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# The Nature of the Relationship between Social Media and Digital Diplomacy: A Study on Enhancing Diplomatic Performance in the Digital Age

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## Abstract:

This article explores the relationship between social media and digital diplomacy, it emphasizes on how these platforms can be used to improve diplomatic performance by establishing new communication channels, expanding the scope of influence, and leveraging the characteristics of the digital environment to strengthen the state's international presence. In this context, digital diplomacy emerges as a new form of diplomatic practice, characterized by direct interaction, rapid responsiveness, and continuous engagement in public digital spaces.

Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, the research combines documentary analysis with qualitative digital content analysis to investigate selected international experiences, including those of the United Kingdom, France, the United States, European Union, and Denmark.

Through this study, we conclude that amid the rapid developments in digital communication, social media has become a central actor in reshaping the mechanisms; and tools of diplomatic practice. Diplomacy is no longer confined to closed official channels; rather, it has become open to interactive platforms that enable states to reach audiences directly, influence public opinion, and manage their external image with greater efficiency.

**Keywords:** Social Media; Digital Diplomacy; Diplomatic Performance; Digital Space.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human society is witnessing a steady development in the field of digital technology and its applications, a development that began two decades ago, with which human life has become more connected to electronic devices and virtual worlds. Digital technology has also come to have the greatest impact on the development of political systems and the formation of international relations.

Media has long played a vital role in societies across a wide range of social, economic, political, and cultural issues—a role that has been further strengthened by technological advancement and the new information revolution. Media outlets have undergone a qualitative shift in their tools, enabling them to exert greater and more profound influence on our social values and opinions on various matters. This transformation has been amplified by the rise of new media, which has ushered the world into a new era of human interaction and communication—particularly through what is known as social networking platforms. These platforms are among the most recent and widely used products of media and communication technologies, and they now exert a powerful influence on both individuals and communities. Their use has expanded beyond mere communication and interaction to encompass political functions as well. In recent decades, international relations have undergone profound transformations in communication and influence mechanisms. Social media platforms—most notably Facebook, Twitter, and others—are no longer limited to social or media spheres alone; rather, their impact has extended to the very structure of diplomatic practice. This has given rise to a new form of engagement between states and the public, known as digital diplomacy. Diplomacy was once limited to closed channels and formal protocols, but today it has become a more open, dynamic, and interactive process. Social media has emerged to become a central tool in managing international image, formulating political messages, and responding to crises in record time.

Therefore, this article examines the nature of the relationship between social media and digital diplomacy, as one of the most prominent manifestations of the transformation in public diplomacy in the digital era. It also highlights the increasing role of communication platforms in boosting diplomatic performance and reformulating its tools and mechanisms to keep pace with the modern communication environment.

In this context, the study aims to: identify the position of social media within the framework of digital diplomacy; analyze how these platforms are used

to achieve foreign policy objectives; and explore the new communicative dimensions that digital media has imposed on diplomatic practice.

Thus, the study addresses the following research problem: To what extent do social media platforms enable states to enhance the effectiveness of their diplomatic performance?

To grasp and delve into answering this pivotal question, we must formulate the following sub-questions:

- how can the new media serve the practice of diplomacy?

-What is the concept of digital diplomacy and what are its main mechanisms?

-How have different states utilized social media platforms to serve their foreign policy interests?

To address the main research problem in addition to the sub-questions, the following hypothesis is proposed: The transformation of diplomacy in the digital age has increased the importance of social media as a tool of international communication and influence. Consequently, states that effectively integrate social media into their diplomatic strategies are more likely to strengthen their international visibility, engage foreign publics, and enhance the overall effectiveness of their diplomatic activities.

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, regarding the nature of the subject, which requires first describing the phenomenon—namely, the relationship between social media and digital diplomacy—and then analyzing its dimensions and its impact on enhancing diplomatic performance through communication, visibility, engagement, and influence. To achieve these objectives, the study relies on documentary analysis to examine the official reports, academic studies…ext. and digital content analysis to explore selected international experiences and to analyze examples of diplomatic communication disseminated through official social media platforms.

Therefore, in this study, diplomatic performance does not refer to quantitative diplomatic outcomes. Rather, it denotes the capacity of diplomatic actors to increase visibility, Foster engagement, communicate rapidly, and influence public perceptions through digital platforms.

Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to understand how social media platforms have transformed diplomatic communication practices and to evaluate their contribution to enhancing diplomatic performance in the contemporary international environment.

