



T.C.

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FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MASTER PROGRAM

**UTILİZİNG DİGİTAL DİPLOMACY AS A SOFT POWER İN
FOREİGN POLİCY (THE UNITED STATES OF AMERİCA AS A
MODEL): AN ANALYTİCAL STUDY OF AMERİCAN
DİPLOMACY FROM 2011 TO 2024**

MASTER'S THESIS

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DEDICATION

To the one who honored me by carrying his name, my dear father. To the one who spared no effort or sacrifice to help me reach a high academic degree. To the light of my eyes, the illumination of my path, and the joy of my life. My mother, then my mother. To my support, strength, and helping hand, my brothers and sisters. To everyone who taught me a letter. To the patient and compassionate one who bore with me the burdens of life and travel during my studies and writing, with love, loyalty, and gratitude (My dear husband).



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ETHICAL AGREEMENT

According to the thesis writing guide of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Graduate Education Institute of Graduate Studies, My Master's thesis named “Utilizing Digital Diplomacy As A Soft Power In Foreign Policy (The United States Of America As A Model): An Analytical Study Of American Diplomacy From 2011 To 2024” that I have prepared under the consultancy of “Asst. Prof. Mayada Kamal Eldeen” is based on scientific ethical values and rules. I hereby declare that it is an appropriate, original work, and I will accept any legal sanctions if it is determined otherwise.

.....\ \

Dastan Abdullah Othman

JÜRİ KABUL VE ONAY

Dastan Abdullah Othman tarafından hazırlanan “**Utilizing Digital Diplomacy As A Soft Power İn Foreign Policy (The United States Of America As A Model): An Analytical Study Of American Diplomacy From 2011 To 2024**” adlı tez çalışmasının savunma sınavı 26.05.2025 tarihinde yapılmış olup aşağıda verilen Jüri tarafından Oy Birliği ile Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi **Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü** Siyaset Bilimi Ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Fakültesi Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ÖZET

DIŞ POLİTİKADA YUMUŞAK GÜÇ OLARAK DİJİTAL DİPLOMASİDEN YARARLANMA (MODEL OLARAK AMERİKA BİRLEŞİK DEVLETLERİ) 2011'DEN 2024'E AMERİKAN DİPLOMASİSİ ÜZERİNE ANALİTİK BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Ülkelerin birbirleriyle ilişkilerinde kullandıkları diplomasi biçimleri, hedeflerine ve politikalarına ulaşmak için yumuşak güçten yararlanma yöntemleri gibi çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Dünya çapında meydana gelen önemli teknolojik gelişmeler göz önüne alındığında, devletler arasındaki geleneksel diplomatik angajman çerçevesinde bir değişimi temsil eden dijital diplomasi başta olmak üzere yeni diplomasi türleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma, ABD'nin uluslararası sahnedeki etkisini ve etkisini artırmak için dijital diplomasiyi bir araç olarak nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Çalışma, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin sosyal medya ve modern teknoloji aracılığıyla yabancı halklar ve hükümetlerle etkili bir şekilde etkileşim kurmak için yenilikçi dijital diplomatik stratejileri nasıl benimsediğini göstermeye odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amaçlarına ulaşmak için, diplomasinin tarihini ve geçirdiği gelişmeleri, ayrıca Amerikan diplomasisinin tarihsel bağlamını ve evrimsel arka planını açıklamak için tarihsel bir yöntem kullanılmıştır. Diplomasi ve yumuşak güç konusunu ele alan belge ve çalışmalar incelenerek eleştirel bir yaklaşım da kullanılmıştır. Dijital diplomasinin dış politikada yumuşak güç olarak kullanılmasının tezahürlerini belirlemek için ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın web sitesinin içeriği incelenerek içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Çalışma, Amerikan modelini analiz ederek, dijital diplomasinin Amerikan değerlerini ve çıkarlarını küresel olarak tanıtmak için kullanılan yumuşak güce nasıl dönüştüğünü ve diğer ülkelerin politikaları üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmada ayrıca yanlış bilgilendirme riskleri, mahremiyet ve insan haklarının korunması da dahil olmak üzere bu yaklaşımla ilgili zorluklar ve fırsatlar da tartışılmıştır. Genel olarak çalışma, dış

politikayı etkilemek için dijital diplomasinin bir araç olarak kullanılmasının, uluslararası sahnedeki etkilerini arttırmak isteyen ülkeler için önemli bir stratejik gelişme olduğunu ortaya koyarken, dijital diplomatik iletişimde şeffaflık ve güvenilirliğin sağlanması ile teknolojinin etkin kullanımının dengelenmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Diplomasi, Kamu Diplomasisi, Dış Politika, Yumuşak Güç.



