions. Very important in this respect is the

feedback. This means the government can assess the impact of its decisions on other actors through feedback mechanisms (media is no exception in the models). This helps the government, especially those charged with the decision-making (diplomats) to carefully steer through the troubled waters of international relations. Therefore, the main focus of the communications approach is communication and information flows and not unitary emphasis on power.

In addition, communication (media) has a twofold role in the international arena. First, they provide input into the process as an independent variable added to environments. Here the leaders react to the perceived reality as constructed by the media and consider it (i.e digital diplomacy). Second, it is part of the environment that foreign policymakers try to affect or influence by making their decisions. This means that leaders who perform in an environment that includes the media take political decisions to solve problems, but at the same time try to make such decisions that would improve their domestic environment and the international community. This is the output environment component of the environment. For example, in conflict management and resolutions situation, leaders prefer to use the media to send messages to leaders of rival states and non-state actors. For example, during the recent xenophobic attacks on Nigerians by South Africans where media was used as an alternative to handle the deadlock before further arrangement for traditional diplomatic negotiations among the two nations.

Goals of Digital Diplomacy

The adoption of digital diplomacy by international subjects, mainly from the states, is based on several goals. Hanson (2012) outlines eight policy goals for digital diplomacy.

1. **Knowledge management:** To harness departmental and whole of government knowledge, so that it is retained, shared and its use optimized in pursuit of national interests abroad.
2. **Public diplomacy:** To maintain contact with audiences as they migrate online and to harness new communications tools to listen to and target important audiences with key messages and to influence major online influencers.
3. **Information management:** To help aggregate the overwhelming flow of information and to use this to better inform policy-making and to help anticipate and respond to emerging social and political movements;
4. **Consular communications and response:** To create direct, personal communications channels with citizens traveling overseas, with manageable communications in crises;
5. **Disaster response:** To harness the power of connective technologies in disaster response situations.

6. **Internet freedom:** Creation of technologies to keep the internet free and open. This has the related objectives of promoting freedom of speech and democracy as well as undermining authoritarian regimes.
7. **External resources:** Creating digital mechanisms to draw on and harness external expertise to advance national goals.
8. **Policy planning:** To allow for effective oversight, coordination, and planning of international policy across government, in response to the internationalization of the bureaucracy.

Evolution of Digital Diplomacy

At the end of the 20th century, was being developed a form of new public diplomacy, known as digital diplomacy. The “*la diplomatie numérique*” concept has the peculiarity of defining Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) areas of action as “international digital challenges” and expanding all traditional diplomacy through the use of ICT-induced innovations, and digital means are not simply considered as tools transferring information, but also contributors to the transformation of diplomatic activities.

E-diplomacy walks the line between continuity and change in our digital era. “E” is the abbreviation of the word “electronic” as a description of the early commercialization of the internet. The first developments of e-Diplomacy belong to 1992 when at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro for the first time civil society e-mails were used for lobbying in the negotiations as well as at the same time in Malta, at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, was founded the first unit for computer applications in diplomacy. Diplomats have often viewed the Arab Spring as the origin of digital diplomacy.

The use of digital media in diplomacy had begun earlier. Already in 2008, it was estimated that the internet was responsible for some 80% of the recruitment of youths to Jihadi movements. Realizing the need to counter Al-Qaeda's recruitment tactics, and its online narrative, President Bush's Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs launched *Public Diplomacy 2.0*. This initiative saw the migration of the State Department to Facebook, the launching of a departmental blog and the establishment of a Digital Outreach Team tasked with countering Al Qaeda's recruitment online.

The next milestone of digital diplomacy was the WikiLeaks scandal of 2010 in which WikiLeaks published some 250,000 diplomatic cables sent between US missions and Washington. It was WikiLeaks that taught diplomats that secrets can hardly exist in the digital age, that information wants to be free and that it can set itself free, and that the digital age would require new working routines, procedures, and tools. During and following the Arab Spring, young activists used social media to spread dissident discourse, shape narratives, and broadcast live footage of revolutions across the world. Social media began to be taken more seriously in the aftermath of the

revolutions, uprisings, and the ensuing political unrest in the Middle East in 2011 (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). The term “Twitter Diplomacy” emerged as a result of the dizzying usage and the very important role of social media, particularly Twitter. Twitter for now is the most used social network, which has become a very important communicative tool for many presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, ambassadors, and diplomats of the world (Sandre, 2013).