## 2. The Concept of Social Media as a New Media Tool

Social media has emerged amid rapid technological change as one of the most important manifestations of new media, transcending the traditional frameworks of media in terms of one-way dissemination and institutional monopoly over information. This new form of media has provided an open space for participation, content production, and the circulation of public opinion in a direct manner that is not subject to central control. From this perspective, approaching social media as a new media tool requires first defining "new media" as the broader framework, before proceeding to define social media as a component within that framework.

**2.1 The Concept of New Media:**

New media emerged as a broad term in the latter part of the twentieth century, encompassing the integration of traditional media—such as film, images, music, the spoken and printed word—with the interactive capabilities of computers and communication technologies, along with the applications of the scientific revolution witnessed in the field of communication and media. The technological revolution in communication contributed to overcoming geographical space and political boundaries, bringing about a structural transformation in both the quantity and quality of media Despite the difficulty of reaching a clear and definitive definition of new media[1]—due to its dynamic, constantly evolving nature—several definitions have nonetheless been proposed, including the following:

- "New media" is a term used to describe forms of electronic communication made possible through the use of computers, as opposed to traditional media, which includes print journalism—such as newspapers and magazines—television, radio (to some extent), and other static forms of communication[2].
- Sheridan College of Technology provides a practical definition of new media as: "All forms of digital media that are presented in a digital and interactive format." According to this definition, new media relies on the integration of text, images, video, and audio, as well as using the computer as its primary tool for production and presentation. Interactivity, however, is the principal distinguishing feature of new media and one of its most defining characteristics.[3]".
- It can also be defined as the utilization of technology to disseminate news, information, and knowledge by integrating traditional media with digital tools and the global information network, in a way that enables interactive communication between sender and receiver at high speed through the internet technologies and social networking sites that rely on web-based platforms. Brody Douglas states:

"While television continues to serve as a window to the world, new media has enabled the user to be connected to the world—as long as they are connected to the internet.[4]"

The forms of new media have become increasingly diverse, growing, and interconnected over time. Among the most prominent of these forms are:[5]

- Blogs/ are websites characterized by regular updates and typically combine texts with images, graphics, videos, and links to other web pages. They are generally informal in nature and often take the form of personal journals or daily news entries.
- Photo Sharing Sites/ are sites that allow you to literally share photos online with your friends, colleagues and family members, and Flickr is considered one of the most popular on the internet.
- Podcasts (audio blogging)/ are a blend of the terms "iPod" and "broadcast", referring to audio or video files that can be listened to or viewed on a personal computer or a variety of portable media devices—such as iPods or mobile phones
- Social Network Sites/ are online communities that offer users opportunities to connect with others and with individuals who share common interests or provide access to shared resources.
- Video Sharing Sites/ allow users to upload and exchange video clips over the internet. They are similar to photo sharing platforms, with YouTube being the most popular among them.

**2.2 The Concept of Social Media:**

Nowadays, the use of the internet has fostered a form of social interaction among individuals within a virtual electronic space, bridging distances between peoples, eliminating borders, and facilitating cultural exchange. This form of communication has been identified to be known as "Social Media Networks," which are among the most widespread platforms on the internet due to the unique features that distinguish them from other websites, as well as their role in transmitting news and political events. These characteristics have encouraged increasing engagement from the internet users across the globe.

The concept of social networking sites, like other social concepts, has sparked wide-ranging debate among academics due to the multiplicity and overlap of the approaches and perspectives used to study it. Terminologically, in English, it is referred to as "social media" or "social network," meaning social network connectivity. However, the Arabic term is more precise in its descriptive nature; the phrase "social networking sites" in Arabic does not provoke much debate regarding its meaning but rather raises questions when it comes to defining it;

many scholars have tried to come with a comprehensive definition of the term.

- It refers to "the emerging modes of communication within the digital environment, which enable smaller communities to connect, interact, and exchange knowledge and resources online. This environment empowers individuals and groups to amplify their voices and those of their communities on a global scale."[6]
- Mohamed Al-Mansour defines social networks as interactive social platforms that allow users to communicate at any time and from anywhere in the world. These networks emerged on the internet a few years ago and have reshaped the concept of communication and closeness between peoples. They earned their "social" label because they foster human relationships. Recently, they have gone beyond their social function to become expressive and protest tools. The most prominent social media networks are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, with Facebook being the most significant one.[7]
- It is also a term given to a group of websites on the internet; that appeared with the second generation of "Web 2.0;" which allows communication between individuals in a virtual community environment that brings them together according to interest groups or affiliation networks (country, university, company...). all of this is done through direct communication services such as sending messages or viewing the personal files of others, and knowing their news and information that they make available for display.[8]

Accordingly, social networking sites can be defined as a group of platforms designed and developed by major companies with the aim of attracting the largest possible number of users and friends, enabling them to share activities and interests within the structure of a virtual community. These platforms offer features such as instant messaging, public and private communication, and the sharing of multimedia content including audio, images, videos, and files. Such services have attracted millions of users from all over the world.