ABSTRACT

UTILIZING DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AS A SOFT POWER IN FOREIGN POLICY (THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS A MODEL) AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY FROM 2011 TO 2024

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The nature of diplomacy that nations use to interact with each other is not uniform, nor is the means of utilizing soft power to achieve their ends and policies. Due to the rapid technological innovation taking place around the globe today, innovative forms of diplomacy have arisen, with the most prominent being digital diplomacy, which is a departure from the traditional paradigm of state-to-state diplomacy. This research analyzes the use of digital diplomacy by the United States of America to promote its influence and spread its impact in the international arena. The research addresses the way in which the United States has embraced innovative digital diplomacy tactics to successfully engage with other nations' peoples and governments via the internet and current technology. A historical method was used to expound the evolution of diplomacy and its development, and the context of American diplomacy and its evolutionary past, in order to accomplish the purposes of the current study. Critical method was also applied through reviewing studies and documents that debate the issue of diplomacy and soft power. Content analysis was used through the study of the content of the United States Department of State website to determine the forms of utilization of digital diplomacy as soft power in the country's foreign policies. By examining the American model, the research uncovered how digital diplomacy is converted into soft power employed to advance American interests and values internationally and affect the policy of other nations. Challenges and prospects of utilizing such a method were also mentioned in the study, such as the risk of misinformation and privacy, and the upholding of human rights. The research proved that the use of digital diplomacy as a means to shape foreign policy is a significant strategic evolution that nations interested in increasing their influence in the global arena can pursue with greater ease, subject to maintaining a balance between

the effective use of technology and providing transparency and credibility to digital diplomacy communication.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy, Foreign Policy, And Soft Power.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
NET	Network
WEB	Websites
SMS	Short Message Service
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



INTRODUCTION

The connection between diplomacy and international relations is a well-established historical fact. As states strive to build balanced relationships with other countries in pursuit of their interests and to gain political, economic, and social advantages, the concept of diplomacy emerged and secured its place within the international relations system. Over time, it developed its explanatory theories and governing rules, which have been framed within a system of international agreements in the form of laws and regulations that ensure diplomats' freedom of movement and work in the host country.

International relations are not static and are instead defined by ongoing dynamism and vitality. This movement is susceptible to the evolution in all aspects that are evident in human society. This movement encompasses the nature of the relations, their direction, and the alliances between nations, as well as other determinants and factors that collectively shape the nature and ultimate portrayal of these relations. On the other hand, examining the dynamism of international relations provides actual insights into the social and political developments of these nations.

Diplomatic relations reflect a pressing need resulting from changing patterns in the way society is structured. Right from the beginning of society in the shape of tribes and clans, relations between them developed concurrently. They evolved into organized movements guided by set rules and principles.

The sophistication of human society has compounded the tasks imposed upon states, and in doing so, has affected their capacity to conduct internal and external missions with the necessary efficiency. This has consequently mirrored the performance of the diplomacy of these states. As a result, informal actors have been called upon to perform unofficial diplomatic roles. Institutionalized civil society, the media, and cultural and sports personalities have been utilized to establish diplomatic relationships with other nations by leveraging personal networks to exert subtle pressure on the other state, thereby contributing to informal diplomacy.

However, the technological advancements that know no bounds have reflected their manifestations across all areas of life and all societal sectors. Although the degree of impact varies among these sectors, it can be said that the advancement has not excluded any of them in one way or another. This has driven diplomatic actors in states to leverage

this development by transferring many official diplomatic procedures to social media and internet platforms, utilizing the ability of these networks to save time as a substitute for the official correspondence that was previously relied upon.

The concept of soft power is one that has seen increased utilization in the field of international relations recently. The term refers to the fact that the tools of influence in this type exceed the traditional framework based on threats, coercion, and political blackmail, moving towards achieving diplomatic gains using attractive means such as cultural, artistic, and sporting avenues.

In the pursuit of defining any concept related to diplomacy, in both its classical and emerging forms, it is essential to touch upon the American experience, as it represents a long-standing international diplomatic power. Throughout history, it has consistently achieved significant gains in its foreign relations, as American diplomacy continually seeks to develop its structure and mechanisms in harmony with the evolving requirements of each stage.