Digital Diplomacy in Africa: An Overview

The end of the Cold War as well as improvement in telecommunications has given the mass media a critical role to play in the foreign policy process. These developments displaced old diplomatic methods 'increasing the diplomatic influence of non-traditional actors such as journalists (Amnion 2000:10). Media is an important component that foreign policy decision-makers take into considerations as they develop their policies since it both constrains leaders and officials yet provides them with opportunities to advance their goals (Gilboa 2002). Naveh (2002) argues that the Media is an important component that foreign policy decision-makers take into considerations as they develop then policies since it both constrains leaders and officials yet provides them with opportunities to advance their goals.

To this effect, recent years have seen a growing academic interest in the migration of MFAs (foreign ministries) to social media. However, the majority of digital diplomacy studies tend to focus on the activities of Western and North American MFAs. This Euro- and American-centric approach fails to recognize the fact that digital diplomacy is now a global phenomenon. One geographic region witnessing a digital revolution in Africa, where MFAs have migrated en masse to Social Networking Sites (SNS). The foreign ministries of Botswana, Uganda, Namibia, Somalia, and Ethiopia all operate Facebook accounts, while MFAs from Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are active on Twitter. African MFAs also seem to be as adept at using social media as their Western peers. A recent study by Kampf, Manor & Segev (2016) found that African MFAs are as active online as their European counterparts, suggesting that in digital diplomacy, the digital divide could be narrowing.

Many countries in Africa and the world at large are seizing the moment and actively pursuing their foreign policy objectives and possibilities for a positive outlook through the creation of websites, blogs, and the use of social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Weibo, Flickr, Google+ and so on. Schwarzenbach (2015) argued that the biggest change Twitter has brought to Africa's foreign policy has been greater access to unfiltered information and worldwide engagement regardless of nationality or political status. Additionally, the increasing number of cellphone users in Africa further democratizes information-sharing. As a result, citizens and civil society are becoming increasingly able to hold governments accountable for policies and statements made by African politicians.

Social media could also help African nations in leveraging their position in the global

diplomatic arena. For instance, African MFAs that are highly active on Twitter may attract a significant number of their peers. By doing so, African countries can more easily disseminate information to the diplomatic milieu and voice their stance on issues shaping the global agenda.

Consequently, allowing each embassy to control its own Twitter feed to advance its individual strategic goals has proven successful thus far. However, it has sparked multiple diplomatic disputes between the embassies and local governments, particularly in Egypt and in addition to the Daily Show incident. For example, in September 2012, as Egyptians protesting against the anti-Islam film *Innocence of Muslims* gathered around the US embassy compound in Cairo, the embassy issued a statement condemning the film. The embassy defended its condemnation of the film throughout the day with a series of tweets, some of which it later deleted amid intense controversy about the role of the film in the protests. The incident became a debate point for the U.S. presidential campaign when Republican candidate Mitt Romney argued that posting tweets condemning the film rather than standing up for free speech rights symbolized “apology diplomacy” by the Obama administration (Fisher, 2013).

Another incident occurred in November 2012 when the U.S. Embassy in Cairo posted a series of tweets suggesting that President Morsi was at risk of becoming a dictator. That differed from the State Department's official statements and took a much tougher stance than spokeswoman Nuland did in a vague and carefully worded speech at a press briefing in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 27, 2012 (Dewey & Nuland, 2012).

In addition, a Twiplomacy study, which is an annual global survey of the presence and activity of heads of state and government, foreign ministers, and their institutions on Twitter, conducted by Burson-Marsteller, a global public relations firm and released in April 2015 analyzed 669 government accounts in 166 countries and revealed that 86% of all 193 United Nations (UN) governments have a presence on Twitter, while only 27 countries, mainly in Africa and Asia-Pacific, do not have any Twitter presence. According to the report, Twiplomacy 2015 also revealed that social media is an essential communication tool for governments and that Twitter has become the channel of choice for digital diplomacy. Even real-world differences are playing out on Twitter and sometimes end up in hashtag wars between embassies and foreign ministries (Alexandru, 2015). The UK Prime Minister @Number10gov is the most followed EU leader with more than three million followers ahead of Italy's @MatteoRenzi with 1.7 million followers (Alexandru, 2015).