Based on the aforementioned definitions, the key characteristics of social media can be summarized as follows:

- Interconnected networked communication: It allows communication from multiple points to multiple points and not just from a single point to multiple points, as is the case in traditional mass communication.
- Flexibility and ease of access and entry for individual users to carry out their activities as senders, receivers, and producers.
- Interactivity: It allows users to actively participate in the production,

modification, and distribution of content.

- Rich Diversity of Content: social media is characterized by a vast and diverse range of content compared to traditional media, which was limited to specific and narrow formats.[9]
- Multiplicity and Ease of Use: Social media platforms support multiple uses in both form and content, offering a high degree of flexibility in the production of media materials Social networks use symbols and images in addition to letters and simple language, which make it easier for users to convey their ideas and interact with others.
- Cost-Effective in Terms of Effort, Time, and Money: With free subscription and registration, anyone can have a space on the social media network, making it accessible to all—not limited to the wealthy or to a specific group.
- Gathering, Participation, Wide Dissemination, and Freedom from Spatial Constraints: These networks are not limited by specific geographic boundaries; they allow rapid access to content anytime and anywhere, it also enables expression on various issues and topics—granting them a global character.[10]

The concept of social networking has created an unprecedented significance in contemporary society. Analyzing this phenomenon reveals that it involves the interaction of five fundamental elements that shape the local community: society, interaction, connections, place, and time. Accordingly, the digital representation of social network activity on the internet—and on the web in particular—has come to contain various social phenomena in an electronic form.

The significance of media and its impact on various events and social phenomena has grown considerably with the emergence and widespread use of social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and others. These platforms have profoundly transformed the ways in which people communicate and interact, how products are marketed, how governments engage with citizens, and how companies conduct their business. They have also reshaped the concept of volunteerism and the methods by which political, social, and human rights activists carry out their activities. Moreover, social networks have come to play a major role in influencing political processes, democratic practices, and even diplomacy and everything related to foreign policy —an influence that we aim to explore further in the remaining sections of this article.

## 3. Digital Diplomacy as an Emerging Pillar of Diplomatic Practice

The rapid and constant development in communication and information technologies has created a profound transformation—on the individual level as well as on states and communities level. This technological advancement in digital media, along with the emergence of social networking platforms, has produced a new challenge for states. As a result, it has become imperative to modernize traditional diplomatic communication tools and to employ the vast advantages offered by digital media to governments, particularly to diplomatic services. This has led to the evolution of new forms and models of diplomacy that encompass all methods of conducting foreign relations across their various dimensions.[11] Such a broad concept is the closest to reflect the realities of contemporary life, where modes of communication and interaction have diversified far beyond the traditional bilateral dealings once limited to diplomatic envoys.[12]

Within this expanded framework, diplomacy has evolved into multiple interrelated tracks: Track One refers to official diplomacy, encompassing formal channels of communication, negotiation, and engagement among states at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. Track Two: denotes unofficial diplomacy, which has gained significant prominence since the early 1990s. It involves communication and cooperation between non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions. Track Three: pertains to the private sector, particularly the role of corporate entities and multinational firms in shaping cross-border engagement and economic diplomacy. Track Four: emphasizes people-to-people interaction and communication, involving cultural, scientific, artistic, and athletic exchanges, often facilitated through the internet and various exchange programs. The fifth track is cooperation and interaction between the media through programs that contribute to cross-cultural understanding other societies. All of these have come to be collectively known as "Multi-track Diplomacy.[13]"

Diplomacy in the digital realm or what is commonly termed "digital diplomacy[*]"; represents one of the emerging forms of diplomatic practice developed in response to technological advancement. particularly following the advent of social media platforms, which have become a global arena unrestricted to any specific group but utilized by states, governments, political parties, civil society movements, and even the general public.

