

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

Ali Belkacemi^{1 *}, Laboratory: Sociology of Cultural Communication ,Department of Media and Communication Sciences, University Amar Telidji – Laghouat (Algeria)

ali.belkacemi.sh@lagh-univ.dz

Djoudi Benguit², Laboratory: Sociology of Cultural Communication ,Department of Media and Communication Sciences, University Amar Telidji – Laghouat (Algeria),
d.benguit@lagh-univ.dz

Send Article Date: . 2026-01-10

Date of acceptance of the article. : 2026-05-07

Abstract: This study examines digital diplomacy as a strategic soft power tool in the Russia-Ukraine crisis, where virtual spaces serve as arenas for geopolitical struggle. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the research identifies digital diplomacy as an independent variable capable of redefining power dynamics in asymmetric conflicts. The findings highlight the Ukrainian leadership's success in converting "viral communication" into tangible logistical support, while traditional narratives struggled in transparent digital environments. Ultimately, the study concludes that digital diplomacy has become a central, decisive pillar in contemporary international relations and global opinion-shaping..

key words: Digital Diplomacy, Soft Power, Social Media, International Conflicts.

1- Introduction:

The emergence of digital diplomacy in the twenty-first century represents a radical shift in the nature of international interactions, as the information and communications technology revolution has reshaped the concepts of sovereignty and influence in the global space. Digital diplomacy, in its essence, is the use of social media platforms and digital technologies as a tool for implementing foreign policy. It represents a contemporary extension of the "Soft Power" concept coined by Joseph Nye, which is based on the ability to attract and persuade rather than through military or economic coercion. In the context of contemporary conflicts, the battlefield is no longer limited to geographical borders but has expanded to include cyberspace, where states compete to own the narrative and lead international public opinion. Platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and TikTok have enabled governments and non-state actors to address populations directly, bypassing official diplomatic channels, which has led to the erosion of the traditional diplomat's monopoly on information. This introduction examines how technology intersects with geopolitics to produce "Smart Power" that combines the appeal of values with the effectiveness of technical influence, forcing researchers and decision-makers to re-evaluate their strategies in a borderless digital world.

1-1 Problem Statement:

* Ali Belkacemi

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

The transition from "closed-door diplomacy" to "screen diplomacy" poses profound challenges related to legitimacy, credibility, and the ability to counter "Sharp Power" represented by disinformation. The central problem of this research lies in the following question:

To what extent are social media platforms effective as a tool of soft power in managing and resolving contemporary international conflicts?

From this central problem, the following sub-questions emerge:

First: What are the conceptual and theoretical shifts that have occurred in the practice of diplomacy with the transition to the digital age?

Second: How do states employ social media platforms to build national narratives that attract global public opinion during international crises?

Third: To what extent does digital diplomacy contribute to transforming virtual empathy into tangible political, military, and logistical support on the ground?

Fourth: What role do communication theories, such as agenda-setting and framing, play in guiding digital diplomacy during conflicts?

Fifth: How can states confront the threats of disinformation and coordinated information operations aimed at undermining their soft power?

1-2 Significance of the Study:

This study derives its importance from the steady increase in the role of digital technology as a decisive factor in current geopolitical conflicts, where it is no longer possible to separate diplomatic work from virtual space. The scientific significance also lies in enriching the academic library with a study that links classical theories of power with modern digital transformations, providing an analytical framework for understanding "crisis diplomacy" in the twenty-first century.

1-3 Objectives of the Study:

First: Deconstructing the organic relationship between digital diplomacy and the concepts of soft power and smart power in Joseph Nye's thought.

Second: Analyzing the mechanisms of employing social media platforms in building the mental image of states and managing their international reputation during conflicts.

Third: Evaluating digital diplomacy strategies in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as a leading applied model.

Fourth: Providing practical recommendations for decision-makers to develop digital diplomacy tools to serve national interests and confront cyber and information threats.

1-4 Clarification of Study Concepts:

First- Digital Diplomacy: Defined as the use of the Internet and information and communication technologies, especially social media platforms, by states and international organizations to achieve foreign policy goals; it is an extension of traditional diplomacy through modern means.¹

Second- Soft Power: The ability to influence others to obtain desired results through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion, relying on the attractiveness of culture, political values, and foreign policies.²

Third- Smart Power: The effective strategy that combines hard power tools (military and economic) and soft power tools in an integrated manner.³

Fourth- Contemporary International Conflicts: Refers to armed or political conflicts between international units that transcend the physical dimension to include information and cyber warfare.⁴

1-5 Literature Review:

Digital diplomacy has become a central theme in modern political and media studies. In their book "The Oxford Handbook of Digital Diplomacy" (2024), Bjola and Manor argue that digital technologies are not merely tools but are "disruptive" to traditional diplomatic norms and practices, creating new patterns of crisis management and negotiations.⁵ In the context of soft power, Guliyev (2025) emphasized that countries like China use digital "Panda Diplomacy" to enhance their national branding, while Israel uses social media platforms to target specific regional audiences to shape their perceptions of its policies.⁶

In the Arab region, 2024 studies (such as the study by Delian and Mohammed) highlighted the development of digital diplomacy in Morocco, Iraq, and the UAE, where these countries have integrated technology to enhance their influence in the Middle East and face the challenges of the "digital divide."⁷ Regarding conflicts, the "Alonso-Martin-Romo" study (2023) analyzed how "citizen historians" reshaped the landscape of disinformation in the Ukrainian war by providing real-time updates that challenged official narratives. Other studies discussed the impact of Artificial Intelligence in "information wars," warning that political bots now constitute up to 45% of conversations about major conflicts on the X platform.

2025 studies focused on the transformation of social media into a major battlefield in the Russian-Ukrainian war, highlighting the role of "viral communication" in mobilizing global support. Meanwhile, other studies reviewed the evolution of the concept of diplomacy from "letter diplomacy" to "iPad diplomacy," confirming that digitalization has led to the decline of secret diplomacy in favor of transparency and direct public engagement. In a theoretical context, a study by Joseph Nye and others examined the challenges of the digital age, noting that the spread of disinformation represents the greatest threat to the credibility of soft power. Arab research has also addressed the role of digital diplomacy in liberation issues, such as the Palestinian cause, and how digital platforms can break the media blockade imposed on oppressed peoples. Collectively, this literature confirms that mastery of digital tools has become a fundamental requirement for sovereignty in the new international system.

1-6 Methodology:

The study relies on the descriptive-analytical approach to diagnose the phenomenon of digital diplomacy and analyze its components. It also uses the Case Study method to analyze the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Content Analysis tools are employed for digital posts, along with Social Network Analysis (SNA) to track information flow and interaction.