In Africa, despite the apparent embrace of the new technologies by a large number of Africans, digital diplomacy is not yet catching on. According to an International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Report (2013), Africa was the fastest-growing region in terms of mobile broadband including 93 million subscriptions, 11% penetration,

and an 82% cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2010 and 2013. Although nowadays, more and more African foreign ministries (MFAs) are embracing the internet and social media and using them as tools for the achievement of foreign policy goals, the percentage of African countries maximizing the potentials of digital diplomacy is negligible. Many African leaders do not have Facebook or Twitter accounts. According to the 2015 Twiplomacy study, Rwanda's @PaulKagame is Africa's most-followed president with 842,260 followers ahead of Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta @UKenyatta (781,929 followers) and South Africa's presidential administration (@PresidencyZA (388,418 followers). Additionally, in the international press and other media, much of the debate in 2014 has focused on events such as the dramatic scene unfolding in Ukraine, the Hong Kong pro-democracy riots, and social turbulence in Western societies accompanying the rise of the Islamic State. By casting our net wider, we can get a broader perspective on how changing communications patterns cut across the world(s) of diplomacy (Brain & Jan 2015). Lessons can be drawn from three recent situations in which diplomacy has been challenged by a changing communications environment.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ebola Crisis. During 2014, the WHO faced increasing criticism over its handling of the Ebola crisis in West Africa. Much of the criticism related to the speed of its response together with the lack of an effective strategy and focused on the leading health NGO, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). On 3 April, MSF first warned WHO, who responded by saying the numbers affected were still small. A dispute then broke out on social media between MSF and the WHO's spokesperson, who insisted it was under control. In September 2014, the adoption of a digital disease management system (RegPoint) through which medical staff, patients, and the public could communicate via mobile phones was being promoted by its private sector development as the only means of combatting the emergency. A favorite theme is that social media is somehow 'demystifying' diplomacy and enhancing access to the diplomatic process. Examples regularly cited are social campaigns using Twitter hashtags and viral videos such as the 'bring back our girls' campaign calling for the release of 270 Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram.

To drive the point back on the recent issue, diplomatic deadlock between Nigeria and South Africa shows the impact of digital diplomacy concerning the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians. The core issue of racial dislike and attack on the black foreigners widened the diplomatic row between the two countries. For instance, in Nigeria, various stakeholders in the country berated the action of the South Africans and even called for the severing of diplomatic ties with South Africa at the height of the xenophobic attacks. The recall of the Nigerian High Commissioner in South Africa (first from digital communication) was an expression of the country's dissatisfaction with the response of the South African government on the spread of hate and dislike for fellow Africans residing in South Africa. It was observed through various comments on social media that the South African government had not shown the political will to curb the

menace which had resulted in the loss of innocent lives and properties destroyed. According to the Special Advisor to Nigeria's President on Diaspora Matters, Abike Dabiri, the frequent attributed xenophobic attacks in South Africa could be ascribed to hate speeches and misinformation emanating from the political class in South Africa.

However, such communication was easy largely because of the application of digital diplomacy (social media). 'Newness' in diplomacy today has everything to do with the application of new communications technologies to diplomacy. This issue goes right to the heart of diplomacy's core functions, including negotiation, representation, and communication (Simmons, 2013). Indeed, given the centrality of communication in diplomacy, it is hardly surprising that the rise of social media should be of interest to practitioners of diplomacy. Most of them, like people outside diplomatic culture, are in the process of adjusting their 'analog' habits and finding their voice in a new information sphere. This takes time, and for technological enthusiasts to simply proclaim the arrival of a 'new statecraft' in the form of what is variously termed e-diplomacy, digital diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, and 'twiplomacy' is too simplistic.