Based on the above, this study aims to clarify the mechanisms by which digital diplomacy is employed as an effective force in foreign policy. This will be achieved by highlighting the American experience in this type of diplomacy during the period from 2011 to 2024, as this timeframe witnessed numerous diplomatic transformations due to the "Arab Spring" revolutions and the resurgence of Russian influence on the international political stage.

Investing in technology represents one of the factors contributing to achieving success, as it embodies the characteristics of the current era. Given that international relations are in a state of continuous dynamism, those in charge must embrace the outcomes of modernity and technology, ensuring that their procedures and activities align with the context of societal development. From this point, many countries have begun investing in the advancement of digital diplomacy.

However, despite the advantages that this technology offers, making it a valuable tool for politicians and diplomats, it simultaneously carries numerous risks and potential threats. It is susceptible to constant hacking and espionage by rival states, rendering it a double-edged sword.

A timeframe of 2011 to 2024 was chosen, as global diplomatic dynamics are expected to be redefined during this period. 2011, the starting point, was also the beginning

of the Arab Spring, a series of uprisings that reshaped the Middle East and brought digital communication into the world of international politics. During this period, state actors and notably the United States, increased their use of social media and online platforms to sway foreign audiences. The endpoint, 2024, marks a complete cycle of transformation that will bless us with a post-COVID-19 global order, where digital diplomacy will have become even more institutionalized. The scope of this project enables us to observe the evolution of digital diplomacy from its strategic experimental stage to a normalized aspect of U.S. foreign policy.

Accordingly, the current study's problem is determined by the quest to answer the following main question:

How is digital diplomacy employed as soft power in states' foreign policy?

The following questions arise from the main inquiry:

1. What is meant by digital diplomacy?
2. How has the technological revolution impacted diplomatic practices?
3. How do digital means change governments' perceptions of the states that employ them?
4. How do digital means change people's perceptions of the states that employ them?
5. What are the most prominent applications of digital diplomacy in American foreign policy?

Importance of the Study

The significance of this study is highlighted in the following points:

- The importance of international relations and the constant focus on them as the primary determinant of foreign policies, along with the resulting alliances and agreements between states, makes the study of any factor influencing these relationships essential and urgent.
- The significant role of technological and digital advancements in societal movements in general, and their potential reflection on diplomatic fields and the key actors associated with them.
- Global diplomacies place growing importance on utilizing soft power tools in diplomatic actions, where this type of diplomacy has often taken precedence over traditional diplomatic forms.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following:

- Clarify the concept of digital diplomacy and the associated concepts and terms.
- Identify the effects and implications of the digital revolution on diplomacy.
- Explain the methods governments use to harness digital technologies in building their relationships with other countries.
- Illuminate the strategies governments employ to utilize digital technologies in shaping their image among other people.
- Analyze the American experience of employing digital diplomacy as a soft power in foreign policies.

Methodology of the Study

In pursuit of achieving the objectives of the current study, the following research methods will be adopted:

- The historical method to explain the history of diplomacy, its developments, and the historical context of American diplomacy.
- The critical method involves reviewing documents and studies that address the topics of diplomacy and soft power.
- Content analysis through examining the content of the U.S. Department of State's website to identify manifestations of employing digital diplomacy as soft power in foreign policies.

Study Hypotheses

The current study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. The United States employs digital diplomacy as a deliberate soft power strategy to influence foreign publics and promote its values, culture, and foreign policy objectives.
2. Digital diplomacy functions not only as a tool of attraction and engagement but also as a mechanism that may incorporate elements of strategic pressure, ideological framing, or indirect influence, especially during international crises or political conflicts.
3. The effectiveness of digital diplomacy as a form of soft power depends on its ethical integrity, transparency, and consistency with the democratic values it seeks to represent globally.

Previous Studies

Al-Osaimi Study (2021) titled: *The Future of Saudi Digital Diplomacy in the Next Two Decades amid Current International Transformations*, published in the Arab Journal of Media and Communication Research, Issue 35, Saudi Arabia.

The study aimed to forecast future scenarios for Saudi digital diplomacy and describe the transformation in the international system, as well as its implications for digital diplomacy. It also sought to clarify the main challenges facing digital diplomacy investments in Saudi Arabia in the future. The study utilized a quantitative method to analyze the phenomenon using statistical techniques, as well as a qualitative method to analyze the fields of digital diplomacy and its prospects. The study concluded that Saudi Arabia is steadily moving towards integrating digital diplomacy as part of its public diplomatic system, and that concerns related to privacy and security are the most significant challenges facing the actual transition to digital diplomacy.