Despite the growing prevalence and repeated use of the term in recent years, establishing a fixed definition for "digital diplomacy" remains a challenging

task—much like other emerging concepts in the humanities. This difficulty arises from the fact that ministries of foreign affairs around the world engage in digital diplomacy through varying patterns, while the continuous evolution of information technology and communication tools persistently reshapes both its definition and its practice

- Digital diplomacy, in general, refers to the use of the internet-based tools—particularly social media platforms—in conducting a form of modern diplomacy. Many scholars and diplomats have embraced the term digital diplomacy to describe the intersection between digital technologies and diplomatic practice.
- "The US government has defined digital diplomacy as: the use of social media in diplomacy to facilitate interaction between diplomats and the internet users in host countries."
- "Academics define it as: a branch of public diplomacy that aims to engage with broad sectors of society in foreign countries rather than focusing solely on the political elite. It also refers to the extensive use of information and communication technologies—including new media, social networks, blogs, platforms, and other online tools—in the field of diplomacy".
- "The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs views digital diplomacy as an extension of traditional diplomacy, grounded in the innovations and new forms of use brought about by information and communication technologies.[14]"
- "One of the most comprehensive definitions—offered by Manor and Segev in "Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice" —holds that digital diplomacy specifically refers to the growing use of social media platforms by states to achieve their foreign policy objectives and to enhance their international image and reputation.[15]
- In other words, digital diplomacy is also defined as "The Art of Negotiation" and the management of relations between states. Media power—media diplomacy—is considered as a form of state power, enabling control over information and its strategic use to influence public opinion and to shape the state's image. This is closely related to the state's media strength or to the extent to which its human resources and experts are effectively engaged with the media, whether through traditional outlets (such as newspapers, radio, and television) or modern platforms (such as satellites and the internet), with the aim of boosting a positive image of the state.[16]

In general, digital diplomacy refers to the way governmental bodies use information and technology to manage international change. It is an extension of traditional diplomacy and encompasses all processes related to communication

between official state actors. Digital diplomacy operates on two levels: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies located across the globe. By working on these two levels, countries can tailor their foreign policy messages and national brand to the unique characteristics of their domestic audiences in terms of history, culture, values, and traditions, thereby facilitating acceptance of their foreign policy and the image they aim to promote According to the digital diplomacy model, communications are characterized by openness, directness, and interactivity. Over the medium and long term, such communications aim to build soft power that serves the interests and international orientations of states.[17]

Accordingly, the objectives behind states' adoption of digital diplomacy can be summarized as follows:[18]

- Knowledge management and its optimal use in advancing national interests abroad
- Engaging with audiences online and leveraging new communication tools to listen to and influence influential public elites.
- Managing the vast amount of information available online and utilizing it to enhance policy- making, as well as to anticipate and respond to emerging social and political movements.
- Communication and consular responsiveness through the establishment of direct, personalized communication channels with citizens abroad, particularly in times of crisis.
- Disaster response by harnessing the power of technologies in times of crisis
- Internet freedom, the promotion of freedom of speech and democracy, as well as the undermining of authoritarian regimes.
- Establishing digital mechanisms to leverage external expertise and harness it in supporting national objectives.
- Building relationships with foreign citizens and civil society organizations outside official diplomatic channels.
- Engaging with influential public elites and foreign interest groups.
- Countering negative propaganda and delegitimizing anti-state groups.
- Extending influence using the internet to shape public opinion in competing countries.
- Strengthening the state's soft power tools and influencing the direction of global discourse to shape international public opinion that serves national interests.

Moreover, digital diplomacy is built on a set of key elements that help to achieve its objectives efficiently within the modern communication environment.

The most prominent ones can be summarized as follows:[19]

-Digital Infrastructure: it depends on the presence of an advanced communication network, such as high-speed internet, computers, and secure digital platforms, all of which allow for instant and effective communication with various audiences domestically and internationally.

-Qualified Personnel (Technically and communicatively): digital diplomatic performance requires skilled personnel with dual competencies: technical proficiency, and a deep grasp of political and diplomatic communication. What ensures appropriate and quick responsive messages.

-Supportive Political Will: The support of the policy makers is very important in digital diplomacy, it cannot succeed without it, they advantage it and grant it the necessary resources to develop its tools and to ensure its continuity within the framework of the state's strategy.

-A Clear Strategic Vision: what is required to activate digital diplomacy is an effective comprehensive goal-oriented communication plan that aligns with the state's foreign policy, identifies target audiences, then defines the means and messages to be employed.

-Agility and Responsiveness: The readiness for instant response to developments and crises is one of the main elements that characterizes digital diplomacy. Digital tools foster quicker action contrary to traditional diplomatic channels.

-Credibility and Transparency: To ensure effectiveness, digital messages must be characterized by credibility and accuracy, which in turn reinforces the trust of both domestic and international audiences in the content disseminated by the state.

-Capacity to Influence and Shape Public Perception: Digital diplomacy can build a positive image of the state and can influence public opinion through the dissemination of symbolic messages as well as introduce the state as a responsible and proactive actor.

Accordingly, any state seeking to achieve these objectives must explore ways to use internet-based tools—such as social media platforms—in the practice of diplomacy.