1-7 Study Sample and Tools:

First- Study Sample:

A purposive sample was selected, consisting of the official accounts of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the "X" platform, for the period from February 2022 to February 2024. This sample was chosen because it represents the two parties to the conflict that most utilize digital tools in the current struggle.

Second- Study Tools:

A- Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis: To classify tweets into narrative frames (e.g., existential threat frame, heroism frame, European solidarity frame).

B- Social Network Analysis (SNA) Tools: Such as Gephi and NodeXL to map interaction and identify influential figures in disseminating narratives.

C- Sentiment Analysis: Using AI techniques to measure global audience reactions toward the messages of the conflicting parties.

D- Social Listening Tools: Such as Brandwatch to monitor the spread of global hashtags and the volume of digital coverage.

THE FIRST TOPIC : CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL SHIFTS IN THE PRACTICE OF DIPLOMACY WITH THE TRANSITION TO THE DIGITAL AGE:

This article addresses the profound changes that have occurred in the definition of diplomacy and its theoretical frameworks, moving from traditional models to more complex ones that suit the nature of the digital age.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: TERMINOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENTIATION:

Various terms have attempted to describe the impact of technology on diplomacy, creating a state of conceptual ambiguity that required a precise deconstruction to reach disciplined definitions.

First- From Traditional Diplomacy to Digital Diplomacy:

Traditional diplomacy is defined as the set of rules, procedures, and protocols that regulate relations between states and international organizations to serve supreme interests. With the advent of technology, terms such as "e-Diplomacy," "Cyber Diplomacy," and "Networked Diplomacy" emerged. However, the term "Digital Diplomacy" stands out as the most comprehensive, as it refers not only to tools (such as Twitter and Facebook) but to the comprehensive transformation in the geopolitical environment, diplomatic topics, and practices. Digital diplomacy today is the use of the Internet and information technology to achieve foreign policy goals and communicate directly with foreign audiences; it represents an evolution of "Soft Power" in the twenty-first century.⁸

Second- Differentiation Between Digital Diplomacy and Related Concepts:

It is essential to distinguish between digital diplomacy and public diplomacy; while the latter focuses on cultivating public opinion in other countries, digital diplomacy provides the interactive and real-time mechanisms for this communication. Additionally, the term "Virtual Diplomacy" highlights interactions that take place across borders without a physical presence, whereas "Cyber Diplomacy" focuses more on issues of cyberspace security and Internet governance. A precise understanding of these differences allows decision-makers to design more effective policies targeting each field with the appropriate tools.⁹

SECOND REQUIREMENT: THEORETICAL SHIFTS AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER:

Digitalization has revolutionized the theories explaining international relations, shifting the focus from the state as the sole actor to multiple actors in a complex network.

First- Networked Diplomacy Theory:

In the digital age, diplomacy no longer follows centralized hierarchical lines but rather a "network" model. The most powerful state today is not necessarily the one with the largest military arsenal, but the one positioned at the center of information networks and possessing the largest number of links (Nodes) with other actors. This model forces diplomats to shift from being "intermediaries" between governments to becoming active "nodes" in networks defending global causes and temporary alliances. Power in this context becomes a product of the ability to mobilize, connect, and influence global public opinion across borders.¹⁰

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

Second- Digitalization as an Ongoing Process and the Redistribution of Power within Institutions:

Digitalization in foreign ministries is understood as a "Process" rather than a "Binary state"; it redistributes power within the diplomatic institution itself. Digital tools have granted ambassadors and missions greater autonomy in responding immediately to events, weakening traditional centralized control. Furthermore, the rise of the "citizen journalist" and non-state actors has broken the state's monopoly on information, forcing foreign ministries to adopt "digital listening" strategies and integrate public feedback into policy formulation.¹¹

Table No. (1) shows the differences between Traditional Diplomacy and Digital Diplomacy

Comparison Basis	Traditional Diplomacy	Digital Diplomacy
Nature of Communication	Hierarchical, Closed, Government-to-Government (G2G)	Networked, Open, Government-to-Public (G2P)
Speed	Slow, governed by protocol	Real-time, instantaneous, crisis-responsive
Actors	States and international organizations only	States, individuals, corporations, networks
Knowledge Source	Intelligence and classified reports	Big Data, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), AI
Main Objective	Managing official relations and negotiation	Building narratives, influencing public opinion, Soft Power

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Bjola, C., & Holmes, M. (2015). Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice. Routledge, London, p. 5.

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AS A TOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

Digital diplomacy has become a vital outlet for promoting perspectives and undermining the approaches of rival states in conflict issues. It enables diplomats to practice "Influence Diplomacy" by creating networks of stakeholders and opinion-makers to discuss foreign policies. In cases of struggle for people's liberation, such as the Palestinian and Western Saharan cases, digital platforms are used to raise awareness of national causes, mobilize global support, and document violations.

Digital diplomacy in conflicts is characterized by several features:

First- Speed and Immediacy:

The ability to respond to field events within seconds.

Second- Bypassing Official Representation: Individuals and activists can perform parallel diplomatic roles.

Third- Global Reach: Overcoming geographical and political barriers to reach target audiences directly.

Fourth- Building Virtual Alliances: Facilitating multilateral dialogue and building coalitions to face global challenges.

However, the use of technology in conflicts carries risks of "Electronic Destruction," where cyber-attacks or the spread of fake news can be more impactful than traditional weapons in destroying a state's moral infrastructure.¹²

THE FOURTH REQUIREMENT: DIGITALIZATION IN DIPLOMATIC PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:

A digital divide emerges in diplomatic performance between developed and developing countries, a topic addressed by specialized studies on the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

First- The Gap in Digital Diplomatic Performance:

Studies indicate that Iraq has recently begun using the concept of digital diplomacy, creating a wide gap between it and other countries. This gap leads to diplomatic outcomes that may not meet the requirements of the decision-maker, necessitating an accelerated pace to develop political tools and means to keep up with technical development. Digital transformation in these countries requires not only providing hardware but also changing the organizational culture within foreign ministries and training cadres on strategic digital communication skills.¹³

Second- Digital Diplomacy as a Tool for Political Stability:

In the context of countries undergoing transitional phases, digital diplomacy is viewed as a tool to enhance the stability of the political system. By establishing specialized units managed by experts, the state can present a positive face of its foreign policies and build bridges of direct communication with both local and international audiences. This communication reduces the chances of misunderstanding and contributes to managing crises and conflicts more effectively, thereby enhancing the state's soft power in its regional and international surroundings.¹⁴

THE SECOND TOPIC: EMPLOYING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO BUILD NATIONAL NARRATIVES DURING INTERNATIONAL CRISES:

Strategic narratives are the cornerstone of modern digital diplomacy, through which states seek to shape the global audience's perception of crises and conflicts.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC NARRATIVES AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION MECHANISMS:

Strategic narratives are a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future in international politics to shape the behavior of others.