Bouachiba and Wafi Study (2019) titled: *Digital Diplomacy and Building Mental Images through social media: A Study of Some Global Experiences*, published in the Algerian Journal of Human and Social Sciences, Volume 3, Issue 2, Algeria.

The study aims to analyze and investigate the impact of social media on creating the mental image of the target audience as an alternative to traditional means of influence, and to determine the extent to which this type of diplomacy is employed and the benefits it brings to the employing state. The study used a historical approach to infer the historical context of diplomatic development, in addition to content analysis and a case study method, by selecting the experiences of the European Union and France in applying digital diplomacy. It concluded that many countries, particularly France, were able to influence diverse populations through social media, which changed what governments could not alter through their traditional hard power.

Jassas Study (2019) titled: *The Role of Digital Diplomacy in Liberating Peoples: A Study of the Palestinian and Western Sahara Cases*, published in the Algerian Journal of Human and Social Sciences, Volume 3, Issue 2, Algeria.

The study begins with the premise that the digital revolution represents one of the indicators of the transformations expected in the 21st century. Control over information and the ability to employ it are crucial factors in state policies and the orientations of people, which vary in their goals—some seek change, others strive to assert existence,

and some work towards liberation from dependency, while still others yearn for freedom. The study employed a case study method to monitor key indicators of digital diplomacy adoption in support of the Palestinian cause. It found that despite the significance of social media and its diplomatic role, Palestinian actors failed to capitalize on the potential of digital diplomacy to advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people.

Abd Al-Aal Study (2018) titled: *Digital Diplomacy and Its Status in Palestinian Foreign Policy*, published in the Series of Research and Media Policies, Birzeit University, Palestine.

The study aimed to diagnose the motivational and operational issues related to practicing digital diplomacy within official Palestinian circles and to clarify the plans and strategies of Palestinian digital diplomacy, as well as action plans to address the needs of official institutions and public policy. The study employed a descriptive analytical method and a survey method by gathering the opinions of a group of Palestinian media experts.

The study concluded that there are numerous gaps in the practices of digital diplomacy by the Palestinian Authority, attributed to the ongoing Palestinian division, which results in the existence of multiple Palestinian diplomatic discourses simultaneously.

Spee Nikita Study (2017) titled: *Perceptions of Credibility in Digital Diplomacy*, Netherlands (**Leiden University, 2018**). This study aimed to understand the public's assessment strategies regarding the credibility of sources in digital diplomacy. It employed a survey method to gather opinions from a group of Dutch citizens about their appreciation of the credibility of data and information published through digital diplomatic channels. The results indicated that when people are adept at crafting content, its credibility increases. Additionally, the more reliable the accounts, the greater the credibility; however, the study concluded that young people find it challenging to evaluate the credibility of digital diplomacy sources.

Commentary on Previous Studies

The previous studies share a common goal of describing digital diplomacy and assessing its degree of integration within the diplomatic relations framework of the countries discussed. They also strive to identify the positives and negatives resulting from the adoption of digital diplomacy.

The current study benefited from these previous studies in determining the research methodologies employed and utilized a content analysis approach in designing its research tools. Notably, this study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is the first to focus on the American experience in employing digital diplomacy as a form of soft power.

Structure of the Study

To present a comprehensive academic study and address the research problem posed, this study will be divided into five chapters.

- **Chapter One** will explore the conceptual framework of the study's themes, including defining the concept of diplomacy and understanding the essence of digital diplomacy.
- **Chapter Two** will be dedicated to studying the impact of the digital revolution on diplomacy, covering the concept of the digital revolution and its relationship with social communication, followed by an examination of the evolution of digital diplomacy.
- **Chapter Three** will analyze soft power in American diplomacy, focusing on the nature of soft power and its actors, and then examining how soft power policies have influenced American diplomacy.
- **Chapter Four** will investigate the impact of digital diplomacy on American foreign policies through an analytical study that leads to specific findings.
- At last, will conclude the study, presenting the summary of findings, results, and recommended actions based on the research conducted.

CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As the life of states requires continuous communication among them, this communication has taken various forms, with tools varying according to the nature of these relationships. One of the most essential tools for communication between states is external representation. Given that diplomatic missions are the institutions that organize and manage relations between states, it is inconceivable in the current era for any sovereign state to exist without diplomatic missions or to refrain from sending diplomats to other countries; this has become fundamental in international relations (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 4). Considering this, this chapter discusses the concept of diplomacy and its historical development through two sections: the first section addresses the concept of diplomacy, its most essential definitions, determinants, types, and significance for states, while the second section discusses the concept of digital diplomacy, its determinants, objectives, emergence, and evolution.