**4. The Role of Social Media within the Mechanisms of Digital Diplomacy**

This tremendous advancement in media and communication, along with the profound transformation in international diplomatic relations, has given rise to a new form of interaction between the media and diplomacy. It now presents a significant challenge and immense pressure on diplomacy worldwide The widespread availability of technology and communication tools at low cost, along with the increasing involvement of populations in shaping policies and making

decisions, has given rise to a new culture that demands rapid access to information and swift decision-making. This has compelled diplomacy to respond quickly and effectively to all events, news, and information within a framework of clarity and transparency. Successful diplomacy today is media-driven diplomacy, not the silent one that remains unheard.[20]

Therefore, it is necessary to develop the traditional means of diplomatic communication and to make profit of the significant advantages that have been granted by digital media to states and their governments, particularly diplomatic institutions, in order to develop new forms and patterns of diplomacy.

New media has offered foreign ministries a unique opportunity by enabling the establishment of virtual embassies in regions where the state has no diplomatic presence. This is achieved through the development of websites created by the ministry in the host country, offering expanded and advanced services.[21]

The use of new media in diplomatic work through tools such as the official websites of diplomatic missions, or through social media platforms like "Twitter", "Facebook", and "YouTube", has made it possible to reach the public of the host country directly, rather than limiting interactions to official institutions. These new tools have increasingly contributed to advancing the objectives of foreign policy.[22]

Twitter and Facebook are currently among the most popular social media platforms used by foreign ministries around the world. Twitter- in particular- serves as an effective and successful tool of digital diplomacy, functioning as a direct promotional channel for self-representation. It is also a valuable instrument during media conflict or divergent information sources, as it provides access to a broad network that allows governments to engage with the public on various issues, as well as with opinion leaders such as journalists, politicians, and bloggers. This has led it to be one of the most prominent interactive tools of digital diplomacy, leading to the emergence of the term Twiplomacy.[23]

Facebook is also being increasingly used through the creation of personal profiles, public accounts, or pages. Similar to twitter, it has recently witnessed the emergence of what is known as Facebook Diplomacy, particularly with the rise of pages belonging to presidents, officials, and governmental institutions, and their wide engagement with the public.[24]

The relationship between diplomacy and media—particularly new media—is a closely intertwined one, with both seen as two sides of the same coin. Most scholars and experts in this field revolve around a common concept: "influence", which media provides to diplomacy. One of the key outcomes of this relationship

has been the emergence of what is known as "digital diplomacy", or as some countries describe it, "Influence Diplomacy".

The diplomat now plays a non-traditional role in the context of the massive information revolution, making extensive use of new media to effectively steer the process of influence in the right and appropriate direction. Direct, balanced, and intelligent engagement with all forms of media turns the diplomat into an influential figure. Media outlets are the means by which the image intended for the external public is conveyed. Moreover, thoughtful and cautious engagement through social media platforms such as (Facebook, Twitter, and others) brings you closer to everyone and makes you a more influential figure.[25]

New media and cyberspace have provided all those working in the diplomatic field with the opportunity to express their capabilities, ambitions, and creativity. It has offered them a vast space for gathering information and transmitting it to their home countries, enhancing their capacities, and facilitating the monitoring of developments both at home and in the host country—all in service of their nation. It has also enabled diplomats to receive remote training via the internet and to improve their academic and language skills, particularly with the emergence of social media networks.[26]

The emergence of the term digital diplomacy in international relations has resulted from the recognized role that new media plays in transforming many autocratic societies into democratic ones. The use of diplomatic media is no longer limited to situations where direct communication channels between crisis parties are unavailable, in which case politicians would resort to the media to convey messages to a particular state or official—whether a formal or informal figure. Today, new media—especially social media—has become the most irreplaceable diplomatic tool that states rely on everyday and every moment , as modern diplomatic practice is now seen as a reflection of a people's culture rather than the culture of a regime, which was the case in the past.

The main factor driving world leaders and various governments to pay attention to this type of diplomacy are the staggering figures revealed by recent statistics on the most popular networks worldwide and the number of their users. According to statistics, Facebook ranks as the leading social media network in terms of the number of users, with over two billion registered accounts. There are more than 3 million search queries on Google every minute, over 4 million users watching videos on YouTube each minute, and nearly 500,000 tweets posted on Twitter.

These significant statistics point to the importance of this qualitative shift in

patterns of human communication, which has led governments to fully capitalize on this fundamental transformation in communication technologies.