First- Types of Narratives in the Digital Space:

States use social media platforms to build three levels of narratives:

1- International System Narratives: Aimed at defining how the world works and who possesses legitimacy (e.g., the "rules-based order" narrative).

2-Identity Narratives: Focus on the state's values, history, and moral position in the conflict.

3-Policy Narratives: Seek to justify specific actions (such as imposing sanctions or military intervention) and portray them as the only necessary solutions.¹⁵

Second- Targeted Communication Strategies:

The effectiveness of a narrative depends on its ability to "Resonate" with the target audience based on their values, interests, and national history. In the digital age, publishing information is no longer enough; one must "segment reality" and present versions that compete for credibility. States use images, videos, and hashtags to add a human touch to their leaders and make their narratives more attractive and emotionally impactful, a process known as "Humanizing Diplomacy."¹⁶

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: CASE STUDIES IN NARRATIVE BUILDING DURING CONFLICTS:

Contemporary conflicts provide applied models of how the "war of narratives" is managed via digital platforms.

First- The Ukrainian Narrative vs. The Russian Narrative:

In the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, a sharp contrast emerged in narrative-building strategies. Ukraine adopted a "decentralized, participatory, and personal" model that succeeded in building broad international solidarity, using memes and poignant human stories to attract a global audience. In contrast, Russia relied on centralized strategies and the deployment of bot networks to spread narratives aimed at delegitimizing the other side and justifying the invasion. Results show that the Ukrainian narrative was more capable of penetrating Western societies, while Russian narratives found resonance in specific environments (such as Hungary and Italy) where they were adopted by populist political parties.¹⁷

Second- Alliance Narratives (The Case of Intervention in Libya 2011):

The case of military intervention in Libya illustrates how strategic narratives can influence the behavior of allies. Britain and France used "Identity" and "System" narratives to persuade the United States to intervene, by provoking "fear of abandonment" and portraying non-intervention as a threat to shared values and Atlantic relations. These narratives succeeded in changing the hesitant position of the Obama administration, proving that strategic communication is a central tool in forming and maintaining military alliances.¹⁸

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: CHALLENGES OF NARRATIVE BUILDING IN AN INFORMATION-SATURATED ENVIRONMENT:

States face immense difficulties in maintaining the coherence of their narratives amidst the massive flow of information.

First- Forced Consensus and Crisis Narratives:

International organizations and governments use "Crisis Narratives" to create a state of "forced consensus," where proposed solutions are portrayed as the only unavoidable option. This trend leads to the marginalization of democratic principles in decision-making and the passing of technical or military policies without sufficient debate. Portraying the future as an ocean of unpredictable risks facilitates the acceptance of exceptional interventions that serve the interests of major powers.¹⁹

Second- Fragmentation of Reality and Digital Hostility:

Attempts by states to "challenge reality" through digital channels sometimes yield counterproductive results, contributing to deepening alienation between states instead of mediating it. When each state presents a completely different reality (as occurred in the cases of Crimea and Aleppo), it becomes impossible to reach a shared definition of reality necessary for the success of multilateral diplomacy. This conflict leads to mutual accusations of manipulating public opinion, undermining international trust and making crises more intractable.²⁰

THE THIRD TOPIC: CHALLENGES OF NARRATIVE BUILDING IN AN INFORMATION-SATURATED ENVIRONMENT:

Transforming "likes" and shares on social media into political, military, and logistical support is the true test of digital diplomacy's effectiveness in conflict management.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: MATERIAL TRANSFORMATION MECHANISMS AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT:

Digital diplomacy has moved beyond the "image improvement" stage to become a tool for mobilizing direct material resources.

First- Defense Crowdfunding:

Ukraine emerged as a leading model in using digital diplomacy to collect massive material donations. Through platforms like "United24" and "GoFundMe," Ukraine succeeded in raising

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

over \$200 million to support the war and humanitarian effort. This type of support reflects a "transnational solidarity" that bypasses traditional government bureaucracy, turning individual empathy into a material force capable of purchasing military and logistical equipment.

Second- Big Tech Diplomacy and Infrastructure Protection:

Digital diplomacy played a crucial role in securing the support of major technology companies. Ukrainian efforts succeeded in persuading companies like "SpaceX" to provide "Starlink" service, and companies like "Microsoft" and "Google" to protect sovereign data through "Cloud Migration." This support would not have been achieved without the ability to communicate directly with the leaders of these companies and build "moral clarity" around the conflict, turning these companies into geopolitical actors providing vital logistical support that sometimes exceeds state support.²¹

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: LINKING PUBLIC OPINION WITH LEGISLATIVE AND MILITARY DECISIONS:

Digital diplomacy contributes to creating popular pressure in democratic countries that pushes governments to take decisive decisions.

First- The Impact of Digital Solidarity on Providing Military Aid:

Studies indicate a direct correlation between levels of digital popular support and state decisions to send military aid. In Europe, support for sending military aid to Ukraine reached record levels (94% in Poland, 93% in Sweden), providing the political cover for governments to spend taxpayers' money on a foreign war effort. Digital diplomacy here acts as a driver of "popular legitimacy" that translates into weapons and ammunition on the ground.²²

Second- Participatory Warfare and the Overlapping Roles of Civilians and Combatants:

The proliferation of smartphones and digital applications has led to the emergence of "Participatory Warfare," where civilians contribute to military operations by passing targeting data or mapping enemy movements via apps like "Telegram." This digital shift allows the technical knowledge of civilians to be converted into "intangible contributions" in the field. However, it simultaneously increases the complexities of International Humanitarian Law and the risks facing civilians who become legitimate targets as a result of their digital activity.²³

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS AND OBSTACLES IN TRANSFORMING VIRTUAL SUPPORT:

Despite the successes, there remains a gap between digital empathy and the ability to achieve a decisive victory.

First- Limitations of Digital Innovation in Deciding Battles:

Researchers pose a fundamental question: Why do digital innovations and technical progress not lead to decisive and rapid victories? The answer lies in the fact that the open digital environment allows adversaries to adapt quickly and adopt the same tools, creating continuous cycles of innovation and counter-innovation.²⁴ Moreover, excessive reliance on decentralized technical solutions (such as volunteer innovators) may lead to the fragmentation of military effort and difficulty in long-term strategic coordination.