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF DIPLOMACY

For a long time, the term diplomacy was limited to the study of archives, treaties, and the history of relations between states. It transitioned from Greek to Latin, then to European languages, and finally to Arabic. There are numerous definitions of this concept. In this context, this section will address the concept of diplomacy.

1.1.1. Definition Of Diplomacy

The term diplomacy entered the international lexicon in the mid-17th century, replacing the word negotiations. Dr. Mohamed Aziz Shakwa notes that the meaning of diplomacy has evolved, now encompassing a range of meanings. In this regard, this section will discuss the definition of diplomacy.

1.1.1.1. Definition of Diplomacy in Terminology

The term "diplomacy" is derived from the Greek word "diplomacy," which refers to the official document carried by a special envoy from a president or leader to another state or region within the same state. These documents are exchanged among leaders,

presidents, and officials, granting the bearer special privileges. Diplomacy is conducted through permanent diplomatic missions, which can be bilateral, multilateral, or specialized. Therefore, it is no longer limited to the exchange of diplomatic missions between states but also includes diplomatic relations between states and international organizations or among international organizations themselves (Al-Jubouri, 2007, p. 483).

The Romans initially referred to sealed and folded metal travel documents as "diploma." Over time, the word's meaning expanded to include official records, papers, and treaties. With this diversification, it became necessary to employ officials to manage these documents, decode their symbols, and preserve them, who were then referred to as "archivists" (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 26). For a long time, the term diplomacy was limited to the study of treaties, archives, and the history of relations between states. It transitioned from Greek to Latin, then to European languages, and finally to Arabic. In Latin, it means an official certificate or document that includes the status of the envoy and the mission for which they are sent, along with instructions from the ruler regarding their advancement, reception, or movement between different regions. These certificates were papers held by pieces of iron called "diplomas" (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 6).

The second meaning that the Romans used for the word diplomacy referred to the character of envoys or ambassadors. In the French context, diplomacy means a commissioner or envoy—someone sent on a mission. The concept later expanded and began to be used in several different meanings, including the professions of negotiation, tact, and foreign policy. In Arabic, diplomacy referred to a "book" that expressed the documents exchanged among those in power, which granted the bearer the advantages of protection and security (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 6).

The term "diplomacy" was also used by Arabs in the same sense as it was by the Greeks and later the Romans. Over time, with the overall development of international relations and diplomacy, this term came to be used in all languages, including Arabic, in a unified sense to express a scientific concept with its foundations and organized rules (Al-Shami, 2007, p. 34).

In essence, diplomacy involves conducting activities to shape a national image among various active players abroad and enhance a state's soft power, influencing foreign

public opinion through unconventional diplomatic means to achieve foreign policy objectives (Cihanoğlu, 2023, p. 8).

The traditional function of diplomacy—as the negotiation of treaties and the exchange of envoys—has given way to a broader role in contemporary international relations. Modern diplomacy now encompasses a range of strategic communication tools adapted to the digitized political landscape. It is increasingly viewed as a social institution that produces and reproduces power relations through rituals, language, and performance (Sharp, 2009, p. 23). From this perspective, diplomacy is understood as a dynamic and symbolic ‘actor’ that responds to shifts in power and international norms. Furthermore, the rise of public diplomacy has blurred the traditional boundaries between domestic and foreign audiences, as states now aim to win over not only foreign governments but also foreign publics (Melissen, 2005, pp. 9–12). This transformation aligns with the concept of "new diplomacy," in which diplomatic practice extends across networks of nonstate actors, international organizations, media platforms, and civil society. This broader model recognizes that diplomacy occurs not only in official meetings but also through media messaging, cultural outreach, and digital engagement, each shaping a state's image and advancing its foreign policy objectives.

1.1.1.2. Definition of Diplomacy in Legal Terms

Regarding the legal definition of diplomacy, scholars of public international law, particularly those specializing in the study of diplomatic relations, differ in their interpretations of the meaning of diplomacy. This disagreement stems from their differing philosophical perspectives. Some key definitions include:

- **Harold Nicolson's Definition:** "Diplomacy is the direction of international relations through negotiation and the method by which ambassadors manage these relations." (Aljazeera, 2021).
- **Henry Kissinger's Definition:** "It is the adjustment of differences through negotiation." (Al-Izazi, 2016).
- **Charles de Martiis's Definition:** "It is the science of relations and foreign affairs between states." (Al-Izazi, 2016).