Furthermore, issues such as climate and health, which in the past were by no means part of the foreign policy realm, are handled by diplomatic means today as a matter of course. At the same time, in some areas of international relations, policymakers are turning away from multilateralism – and it is not just traditional diplomacy apologists, who assume that foreign policy issues are better solved bilaterally. Indeed, the public, in turn, is more directly –often mediated by social media – placing demands on diplomacy, be it to stop whaling, halt the flow of refugees, or any other issue on the contemporary agenda. Such shifts in the focus of diplomatic activity raise questions about which changes in modern diplomacy would have longer-term impacts, as well as if and how governments should respond to those changes. Four aspects concerning diplomacy seem to be of central importance: (1) The personality of the individual diplomat; (2) fundamental changes that come with technical developments, especially due to digitization; (3) the increase of diplomatically active actors; (4) the new sensitivities of various publics to foreign policies.

The heterogeneity and pluralism of thinking about modern societies impact the diplomat's personality and their work as much as anyone else. An example might be what occurs through the use of social media: even the way a diplomat uses social media constitutes a 'message' from the diplomat's society to the outside world beyond what a government wants to officially communicate. This changes the appearance and presumably the orientation of diplomacy and must be taken into account in the recruitment, training, and employment of diplomats.

Several new actors involve themselves in diplomatic processes on their initiative and/or are deliberately involved in dealing with new tasks of diplomacy. These actors include other national institutions, such as other ministries whose tasks extend into foreign

policy, international organizations – mostly UN sub-organizations – or, for Europeans, EU institutions. They could include transnational companies and non-governmental organizations. At the same time, when diplomats appear more visible to the public thanks to the digital revolution, they stand more in the shadow of other foreign policy actors. Professional diplomacy as a whole tends to be overshadowed at least partially by the activities of traditionally non-diplomatic actors.

In addition, contrary to the hopes of national-populist movements' that nation-states would win back their former status as sovereign actors, in reality, the process of dissolution of physical and non-physical borders continues at great speed. While states attempt to preserve their formal status as the last legitimate source of national and international governmental leadership, avenues are opening up for non-diplomatic, internationally active governmental institutions, parliaments, internationally active companies, media, non-governmental organizations, and organized crime. All of these attempts to influence society or the community of states.

Benefits of digital diplomacy

- 1. Strengthening international relations:** Diplomacy comes in many shapes and sizes. In the 21st century, international politics have a wide variety of international actors, including States, Ethno-nationalist factors, Multinational Corporations (MNCs), Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs, various Transnational Movements (TNMs) and Networks, or even individuals (Mingst, 2008). Recently, a network of international organizations of different sizes and types united people from all the countries. Therefore, digital diplomacy does not replace traditional diplomacy, but it could strengthen the state's work in international relations quickly and more effectively. Today, it is an essential element for realizing foreign policy. Digital diplomacy helps a lot in advancing its foreign policy goals, expanding international alignment, and affecting people who never set foot in any of the embassies of the world. Direct public interaction and the involvement of non-state actors make countries use social media and digital diplomacy as a way to maintain legitimacy and develop or strengthen relationships in a changing world (Deos, 2015).
- 2. Proximity with audiences:** The geographical distance between MFAs and embassies is less important than it was earlier. The internet websites, blogs, and social media have attracted more and more politicians and diplomats of the world with citizens from all corners of the globe. Shih (2009) opined that “in social media, to penetrate deeply within different audiences, must be applied the *Think globally, act locally* formula”. WikiLeaks has brought a conceptual shift in which digital and social media tools are seen as tools for communicating with online audiences rather than online audiences.
- 3. Fast and effective communications:** Digital technologies are extremely

useful for gathering and processing information regarding diplomatic activities as well as for fast communications in urgent situations. They enable governments to think about the consequences of events in different parts of the world and how they affect their country. For example, in times of crisis, embassies can create groups in WhatsApp that include the ambassador, consular officer, press secretary, staff who collects online information, diplomats from the headquarter and staff answering citizens questions on the internet.