Second- Risks of Reliance on the Private Sector:

Recent crises have revealed the risks of tethering national sovereignty to infrastructure owned by private tech companies. While the support provided by companies like "Starlink" or "Amazon" is important, it remains subject to the company's interests and its moral and political evaluation, which may change at any moment, placing the state in a position of critical technological dependency during conflicts.²⁵

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

Table No. (2) shows the financing mechanisms of digital diplomacy.

Transformation Mechanism	Digital Means	Tangible Outcome
Financial Support	Crowdfunding Platforms (e.g., United24)	Raising over \$200 million for drones and equipment procurement
Logistical Resilience	Cloud Services and Satellite Communications	Protecting state data and ensuring continuity of Command and Control (C2)
Political Pressure	Hashtag Campaigns and Direct Engagement with Lawmakers	Accelerating the approval of military and logistical aid packages
Field Action	Crowdsourced Intelligence (OSINT) Apps	Identifying enemy positions and guiding precision military strikes
Economic Pressure	Digital Corporate Boycott Campaigns	Pushing major corporations to withdraw from the adversary's market

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Manor, I., & Bjola, C. (2024). Digital Diplomacy as a Driver of Military Aid: Public Opinion and Strategic Communication in the Ukrainian Crisis. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 45.

THE FOURTH TOPIC: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION THEORIES IN GUIDING DIGITAL DIPLOMACY DURING CONFLICTS:

Digital diplomacy does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it is based on theoretical frameworks in communication science that explain how public awareness is shaped and international attention is directed.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: AGENDA-SETTING THEORY:

This theory focuses on the ability of media and digital platforms to determine the issues that the public should care about.

First- Shifts in Agenda-Setting in the Digital Age:

Previously, agenda-setting was a "top-down" process led by media and political elites. Today, the process has become "reciprocal and dynamic," as digital audiences, through intensive interaction and hashtags, can impose certain issues on government agendas. Platforms like Facebook and X contribute to "incidental news exposure," raising public sensitivity toward specific conflicts and placing them at the forefront of their concerns.²⁶

Second- Strategic Employment of Agenda-Setting in Conflicts:

States use digital diplomacy to highlight an opponent's violations or humanitarian crises associated with a conflict, forcing international organizations to act. The COVID-19 crisis demonstrated how popular interaction on platforms like "Weibo" can change government priorities, a tactic applied by digital diplomats to mobilize attention for issues like "Climate Change" or "Military Aid" by creating digital momentum that cannot be ignored.²⁷

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: FRAMING THEORY:

Framing theory is the most powerful tool in the hands of the digital diplomat, as it concerns how "meaning is constructed" for events rather than merely reporting them.²⁸

First- Mechanisms of Framing in Diplomatic Discourse:

Framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality and making them more prominent to define a problem, assign responsibility, and suggest solutions. In conflicts, frames such as "Democracy vs. Authoritarianism" or "Human Rights" are used to bestow moral legitimacy on a

state's position. For example, the US State Department uses social media to frame its messages around promoting democracy, while China focuses on framing its developmental success and stability.

Second- Framing and its Impact on Military Support (The Case of Gaza):

Empirical studies show that the way a conflict is "framed" directly affects public support for military aid. In the case of US support for Israel, media framing plays a decisive role in shaping public attitudes toward providing logistical and military assistance. Focusing on humanitarian aspects or security goals can shift levels of political support for these policies. "Priming" and the framing of images and information contribute to building interpretative frameworks that make military aid either socially acceptable or rejected.

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: INTEGRATION BETWEEN THEORIES AND THE SHAPING OF DIGITAL SOFT POWER:

The integration of agenda-setting, framing, and the network model represents a comprehensive framework for understanding digital diplomacy.

First- The "Recognition and Transformation" Framework for Public Policy:

Researchers propose a framework for transforming digital sentiments (D-information) into significant political information integrated with expert opinions and social surveys to formulate public policies compatible with the digital age. This framework requires governments to move from monitoring public opinion to its "institutional recognition" and integration into the decision-making cycle.

Second- Building International Identities and Norms:

Digital diplomacy via social platforms contributes to building national identities and new international norms. Through repetition and dissemination, framed narratives become part of the virtual identity of the global audience, facilitating the acceptance of certain international standards (such as human rights protection or cybersecurity) and establishing them as binding rules in the international system.²⁹

THE FOURTH REQUIREMENT: SOFT POWER AND SMART POWER: JOSEPH NYE'S UPDATED APPROACH:

Joseph Nye considers that soft power stems from three primary resources: culture, political values, and foreign policies. In the digital age, these resources are broadcast via social media platforms. However, digital soft power faces the challenge of "credibility"; in a world drowning in information, credibility becomes the scarcest resource. Here, the concept of "**Smart Power**" emerges the ability to combine hard and soft power in a mutually reinforcing way. Digital diplomacy is the executive tool of smart power; it gives the state the ability to "shape the preferences of others" by building attractive mental images that legitimize the use of hard power when necessary. In contemporary conflicts,³⁰ digital diplomacy is used not only for attraction but also to counter "**Sharp Power**" used by authoritarian powers to manipulate information and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

THE FIFTH TOPIC: STATE STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING DISINFORMATION AND COORDINATED INFORMATION OPERATIONS:

Disinformation represents the dark side of digital diplomacy, through which states seek to undermine the soft power of their opponents and destabilize them internally.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE NATURE OF DISINFORMATION THREATS AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS:

Disinformation is not merely an error in information but a deliberate and systematic effort to manipulate public awareness for geopolitical goals.

First- Contemporary Manipulation Techniques:

Hostile states and actors use a range of sophisticated tools, including:

1-Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB): Creating networks of fake accounts and bots to amplify misleading messages.

2-Deep-fakes: Using AI to create entirely fake content.

3-Exploiting Platform Business Models: Manipulating recommendation algorithms that prioritize controversial content to increase clicks and profits.

4-Reality Contestation: Presenting contradictory accounts of historical or field events to sow doubt and confusion.

Second- Impact of Disinformation on Soft Power and Institutional Trust:

Disinformation aims to erode trust in truth and democratic institutions. By spreading half-truths and conspiracy theories, a state of social polarization is created, making it difficult for the state to practice public diplomacy effectively. Undermining national "attractiveness" is the ultimate goal of these operations.³¹

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: COUNTER-STRATEGIES (AN INTEGRATED PORTFOLIO APPROACH):

Experience has proven that there is no single technical solution to disinformation; rather, a multi-dimensional strategy must be adopted.

First- Tactical and Technical Interventions:

1-Fact-checking: A necessary tool to expose blatant lies.

2-Algorithm Modification: Pressuring tech companies to reduce the prominence of misleading content.

3-Removal of Inauthentic Networks: Collaboration between platforms and governments to dismantle botnets.

Second- Deterrence and Sovereign Operations:

1-Sanctions and Legal Regulations: Imposing sanctions on entities and individuals involved in disinformation campaigns.