- **De Aerthe's Definition:** "It is the art of applying the principles of international law; in practice, diplomacy is the adherence to international law principles." (Al-Shami, 2007, p. 35).

- **Adnan Bakri's Definition:** "A political process used by states to implement their foreign policies while interacting with other states or international actors and managing diplomatic relations among each other within the international system."

- **Samouhi's Definition:** Samouhi defines diplomacy in a broader sense, stating that diplomacy is: "The art of representing the government and safeguarding the interests of the state with foreign governments, ensuring that the rights of the country are preserved, its dignity respected abroad, and that it can manage international affairs by directing political negotiations and following their stages according to instructions, while striving to apply the law in international relations so that legal rules become the basis for interactions among peoples." (Samouhi, 1973, p. 85).

- According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2024), diplomacy is "the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2024).

In the *Dictionary of International Relations*, authored by Farouk Sunmezoglu, diplomacy is referred to as one of the tools of foreign policy for states. Diplomacy, in a broad sense, distinguishes all external relations of the state. At the same time, it is expressed in a narrow sense as the process of conveying the government's opinions and perspectives on specific issues directly to decision-makers in other countries (Orhan, 2023, p. 30).

The term diplomacy entered the international lexicon in the mid-17th century, replacing the word negotiations. Dr. Mohamed Aziz Shakwa notes that the meaning of diplomacy has evolved over time and now encompasses many meanings, which can be included in the following general definition: the art and science of managing foreign relations (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 9).

Cull describes public diplomacy as the interaction of international actors with foreign audiences to gain foreign policy interests (Cull, 2014, p. 255).

In contrast to classical legal definitions of diplomatic relations that focus mainly on their formal nature—such as negotiation, treaty making and more generally adherence to international law—contemporary theorists of international relations agree that

diplomacy has also to be recognized as a multidimensional practice, based on wider contemporary global norms, on institutional power and, more importantly perhaps, on symbolic representation. Diplomacy is understood broadly as “the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad” (Berridge, 2010, p. 1). It is further noted that “for the first time in the 21st century it is embracing a wide range of diplomatic actors and informal channels” (Berridge, 2010, p. 1).

In the past, legal scholars have increasingly recognized that diplomacy functions within both legal-institutional frameworks and socio-political contexts that help or hinder its effectiveness. Diplomacy is referred to as “the art of representing and reconciling different interests in the international system through peaceful means” (Sharp, 2009, p. 6), and must therefore be assessed in both procedural legality and ethical legitimacy. With digital diplomacy, the era of dual lens is significant, as actions may be legally permissible but still ethically questionable (such as using online influence campaigns or data-driven engagement tactics).

Moreover, public diplomacy, as a subfield, has pushed back against the traditional legalistic orientation of the discipline, lending more currency to the soft techniques of power and persuasion characteristic of diplomacy. Although “what follows is a snapshot of the global energy situation at the end of 2008, it can be said that in many respects the present means much the same as that of the not-too-distant past” (Nye, 2008, p. 95). The way diplomacy functions today is not confined to interaction among [government to government], but [government must win the hearts and minds] of foreign publics as well. This implies that current diplomacy has two aspects, involving the legal doctrines as well as persuasive communicatronics in their functioning and a diplomat needs to do with both law, public perception and strategic depiction at the same time.

1.1.2. The Emergence and Evolution of Diplomacy

In light of the expansion of international relations today, diplomacy has become the primary means of enforcing and preparing states' foreign policies, as well as a key factor in protecting and safeguarding the interests of states and individuals abroad (Imran, 2014, p. 15). In this context, this section examines the historical evolution of diplomacy and its various forms.

1.1.2.1. The Historical Development of Diplomacy

The emergence and evolution of diplomacy are linked to the rise and development of international relations. The history of diplomacy dates back to the interactions between human groups (Daghesh, 2014, p. 6). Historical studies have revealed the existence of international relations between ancient empires and states dating back to around 3500 to 3000 BC. The communication between the peoples of empires, city-states, and kingdoms was not limited to warfare and conflict; there were also significant peaceful connections arranged through agreements facilitated by commissioners acting as diplomatic envoys, resembling the contemporary concept of diplomacy (Imran, 2014, p. 17).