Statistics published in the "Twiplomacy 2018" study indicate that 97% of United Nations member states (a total of 193 countries) have an official presence on Twitter. The study recorded 951 accounts affiliated with the offices of prime ministers and foreign ministers from 187 countries, distributed as follows: 372 personal accounts and 579 institutional government accounts. Facebook is the second most popular platform among world leaders. According to the same study, accounts belonging to heads of government and foreign ministers from 187 countries were identified on Facebook in 2018, representing 93% of the United Nations member states the third platform in this field is Instagram, with 81% of United Nations member states having created accounts on the platform and sharing daily stories.[27]

According to the "Digital Diplomacy Review" report, published annually by the Istanbul Center for Digital Affairs "AKA", which evaluates the digital diplomacy performance of 210 foreign ministries around the world, the United Kingdom ranks first globally in digital diplomacy performance, followed by France and then the United States of America.

One of the most prominent diplomatic models and experiences is the British one, which established a dedicated office for digital diplomacy that carries out numerous activities through the internet and social media platforms among the most prominent British diplomatic figures to adopt the new diplomacy approach within the diplomatic corps is former British Ambassador to Lebanon, Tom Fletcher. During his tenure at the Foreign Office, he advanced digital engagement, earning him the nickname “The Twitter Diplomat.”

The United Kingdom has also made extensive use of websites and social media platforms; in a wide range of world languages to serve the purposes of its public diplomacy. One of the most prominent British examples of digital diplomacy; is the Twitter account of Edwin Samuel, the spokesperson for the UK government in the Middle East and North Africa, which is operated in Arabic. In addition, the UK Foreign Office runs an Arabic-language Twitter account, alongside a long list of Twitter accounts managed by British embassies and consulates across the Arab world.[28]

France is also regarded as one of the leading countries in the field of digital diplomacy, referring to it as “influence diplomacy.” Since 2009, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pursued a dedicated policy concerning communication

through social networks It was the first French ministry to open a Twitter account. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs places significant emphasis on digital activity, with the primary aim of promoting France's image; and consequently defending its interests—whether economic, linguistic, or cultural.

The Ministry has also established a monthly interactive session; on the Twitter platform, allowing the public to engage with French officials, express their views, and receive responses to their questions on various topics. This distinctive strategy leverages the most important feature of new media; direct interactivity with the public, which enables the highest degree of influence in service of the core objective of digital diplomacy, which is: addressing the public and influencing it directly at minimal cost.[29]

The French approach also focuses on promoting digital content in the French language; and upholding values that France regards as integral to its national identity; such as: human rights; social justice; cultural diversity; and environment. France places; significant emphasis on producing high-quality content across its official digital platforms, aiming to reinforce its image as a nation of cultural and humanistic influence.[30]

In the context of other international experiences, the "American experience" is particularly noteworthy; the U.S. Department of State launched an initiative to train American diplomats in various countries, in the professional and effective use of social media platforms; as part of the "Global Dialogue" initiative aimed at promoting U.S. policies to foreign audiences. This initiative yielded significant results, as American diplomats began to use social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook in their daily work. As a result, the number of followers of the U.S. Department of State's pages on Facebook and Twitter reached 26 million followers; Signs of this form of diplomacy began to emerge in 2002. When the U.S. Department of State established a dedicated Office of E-Diplomacy All of these measures aim to explain the principles of U.S. foreign policy in a way that is acceptable to global public opinion. Seeking to improve the country's image and communicate its initiatives in areas such as reform, spreading democracy, defending human rights, and fighting against terrorism, among others.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been widely dubbed the "King of Twitter" due to his frequent use of the platform to announce official positions, articulate policy stances, and convey diplomatic messages — including threats directed at rivals and adversaries,[31]in this regard, Trump asserted in an interview with The Financial Times: "Without tweets, I wouldn't be here today." As Trump noted: "I have over 100 million followers across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram" He added: "I

don't have to go to the fake media.[32]" This underscores the powerful influence of new communication channels employed in digital diplomacy on both domestic and global public opinion.

There is also the "European Union experience," which has adopted "digital diplomacy" as a strategy for communicating "cultural" and "economic" content to the world and influencing the global audience in the digital space. The European Union invented the term "citizen ambassador" through digital platforms and social media sites, positioning the digital citizen as a form of "soft power" to advance its strategic objectives.

As for Denmark, it appointed Casper Klynge in September 2017 as Ambassador to Silicon Valley (California, United States), home to some of the world's leading technology and social media companies, such as "Apple" and "Intel". In his remarks, Tech Ambassador Casper Klynge stated: "Some tech companies have an enormous impact on every country", adding: "This clearly underlines the need for "Techplomacy."