2-Operational Friction: Conducting cyber operations to disrupt the infrastructure of disinformers (e.g., US Cyber Command's actions against the Russian Internet Research Agency in 2018).

3-Banning Hostile Platforms: Banning platforms like "VKontakte" in Ukraine proved effective because "ease of access" is a primary driver of consumption.³²

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: BUILDING RESILIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:

First- Media Literacy and Supporting Independent Journalism:

Investing in citizen awareness (Media Literacy) is the best defensive strategy. Supporting local independent journalism provides reliable alternatives to information.

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

Second- Institutional Models for Counteraction (GEC and the EU):

The US Global Engagement Center (GEC) and the EU's "Rapid Alert System" are leading models for transnational cooperation to monitor and respond to coordinated information operations.³³

Table No. (3) shows state strategies for countering disinformation.

Strategy Type	Tool / Mechanism	Intended Goal
Tactical	Fact-checking and Content Labeling	Real-time debunking and reducing viral spread
Structural	Media Literacy and Journalism Support	Building long-term societal resilience
Sovereign	Sanctions and Cyber Operations	Deterring actors and imposing costs on disinformation
Technical	Algorithm Modification and Network Takedowns	Undermining the digital disinformation infrastructure
Diplomatic	Counter-Disinformation Centers and International Alliances	Unifying efforts and exchanging strategic intelligence

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Pamment, J., & Howard, P. (2025). Countering Disinformation: Strategic Communication and the Digital Resilience Framework. 1st edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 210.

THE SIXTH TOPIC: ANALYSIS OF FIELD STUDY RESULTS: THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT AS A CASE STUDY:

In this section, we analyze the digital data extracted from the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, focusing on the communicative performance of President Zelenskyy in the face of the official Russian narrative.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: COMPARISON OF DIGITAL INTERACTION BETWEEN UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP

The data showed a vast difference in the levels of engagement and reach between Ukrainian and Russian accounts on the "X" platform. This is attributed to the "Digital Political Performance" strategy followed by Zelenskyy, which was characterized by a human touch and calculated improvisation.

Table No. (4) shows a comparison of digital interaction between Ukrainian and Russian leadership via the X platform

Indicator	Ukrainian President (Zelenskyy)	Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Kremlin
Number of Tweets (Sample: Feb 2022-2023)	118 Qualitative Tweets	28 Official Tweets
Average Number of Retweets	10,944	1,019
Highest Retweet Rate for a Single Tweet	+72,000 within 24 hours	7,500 (Official Meeting)
Nature of Language Used	Emotional, direct, "We"-centered	Dry, bureaucratic, "State"-centered
Dominant Visual Imagery	Military t-shirt, the field, tired faces	Luxurious halls, sovereign symbols, formality

Analysis of Table No. (4):**First- Communicative Efficiency: The Gap Between "Qualitative Activity" and "Formal Stagnation":**

The figures demonstrate an overwhelming superiority of the Ukrainian leadership in managing the digital battle. This was not limited to the volume of tweets (which was four times that of the Russian side) but extended to the "Quality of Interaction." While the Kremlin and the Russian Foreign Ministry contented themselves with publishing sporadic official statements, Zelenskyy practiced "Active Digital Diplomacy." This disparity in intensity reflects a Ukrainian desire to control the daily narrative and prevent the Russian account from expanding in cyberspace.

Second- Interaction Analysis: The Power of "Transnational Influence":

The retweet figures reveal a striking reality; the average engagement with Zelenskyy exceeds ten times that of the Russian side. This indicates that Ukrainian content possesses "Virality" characteristics—meaning it is content that the audience likes to share and engage with. In contrast, the Russian figure (an average of 1,019) shows that Russian messages remained confined to narrow diplomatic circles or traditional supporters, failing to penetrate the broader global public opinion.

Third- Process and Methodology: "Humanizing Leadership" vs. "Institutional Prestige":

The secret to this disparity lies in the communicative philosophy of each party:

1-The Ukrainian Approach (Reality Drama): Zelenskyy relied on a "Political Performance" strategy by appearing in field attire (the olive-green t-shirt) with faces exhausted by fatigue. This visual imagery, combined with emotional language using the collective first-person "We," transformed the war from a dry geopolitical conflict into a human story of resilience. This "Calculated Improvisation" broke the barrier between the ruler and the follower behind the screen.

2-The Russian Approach (Traditional Protocol): Russia continued to use dry bureaucratic language and images reflecting the luxury of halls and sovereign symbols. This strategy aims to project power and stability, but in the world of "Social Media," it appears detached from reality and incapable of garnering empathy. This made the Russian discourse look like old-fashioned "Government Publications" that do not appeal to modern platform users.

Fourth- Strategic Results: Dominating the Global "Trend":

The ability to achieve more than 72,000 retweets in a single day granted Ukraine the authority to "Set the International Agenda." This digital dominance was the primary reason for transforming popular digital empathy into real political pressure on Western governments to accelerate military aid. In other words, Zelenskyy succeeded in turning "Likes" and "Shares" into "Missiles and Tanks" on the ground, while the Russian message remained defensive and justificatory within rigid official frameworks.

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: ANALYSIS OF UKRAINIAN NARRATIVE FRAMES (FEBRUARY 2022 – FEBRUARY 2023):

Zelenskyy used four main frames to build his national narrative and attract international support. The following table illustrates the distribution of these frames and their statistical effectiveness according to (Pearson's chi-square) tests.

Table No. (5) shows the analysis of Ukrainian narrative frames during the period between February 2022 and February 2024.

Narrative Frame	Description & Strategic Objective	Statistical Significance (P-value)	Temporal Evolution & Usage
Existential Threat	The war as a matter of life or death for the Ukrainian nation and culture.	$\$P < 0.05\$$ (Significant)	Predominated in the first phase (Feb-Mar 2022), accounting for 80% of the discourse.
Heroic Resistance	Portraying Ukrainians as an "unbreakable" people and a steadfast army.	$\$P < 0.001\$$ (Highly Significant)	Led the second phase (Apr-Sep 2022) at a rate of 65%.
European Belonging	Ukraine as a shield for European democracy against "barbarism."	$\$P = 0.112\$$ (Insignificant across all audiences)	Used extensively when addressing Western allies to request weaponry.
Moral Conflict	A cosmic battle between good and evil, and democracy vs. authoritarianism.	$\$P < 0.05\$$	Increased in the third phase (Oct 2022+) to counter "war fatigue."