In this context, ancient Egypt recognized a system of diplomatic representation. It sent its envoys to the Hittites (who were an Anatolian people that played an essential role in establishing an empire centered in Hattusa in north-central Anatolia around 1600 BC) (Imran, 2014, p. 15). The empire reached its peak in the mid-14th century BC under the rule of Suppiluliuma I, encompassing all of Anatolia and parts of northern Syria and Mesopotamia. The first international balance of power in the area known as the Near East at that time was established among three states: ancient Egypt, the Ethiopian state, and the Assyrian state. A significant precedent was the treaty that followed a long period of conflicts with the Hittites, known as the "Hattusili Treaty" or the "Pearl Treaty."¹ Historians describe it as the first written international treaty of its kind in human history. Key principles included the status of envoys and messengers, as well as the recognition of their positions after establishing friendly relations. This also involved promoting peace by guaranteeing the sanctity of each other's territories and updating alliances and mutual defense. This treaty remained a model for drafting treaties due to its preamble, body, and conclusion (Walad Hajjag, 2014, p. 18).

Regarding the Greeks, although the foundation of their society relied on resorting to war and using force to resolve disputes, the Greeks established general rules to organize diplomatic relations among their city-states. This included sending ambassadors, implementing diplomatic immunity, and protecting foreigners. They also invented the

¹ The Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty was signed between Pharaoh Ramses II and Hittite King Hattusili III in the 21st year of Ramses II's reign, around November 10, 1259 BC. Both rulers confirmed their agreement on peace between them and recognized each other as equal partners. They pledged mutual military support against internal and external threats, and they also agreed to return "refugees" to one another.

method of holding regional conferences known as "Amphictyonic congresses," which were considered the first form of international organizations (Walad Hajjag, 2014, p. 19).

In the Islamic community, as in the European community, diplomacy was practiced both before and after the emergence of Islamic law, contributing to the establishment of rules between Muslims and non-Muslims (Al-Shami, 2007, p. 22).

The origins of diplomacy date back to a historically earlier stage, where human societies, even before the establishment of the modern state, relied on communication with one another based on the exchange of interests and benefits (Blumann, 1989, p. 3). Communication between tribes and clans later evolved into the exchange of goods and products between nations and peoples, as well as the delineation and designation of borders and the resolution of how to separate human settlements. This organization of mutual benefits based on shared interests represents the earliest form of diplomacy (Yusuf, 2020, p. 7). Thus, diplomacy has ancient roots, with 16th-century writers believing that angels and messengers conveying messages were the earliest forms of diplomacy (Nicolson, 1939, p. 16).

The earliest primitive societies engaged in relations with one another and sent delegations to conduct negotiations aimed at settling disputes, as ongoing wars, a common trait among tribes and clans, characterized those periods. Such conflicts would be set aside during times of death and burial, when negotiations would begin among the parties to end the war and resolve disputes. Additionally, the principle of diplomatic immunity emerged in its initial form after messengers from one party were killed upon their arrival (Sabareeni, 2008, p. 23).

The history of international relations among ancient peoples dates back to approximately 3500-3000 BC. The division of human society characterized this era in ancient world history into two central units: one in the Middle East controlling the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, and the other controlling the Nile Valley. Surrounding each of these areas were several cities and city-states, leading to the establishment of the first two major empires in that region: the Chaldeans or Babylonians in Southwest Asia and the Egyptian (Pharaonic) Empire in Northeast Africa (Aficrin, 2020, p. 429).

The Vienna Congress was a pivotal event that shaped diplomatic principles and international relations in European history. Held in 1815, the Vienna Congress redrew the borders of Europe that Napoleon had shattered. The participation of state representatives

at the Vienna Congress was not limited to just them; representatives from private institutions, such as newspapers, also played a role. The Vienna Congress inspired international solidarity and later became a source of inspiration for numerous organizations, including the League of Nations and the United Nations. For the first time, all participating countries agreed that diplomacy enjoyed a specific legal status and was a profession governed by rules. The congress categorized diplomatic representatives into three groups: first, ambassadors (*legatus*), second, ministers plenipotentiary sent to the king, and finally, *chargé d'affaires* at the foreign ministry.

In the modern era, following the end of World War I, the first international organization with a global direction and political character was established: the League of Nations. Although the League failed to achieve its goals due to conflicts with the interests of major powers, this period witnessed the emergence of international and non-international organizations at the global governance level, such as the Permanent Court of International Justice, established in 1920. Regarding the United Nations, established in 1945, the San Francisco Conference led to the formation of the United Nations, which replaced the League of Nations. Notably, this period saw improvements and modifications to the names of some organizations, such as the International Health Organization becoming the World Health Organization, and the International Institute for Cultural Cooperation becoming the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). New international organizations were also established, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Monetary Fund. Membership in some organizations was restricted to many countries typically located in a specific geographical area, and this trend intensified, especially after many countries gained independence since 1945 (Walad Hajjag, 2014, p. 27).