The term "Techplomacy," used by the ambassador, merges the words technology and diplomacy. France adopted a similar approach by appointing David Martinon as Ambassador for Digital Affairs in November of the same year. The role of the digital ambassador focuses on issues related to the digital domain under the purview of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. These include international negotiations on cybersecurity, internet and networks governance, freedom of expression online, matters related to intellectual property rights in the digital space, and support for digital sector exports.[33]

Whereas public diplomacy was once the exclusive domain of decision-makers, "international relations practitioners", and "media professionals" such as journalists and columnists, the rise of "digital platforms"—particularly social media channels—has opened up a free space for all citizens across both the Arab and Western worlds to engage in social, economic, political, and especially cultural participation. This modern form of "social connectivity" has, in turn, contributed to reshaping and expanding the meaning of "diplomacy" itself The new mode of "communication", embodied in "digital interaction" through social media platforms, has encompassed a wide range of activities and events through which "citizen" has been able to contribute to strengthening international ties and relationships.

In light of the foregoing, it can be concluded that the internet and social media platforms have become essential instruments in enhancing and

operationalizing the diplomatic performance of the state. The main advantages of these tools are listed as follows:

– Expanding the reach of diplomatic efforts: The strengthening and advancement of international relations are no longer confined to formal interactions between two official actors—such as presidents, ministers, embassies, or organizations. With the emergence of digital diplomacy, a new complementary channel has emerged alongside traditional diplomacy. It improves the state's capacity to implement foreign policy in a faster and more direct manner, broadens international outreach, and also enables engagement with individuals and entities beyond the reach of conventional diplomatic mechanisms. Moreover, it allows for direct communication with influential civil society organizations and public opinion leaders in target countries, all within the scope of the state's external diplomatic apparatus.

– Multiple messages with a unified meaning: The geographical distance between diplomats and target audiences has become increasingly irrelevant with the widespread use of digital communication technologies. These tools enable the segmentation of audiences based on interests, geographic location, age groups, and other classifications. As a result, it is now possible to deliver multiple tailored messages—conveying the same core meaning—to various segments of the target audience, thereby fostering more effective and meaningful engagement. Additionally, this allows for monitoring audience reactions and categorizing respondents based on the nature of their interaction with the message. Such practices contribute to a deeper understanding of audience preferences, facilitate the evaluation and adjustment of existing policies, and promote the exchange of ideas with target publics in a way that fosters greater insight into their perspectives on public affairs.

- A dynamic and responsive environment: This is achieved through the rapid and efficient exchange of information and heightened awareness of current events, both of which can serve the public interest. In addition to providing highly valuable data that can be collected, analyzed, and used to shape response and engagement strategies, such an environment also enables leadership and swift action that may produce positive outcomes for the nation.[34]

- Low Cost and High Returns: This entire process does not require substantial financial budgets to be implemented. The effective use of multiple free-to-use tools can significantly reduce financial costs, eliminating the need for major financial investment. Moreover, when these tools are used efficiently, the potential returns can be considerable in times of crisis; the need arises to establish a

foundation for the proper circulation and management of information, followed by the adoption of effective measures based on that information. Through digital diplomacy tools, a high degree of space is created for stakeholders to convene and engage without the necessity of being physically co-located.[35]

- Unofficial Presence: In addition to the official presence of various state institutions on social media platforms, authorities also capitalize on the digital space to advance their political agendas and associated messaging, this is often carried out through unofficial channels; aimed at influencing public opinion.

In parallel with the state's deployment of student groups, volunteer teams, or other actors; to disseminate official political messages among the public (whether domestically or abroad). some governments that are attuned to digital developments and aware of the strategic importance of social media platforms as direct channels of communication with people everywhere, activate unofficial accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other applications. These accounts are tasked with broadcasting messages defined by the ruling authority and managing information battles across the digital sphere.[36]

- Enriching consular communication with the public and establishing direct, personalized channels of contact with citizens abroad, thereby enabling timely and effective communication during crises.
- Maintaining engagement with audiences in the virtual sphere and leveraging new communication tools to listen to and interact with the public — alongside the coordination of efforts across all state institutions to manage relevant resources and strategically deploy human capital in a manner that optimally serves national interests abroad and enhances the state's soft power.
- The majority of ambassadors, diplomats, and even ministers rely on interactive social media platforms to introduce a favorable image of their countries and foreign policies, to explain their professional activities, and also to contribute to the global dissemination of their national cultures. These platforms are also employed to shape global public opinion in anticipation of certain decisions that hold international significance, particularly for great powers.[37]