Analysis of Table No. (5):

First- Dynamic Strategy: "Adapting Discourse to Field Necessity":

The data reveals that the Ukrainian narrative was not static; rather, it was a "living organism" evolving alongside the phases of the war. the discourse shifted from focusing on "Self and Existence" at the onset of the invasion, to "Heroism and Strength" during the period of resilience, and finally to "Universal Values" to sustain support. This progression reflects a deep awareness of audience psychology, as it is impossible to keep the world in a state of high alert using the same tone for an extended period.

Second- Analysis of Frames and their Statistical Power (Significances and Results):

1-Existential Threat Frame (The Most Urgent):

In the first phase, this frame dominated by 80%. With statistical significance ($\$P < 0.05\$$), this discourse succeeded in creating a global "positive shock." The goal was to justify requests for immediate support as a matter of life and death, which helped bypass international bureaucratic complexities at the start of the crisis.

2-Heroic Resistance Frame (The Statistically Strongest):

With the highest significance value ($\$P < 0.001\$$), this frame proved to be the "most marketable Ukrainian product." Portraying Ukrainians as an unbreakable people not only boosted internal morale but also reassured Western donors that their aid would not be in vain and that there was an army capable of tipping the scales. This explains the dominance of this frame during the counter-offensive period (April-September 2022).

3-European Belonging Frame (The Functional Discourse):

Interestingly, this frame recorded low statistical significance ($\$P = 0.112\$$), meaning it was not influential across all segments of the global audience. However, it was used as a "targeted pressure tool" toward European decision-makers. Zelenskyy confronted Europe with its historical responsibilities by portraying Ukraine as a "Shield for Democracy," transforming military support from a "grant" into a "defensive duty" for the continent.

4-Moral Conflict Frame (Long-term Strategy):

As the war entered the "fatigue" phase (October 2022 and beyond), the (Good vs. Evil) discourse was activated. The strategic goal here was to prevent the war from turning into a mere ordinary "border dispute" and to re-frame it as a cosmic battle between democracy and authoritarianism, ensuring the continued flow of financial and military aid despite economic pressures in the West.

Third- Strategic Conclusion: "The Engineering of Persuasion":

The results show that Zelenskyy's success was not merely "charisma" but precise "narrative engineering." He statistically utilized what worked for each stage:

1-Initially: Eliciting sympathy (Existential Threat).

2-In the middle: Building confidence (Heroic Resistance).

3-In continuity: Investing in values (Moral Conflict).

This process transformed Ukraine from a "victim" into a "strategic partner" protecting Western values, explaining its success in maintaining international momentum unprecedented in the history of modern conflicts.

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: MECHANISMS OF "SHARP POWER" AND DISINFORMATION IN RUSSIAN DIGITAL DIPLOMACY:

On the other side, the Russian diplomatic apparatus relied on strategies aimed at undermining Ukrainian legitimacy and justifying the invasion. Massive networks of automated accounts (Bots) were uncovered, used to disseminate pro-Kremlin narratives.

Table No. (6) shows the mechanisms of "Sharp Power" and disinformation in Russian digital diplomacy:

Russian Digital Tool	Impact Volume / Statistics	Strategic and Informational Objective
Coordinated Bot Accounts	1,856 tracked coordinated accounts	Spreading the "Denazification" narrative and creating a false consensus.
Disinformation Channels	38,000 unique channels across 25 platforms	Flooding the information space with contradictory messages to cast doubt on facts.
Monthly Impressions	450 million impressions (across 12 languages)	Dominating the "Digital Space" in developing countries (BRICS).
Deepfake	Zelenskyy's surrender video (March 2022)	Causing a collapse in national morale and sovereignty.

Analysis of Table No. (6):**First- The Philosophy of "Information Flooding": From Diplomacy to Hybrid Warfare:**

The data shows that Russia did not limit itself to official channels but launched a parallel "digital army" consisting of 38,000 unique channels across 25 different platforms. This massive scale of dissemination does not aim to convince the recipient of a single narrative as much as it aims to "kill the truth." When a user encounters contradictory messages of this magnitude, they reach a state of total skepticism toward everything they see, a strategy known as "**Agnotology**" (the cultural production of ignorance).

Second- Systematic Disinformation via Coordinated Bot Accounts:

The tracking of 1,856 coordinated accounts reveals a "False Consensus" strategy. These accounts act as a programmed amplification system, intervening in digital conversations to give the impression that the "Denazification" narrative enjoys broad popular support. The goal here is

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

not communication, but "algorithm hijacking" to force Russian content onto the global user interface, exerting psychological pressure on those hesitant to take a stance.

Third- Digital Geopolitics: Targeting BRICS Countries:

The figure of 450 million monthly impressions in 12 languages reveals a clever shift in resource allocation. It appears that Russia, after losing control over the narrative in the West, directed its digital weight toward the "Global South" and developing nations. The use of multiple languages aims to create a solid block of public opinion in these countries that supports the Russian position, or at least adopts a stance of negative neutrality toward Western sanctions.

Fourth- Deepfake: The Failed Psychological Weapon:

The use of the "Zelenskyy surrender" video in March 2022 represents the pinnacle of "moral assassination" attempts. The process aimed to cause a shock leading to the collapse of morale and national sovereignty at a critical moment. Although this video failed technically due to audience awareness, its inclusion among official tools reflects the readiness of Russian digital diplomacy to cross all ethical red lines to achieve a strategic breakthrough.

THE FOURTH REQUIREMENT: DISINFORMATION AND AUTOMATION IN THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT (2022-2024):

Table No. (7): Statistics of Disinformation and Automation in the Ukrainian Conflict (2022-2024)

Indicator	Statistical Value	Source / Context
Number of Analyzed Tweets	5.2 Million Posts	University of Adelaide study on conflict hashtags
Percentage of Political Bot Accounts	45% - 60%	Accounts regularly posting about Russian politics
Misleading AI-generated Articles	3.5 Million Articles	Produced by the Pravda network in 2024 to mislead chatbots
Reach of Disinformation	70 Million Users	Initial reach during the first weeks of the 2022 invasion
Bot Persuasion Success Rate	33%	Success of "Elite Bots" in convincing the audience of falsehoods

Analysis of Table No. (7):

The results show that Russia adopted an "Information Flooding" strategy through automation, while Ukraine adopted an "Active Defense" strategy and the personal presence of President Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy succeeded in building a "**Parasocial**" relationship with the global audience, transforming public empathy into political pressure on governments to supply Ukraine with weaponry.

First- The Automation "Tsunami": Hijacking the Public Sphere:

Data indicates that the percentage of political bot accounts ranges between 45% and 60%. Statistically, this means more than half of the digital dialogue regarding the war is non-human. This process aims to create "Echo Chambers," where software amplifies a specific narrative until it appears as global public opinion, forcing average human users to doubt their convictions in the face of this overwhelming flood of programmed support.