Risks of digital diplomacy

1. **Freedom from the internet and social media:** Globalization of information encourages connections, information about norms elsewhere, also comparing policies and best practices notes. However, new communication technologies have had a profound impact on negative events as well. Kinsman & Bassuener, (2010) observed that terrorist and xenophobic groups also mobilize and recruit supporters through them. The internet is also perceived as a channel for the spread of extremism, terrorism, and the imposition of foreign ideologies. Between August 2015 and December 2017, the social network Twitter had closed 1.2 million accounts for a terrorist apology with the purpose to prevent the promotion of terrorism. However, Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube continue to have pressures from some world governments, which are criticizing them for not being strict enough in their fight against terrorist propaganda.
2. **Lack of knowledge about the usage of the internet and social media:** In practice, secrets no longer exist on the internet. The social media revolution is changing the way how people see the world, and how they are communicating. Not only it has made it easier for governments and ambassadors to engage with the public but it has made everybody more aware of the effects - both positive and negative - a single word, tweet, Facebook comment, video, or image could have in a relatively short timeframe. Lack of knowledge about using new communication technologies, the internet, and social media can result in terrible consequences, severe conflicts, even dismissals of politicians.
3. **Hacking:** The growing pervasiveness of the digital world, alongside the fear of future attacks of sensitive institutions, has turned many cyber optimists into cyber pessimists. Hacking is a risk, which has existed since the invention of the internet. Very rightly, it is considered to be the main risk of digital diplomacy because many heads of state, governments, and diplomats around the world have been its victims, which has rarely jeopardized their careers. Diplomatic rivals, including state and non-state actors, try to attack government systems to extract information that would serve them for certain purposes. In the ICT

era there is no success in controlling information, but in the knowledge how to use them ineffective forms. When private information becomes public, it could have a fast and profound impact on leading world affairs because the reputations of states and their leaders may be damaged (Westcott, 2008).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The approval of digital initiatives is considered a revolution in the realization of diplomacy because it has radically changed the development of diplomatic practices, information management, public diplomacy, strategy planning, international negotiation, and crisis management, highlighting a new form of public diplomacy, the digital one.

The new diplomacy not only ensures fast access to information to diplomats and other officials but also trivializes the role of ambassadors, breaks diplomatic deadlocks, and creates a climate conducive to negotiations. Diplomats could use media events to cultivate public support for a peace process after the conclusion of the initial phase but before moving to the next phase. At present, world leaders extensively use digital diplomacy as a significant instrument to advance negotiation and to mobilize support for agreements.

Furthermore, digitalization does not change the fundamental functions of diplomacy, but the texture of diplomacy is undergoing significant change. The impact of developments in ICT has to be seen in the context of these broader evolutionary trends, and as a constituent part of a changing landscape in which diplomatic tools are reconfigured to meet the demands of changing processes. It is recognized that the rise of networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, and other social media is important, but the ongoing debate equally needs to address the wider impact of digitalization on the external relations of governments and other international actors.

The conventional wisdom among diplomats is that digitalization does not change the fundamental objectives of diplomacy, but offers new ways through which these could be achieved. However, as a matter of course, governments are always using new technical *instruments*. The means of *digitization*, for example, thus intervene in the functioning of administrative action. Such intervention could hinder or accelerate diplomacy, for example in the collection and processing of information. Furthermore, digitization influenced by social media, in turn, influences the preservation, gain, and loss of trust in the public of a country and its international partners. Governments need to take a more nuanced look, taking into account the different facets of diplomatic practice. Although digital diplomacy is for instance not synonymous with public diplomacy, it is obvious that the resources provided by big data and social media networks greatly enhance the strategies available here. And consular work and crisis management are increasingly impacted by digital technologies. Foreign ministries should work out what they mean by 'digital diplomacy'. The term requires a greater degree of precision than is commonly given in government circles, which reminds of

vague references to 'soft power' by political leaders and diplomats.

Ministries of Foreign Affairs, diplomats, and governments, in general, should therefore be proactive in four areas:

1. Diplomats must understand the tension between individual needs and state requirements, and engage with that tension without detriment to the state.
2. Digitization must be employed in such a way that gains in efficiency are not at the expense of efficacy.
3. Forms of mediation should be developed that reconcile the interests of all sides allowing governments to operate as sovereign states, and yet simultaneously use the influence and potential of other actors.
4. New and more open state activities need to be advanced that respond to how emotionalized publics who wish to participate in governance express themselves.

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