Hence, it has become imperative for the state to harness and deploy its human capital through social media networks; by engaging in "digital interaction" with external "audience" via virtual social platforms, in order to convey its culture and promote its social, economic, and; above all; political interests. This shift has transformed the concept of “public diplomacy” into “digital diplomacy,” which contributes to the establishment and long-term sustainability of international

relationships. It also supports the safeguarding of state interests and the realization of its intended goals through “digital relations” between peoples. The state’s ability to leverage the virtual presence of its citizens enhances its strength across key domains at the international level. Alternatively, it is important to train national human resources in "emerging media technologies" in order to anticipate future trends and monitoring the vast flow of information of "social media platforms" and new digital communication networks across all fields and sectors.[38]

Although social media offers significant diplomatic opportunities, its effectiveness remains constrained by several factors. Chief among these is the problem of misinformation and disinformation, which can undermine the diplomatic efforts and damage the credibility of states and their representatives.[39] Closely related is the issue of information overload, whereby social media generates vast amounts of information that can be overwhelming for both diplomatic institutions and their intended audiences, making it increasingly difficult to sustain coherent and strategic communication. Reputational risk constitutes another significant concern; failure to maintain transparency and authentic engagement may lead to the spread of disinformation, erode public trust, reduce audience participation, and ultimately damage a nation’s reputation.[40]

Beyond these, the broader complexity of managing diplomatic communication in digital environments has grown substantially, as cybersecurity threats, misinformation, and the erosion of traditional as state sovereignty in the digital space are major concerns, with the rise of digital diplomacy creating new avenues for cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns that can destabilize international relations. Furthermore, the democratizing narrative frequently attributed to digital diplomacy conceals a structural reproduction of existing international power hierarchies, wherein technologically advanced states consistently amplify pre-existing advantages while developing states face inherently unequal communicative conditions.[41]

Consequently, social media should be understood as a complementary tool that strengthens diplomatic capabilities rather than replacing traditional diplomatic practices.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Taken together, the preceding points demonstrate the profound impact of the digital world on the reality of international relations and how it has contributed to transforming modes of communication, compelling states—particularly powerful ones—to defend their interests within this realm and in relation to the dominant corporations that control it. Digital diplomacy has established its own channels, very different from those of traditional diplomacy, and has emerged as an autonomous form of diplomacy with its own unique methods and practices. States are increasingly forced to assert their influence within the digital world, which has become a main indicator of national power. A state that fails to defend its interests in the digital domain; or to shield itself from the consequences of cyber warfare; is progressively perceived as weak and vulnerable on the international stage.

In this context, social media platforms emerge as active agents in reshaping international relations—not merely as channels of communication, but as strategic arenas employed by diplomatic actors to enhance their external presence and advance the objectives of their foreign policy in terms of influence, power, and impact. Diplomacy was, in the past, following closed channels and formal protocols, yet it has changed to become a more open, dynamic, and interactive process."

There are several keys that illustrate the nature of the relationship between diplomacy and media activity, in its traditional as well as in the emerging digital forms. This include:

– The rising role of digital media in the diplomatic sphere, with leaders and officials increasingly using these platforms as a primary tool for communication.

– With the advancement of international digital communication, diplomacy has evolved into a form of open public diplomacy that transcends spatial and temporal boundaries and has significantly influenced the traditional rules of diplomatic practice.

– The status and importance of new or alternative media compared to traditional media, and the distinctive role played by social media platforms as advanced communication tools capable of delivering high-quality public diplomacy. These platforms bridge distances and play a crucial role in reshaping the state's image in the eyes of foreign audiences at a record-breaking pace. Therefore, governments have begun adapting their institutions to benefit from digital platforms, enabling direct communication with citizens, the announcement of political positions, and

the broadcasting of messages to foreign publics in their native languages—thus employing these platforms as instruments of soft power.

- It must be emphasized that the current era is characterized by the fusion of power and speed; the actor who holds the levers of power and manages to reach the arena first retains the greatest influence in shaping and framing the rules of international relations.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the state and social media platforms remains fraught with tension. Efforts to regulate these platforms and subject them—one way or another—to state authority are ongoing. This constitutes a high-stakes gamble for the platforms themselves, which initially emerged as tools of "liberation" for citizens, only to evolve into mechanisms that monitor them and shape their opinions Yet the task of governments in controlling digital platforms has not been—and will not be—an easy one. Alongside the legal complexities and overlapping interests, the rapid pace of technological advancement continues to introduce unforeseen tools and software that expand what is available to citizens and make it increasingly difficult for states to keep up and exercise full control.

The study thus concludes that enhancing diplomatic performance in the digital environment requires the intelligent and balanced use of social media platforms, along with clear communication strategies and an institutional framework capable of managing digital presence effectively and proactively.

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