Second- Cross-Platform Disinformation Engineering (Massive Reach):

The reach of disinformation to 70 million users in the initial weeks alone reflects a "Digital Shock and Awe Strategy." In those critical moments, the audience is in dire need of information,

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

making them easy prey for misleading content. This rapid reach allowed false narratives to take root in the collective consciousness before fact-checking platforms could expose them.

Third- The New Generation of Disinformation: Targeting Artificial Intelligence:

The production of 3.5 million articles via the *Pravda* network in 2024 represents a dangerous strategic shift. The goal is no longer just "misleading humans," but "AI Data Poisoning." By flooding the internet with AI-generated articles, these networks aim to make Large Language Models (LLMs) and chatbots cite this misinformation when asked about the conflict, ensuring the Russian narrative remains alive in future technical responses.

Fourth- Effectiveness of "Elite Bots" and the Psychology of Persuasion:

Achieving a 33% success rate in convincing the audience of falsehoods is a very high figure by social psychology standards. This success is due to the evolution of "Elite Bots," which no longer just post links but accurately mimic human behavior and engage in seemingly logical discussions. This process erodes trust in absolute truth, as one in every three people ends up believing automated content.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that digital diplomacy has brought about a structural shift in international conflict management. Power is no longer measured solely by the number of aircraft and tanks, but by the "ability to own the narrative" and employ social media platforms to build transnational virtual alliances. In the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, Ukraine proved that "Smart" digital diplomacy—combining human authenticity with technical speed—can compensate for a severe lack of material power. Meanwhile, Russia proved that reliance on "Sharp Power" and disinformation may yield short-term results but destroys soft power and international credibility in the long run.

Digital diplomacy is now the "nervous system" of the international system, where roles overlap between official diplomats, citizen journalists, and digital activists. This overlap has led to the emergence of a new pattern of "Hybrid Diplomacy" that requires communicative and technical skills previously uncommon in traditional diplomatic work.

Key Findings of the "First Digital World War":

1-Superiority of "Humanization" over "Institution": Zelenskyy's human touch and calculated improvisation outperformed dry Russian protocol.

2-Digital Virality as a Strategic Weapon: Ukrainian narrative characteristics were "transboundary," turning "Likes" into actual military aid.

3-Narrative Dynamics and Temporal Evolution: Adapting discourse (Existential -> Heroic -> Moral) prevented "war fatigue."

4-The "Parasocial" Model: Building an emotional connection between Zelenskyy and the global audience broke the effectiveness of the isolated Russian narrative.

5-"Agnotology" Strategy: Russia aimed to "confuse" rather than "convince," using 38,000 channels to kill the truth through doubt.

6-Redirecting Influence toward the "Global South": Targeting BRICS countries with 450 million monthly impressions to ensure narrative continuity outside the West.

7-Public Sphere Hijacking via Bots: 45% to 60% of the dialogue is "non-human," creating a "False Consensus."

8-AI Data Poisoning: Flooding AI training data with misinformation to falsify history in future automated systems.

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

9-Psychological Infiltration by "Elite Bots": One-third of the audience lost the ability to distinguish between human and automated content.

10-Transformation from "Soft Power" to "Sharp Power": Controlling the "Algorithm" has become as vital as controlling the "Territory."

Recommendations and Proposals:

1-Institutionalizing Digital Diplomacy: Integrating digital work as a core strategy within Foreign Ministries.

2-Investing in "Digital Diplomatic Cadres": Training diplomats in data analysis and social media algorithms.

3-Countering "Sharp Power" with Transparency: Adopting an "Open Intelligence Model" to proactively debunk rival narratives.

4-Building "Digital Sovereignty": Reducing absolute dependence on major tech company algorithms.

5-Employing Ethical AI: Using AI for sentiment analysis and culturally tailored messaging.

6-Enhancing "Digital Public Diplomacy": Supporting civil society initiatives that often possess higher global credibility.

Digital diplomacy in 2026 and beyond will be the field where wars are won or lost before the first shot is fired. The ability to combine the "Charm of Soft Power" with the "Precision of Digital Tools" will determine the status of nations in the upcoming world order.

Citations:

1-Corneliu Bjola, Adapting to Digital Diplomacy: Opportunities and Challenges, Geopolitics, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2016, p. 10.

2-Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 1st edition, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004, p5.

3-Ernest J. Wilson III, Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power, The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 616, No. 1, 2008, p. 115.

4-Harto Bevanyarva, International Conflict: Nature, Causes, and Resolution, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2021, p. 45.

5-Corneliu Bjola and Ilan Manor, The Oxford Handbook of Digital Diplomacy, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024, p. 115.

6-Farid Guliyev, Digital Panda Diplomacy: China's National Branding in the Age of Social Media, Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 78, No. 2, 2025, p. 88.

7-R. Alonso-Martin-Romo, Citizen Historians and the Landscape of Disinformation in the Ukrainian War, Media and Communication Studies Review, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2023, p. 204.

8-Nicholas J. Cull, Public Diplomacy: Global Force for Good in the Information Age, 1st edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2023, p. 42.

9-Ilan Manor, Untangling the Concepts: Digital Diplomacy vs. Cyber Diplomacy, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2024, p. 158.

10-Anne-Marie Slaughter, Power in the Networked Century, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 102, No. 1, 2023, p. 89.

11-Brian Hocking, Diplomatic Practice in the Digital Age: Institutions and Processes, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2025, p. 112.

12-Ilan Manor, The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy: Protocols, Platforms, and Challenges, 2nd edition, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2024, p. 195.

13-Corneliu Bjola, The Digital Pivot in Foreign Ministries: Cultural and Strategic Challenges, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2024, p. 55.

14-Jan Melissen and Ilan Manor, Public Diplomacy and Conflict Management in Transitional States, 1st edition, Routledge, London, 2025, p. 142.

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

- 15-Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle, *Strategic Narratives: Communication and the New World Order*, 2nd edition, Routledge, New York, 2024, p. 75.
- 16-Ilan Manor and Elad Segev, *Strategic Narratives and Digital Diplomacy: The Case of Image-Building on Social Media*, *Global Media and Communication*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2025, p. 210.
- 17-James Pamment, *The Narrative Dimensions of the Russo-Ukrainian War: Digital Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2024, p. 88.
- 18-Alister Miskimmon and Ben O'Loughlin, *Strategic Narratives and Alliance Management: The Case of the Libya Intervention*, 1st edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023, p. 114.
- 19-Aisling Swaine, *Crisis Narratives and the Construction of International Responses*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024, p. 156.
- 20-Ilan Manor, *The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy: Platforms and the Fragmentation of Reality*, *Global Policy Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2025, p. 230.
- 21-Olga Boichak, *Digital Mobilization and Defense Crowdfunding in Contemporary Conflicts*, *New Media & Society*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2025, p. 118.
- 22-Ilan Manor and Corneliu Bjola, *Digital Diplomacy as a Driver of Military Aid: Public Opinion and Strategic Communication in the Ukrainian Crisis*, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2024, p. 45.
- 23-Andrew Hoskins and William Merrin, *Participatory Warfare: Digital Media and the New Military Paradigm*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2023, p. 112.
- 24-James Der Derian and Alexander Wendt, *Quantum Diplomacy and the Limitations of Digital Innovation in Modern Warfare*, *International Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2024, p. 342.
- 25- Marietje Schaake, *The Tech Coup: How to Save Democracy from Big Tech*, 1st edition, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2024, p. 189.
- 26-Maxwell McCombs and Sebastian Valenzuela, *Agenda-Setting Theory in the Digital Age: From Top-Down to Reciprocal Models*, *Journal of Communication Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 2024, p. 112.
- 27-Ilan Manor, *Public Diplomacy and the Politics of Uncertainty: Strategic Agenda-Setting in the Digital Era*, 1st edition, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2023, p. 205.
- 28-Robert Entman and Usher Nikki, *Framing, Priming, and the Digital Diplomatic Discourse: Shaping Public Support for Military Aid*, *Political Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2025, p. 315.
- 29-Corneliu Bjola and James Pamment, *Countering Online Propaganda and Extremism: The Strategic Role of Digital Diplomacy*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2024, p. 178.
- 30-Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power and Great-Power Competition: From Issues to Strategies*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2025, p. 74.
- 31- Bennett L. Lance and Steven Livingston, *The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and the Decline of Democratic Institutions*, *Journal of Democracy and Digital Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2024, p. 142.
- 32-James Pamment and Howard Philip, *Countering Disinformation: Strategic Communication and the Digital Resilience Framework*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2025, p. 210.
- 33-Corneliu Bjola and Ilan Manor, *Institutional Responses to Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior: A Comparative Study of the GEC and EU Models*, *Global Affairs and Security Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025, p. 95.

Bibliography List setting:

First: Books:

- 1-Alonso-Martin-Romo, R., *Citizen Historians and the Landscape of Disinformation in the Ukrainian War*, *Media and Communication Studies Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2023.
- 2-Bevanyarva, Harto, *International Conflict: Nature, Causes, and Resolution*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2021.
- 3-Bjola, Corneliu, and Ilan Manor, *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Diplomacy*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024.

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

4-Bjola, Corneliu, and James Pamment, *Countering Online Propaganda and Extremism: The Strategic Role of Digital Diplomacy*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2024.

5-Cull, Nicholas J., *Public Diplomacy: Global Force for Good in the Information Age*, 1st edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2023.

6-Hocking, Brian, *Diplomatic Practice in the Digital Age: Institutions and Processes*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2025.

7-Hoskins, Andrew, and William Merrin, *Participatory Warfare: Digital Media and the New Military Paradigm*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London, 2023.

8-Manor, Ilan, *The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy: Protocols, Platforms, and Challenges*, 2nd edition, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2024.

9-Manor, Ilan, *Public Diplomacy and the Politics of Uncertainty: Strategic Agenda-Setting in the Digital Era*, 1st edition, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2023.

10-Melissen, Jan, and Ilan Manor, *Public Diplomacy and Conflict Management in Transitional States*, 1st edition, Routledge, London, 2025.

11-Miskimmon, Alister, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle, *Strategic Narratives: Communication and the New World Order*, 2nd edition, Routledge, New York, 2024.

12-Miskimmon, Alister, and Ben O'Loughlin, *Strategic Narratives and Alliance Management: The Case of the Libya Intervention*, 1st edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023.

13-Nye, Joseph S., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 1st edition, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004.

14-Nye Jr., Joseph S., *Soft Power and Great-Power Competition: From Issues to Strategies*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 2025.

15-Pamment, James, and Howard Philip, *Countering Disinformation: Strategic Communication and the Digital Resilience Framework*, 1st edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2025.

16-Schaaake, Marietje, *The Tech Coup: How to Save Democracy from Big Tech*, 1st edition, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2024.

17-Swaine, Aisling, *Crisis Narratives and the Construction of International Responses*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024.

Second: Journal Articles:

1-Bennett, L. Lance, and Steven Livingston, "The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and the Decline of Democratic Institutions", *Journal of Democracy and Digital Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2024.

2-Bjola, Corneliu, "Adapting to Digital Diplomacy: Opportunities and Challenges", *Geopolitics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2016.

3-Bjola, Corneliu, "The Digital Pivot in Foreign Ministries: Cultural and Strategic Challenges", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2024.

4-Bjola, Corneliu, and Ilan Manor, "Institutional Responses to Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior: A Comparative Study of the GEC and EU Models", *Global Affairs and Security Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025.

5-Boichak, Olga, "Digital Mobilization and Defense Crowdfunding in Contemporary Conflicts", *New Media & Society*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2025.

6-Der Derian, James, and Alexander Wendt, "Quantum Diplomacy and the Limitations of Digital Innovation in Modern Warfare", *International Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2024.

Digital Diplomacy in a Turbulent World: Using Social Media Platforms as a Soft Power Tool in Contemporary International Conflicts

7-Entman, Robert, and Usher Nikki, "Framing, Priming, and the Digital Diplomatic Discourse: Shaping Public Support for Military Aid", *Political Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2025.

8-Guliyev, Farid, "Digital Panda Diplomacy: China's National Branding in the Age of Social Media", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2, 2025.

9-Manor, Ilan, "Untangling the Concepts: Digital Diplomacy vs. Cyber Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2024.

10-Manor, Ilan, "The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy: Platforms and the Fragmentation of Reality", *Global Policy Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2025.

11-Manor, Ilan, and Elad Segev, "Strategic Narratives and Digital Diplomacy: The Case of Image-Building on Social Media", *Global Media and Communication*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2025.

12-Manor, Ilan, and Corneliu Bjola, "Digital Diplomacy as a Driver of Military Aid: Public Opinion and Strategic Communication in the Ukrainian Crisis", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2024.

13-McCombs, Maxwell, and Sebastian Valenzuela, "Agenda-Setting Theory in the Digital Age: From Top-Down to Reciprocal Models", *Journal of Communication Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 2024.

14-Pamment, James, "The Narrative Dimensions of the Russo-Ukrainian War: Digital Diplomacy and Strategic Communication", *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2024.

15-Slaughter, Anne-Marie, "Power in the Networked Century", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 102, No. 1, 2023.

16-Wilson III, Ernest J., "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, No. 1, 2008.