With the advancement of communication and technology, as well as the increasing number of actors on the international stage, the concept of public diplomacy emerged. It first appeared in 1965 in the writings of American scholar Edmund Kuhlmann. Public diplomacy is defined as "the act of persuading people in targeted countries to seek to change their governments' internal and external policies, creating a conducive environment for a public that advocates for foreign policy goals and national interests." Public diplomacy seeks to influence and mobilize global public opinion in support of a

foreign state's foreign policy objectives, enhance the state's image through cooperation with its people, foster mutual understanding, and cultivate constructive relationships to promote a secure global environment (Çifçi, 2020). Others have defined it as "all the means that states use to influence the opinions of citizens in foreign countries" (Mohammed, 2020, p. 7).

Public diplomacy is considered the interactive dimension of traditional diplomacy. It includes public diplomatic activities in culture, media, and education (Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination, 2001, p. 17). Public diplomacy encompasses several forms, including cultural diplomacy (the presence of cultural centers of a state in the host country), educational diplomacy (through scholarship programs and student exchanges), humanitarian diplomacy (by sending humanitarian and economic aid during disasters and crises), as well as conference diplomacy and trade and economic diplomacy (conducted through trade exchanges and chambers of commerce). Many studies argue that both public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy complement each other rather than compete (Abdul Aal, 2018, p. 3).

Evolution of geopolitics and new communication technologies have greatly transformed diplomacy from ancient exchange of emissaries to the modern statecraft. In tracing the history of diplomacy, although the early examples of bilateral diplomatic protocol were established by ancient civilizations, Egypt and Mesopotamia most importantly, modern diplomacy doesn't evolve until the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, coming to bear in the 1815 Vienna Convention, then the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations when diplomatic immunities and descriptions were legalized. Diplomacy has become gradually depersonalized, de-monarchic, institutionalized, and professionalized (Bull, 1995, p. 156). In the 20th century, the growth of multilateral diplomacy in organizations such as the United Nations was, in fact, a function of how diplomacy itself evolved, from managing state-to-state war and peace to coordinating global governance. Moreover, media ideology and perception increased significantly during the Cold War era and formed the basis for public diplomacy as a structured strategic tool. Public diplomacy was a mechanism designed not only to convey the interests of the state but also to legitimate these through interaction with a global audience (Snow & Taylor, 2009, pp. 13–16). Then we turned the corner where the soft

power tools—culture, education, broadcasting—became as important as actual negotiation. Their development over the past decades with digital technologies has been normative. “Digital diplomacy” is the term used to describe how social media, data analytics, and virtual engagement have “fundamentally changed how states conduct foreign policy, reach publics and manage crises in real time with prospective and actual enemies without the restrictions of the prevailing technologies” (Manor, 2020, p. 11). Consequently, diplomacy in times like these is marked at once by its ancient roots and its modern revitalizing program that integrates a dynamic, technology-focused world of globalization and information interdependence.

1.1.3. Types of Diplomacy

Diplomacy varies based on the following criteria:

- **In Terms of the Number of Parties:**

- **Bilateral Diplomacy:** This refers to diplomacy between two states.

- **Multilateral Diplomacy:** This involves a group of states through conferences or international organizations, a type that has existed since the League of Nations to the present day.

- **In Terms of the Nature of Relations:**

- **Secret Diplomacy:** This occurs behind the scenes and keeps its results confidential.

- **Public Diplomacy:** This is evident immediately upon its conclusion, even if negotiations were conducted privately. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the founders of the League of Nations sought to eliminate the era of secret diplomacy that had long been practiced, as the establishment of the League and its councils, as well as treaties concluded among those states, were linked to their publication under the threat of nullification (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 11).

- **In Terms of the Means Used:**

- There is **peace diplomacy**, which is based on negotiations between the concerned states, and this is the fundamental approach. Additionally, there is **violence diplomacy**, also known as **gunboat diplomacy**, which manifests when a state achieves its objectives through coercive and violent means, including war, which some consider a

continuation of the state's diplomatic activity in a different arena than negotiations (Al-Dabbas & Malindi, 2018, p. 12).

- **Other Types of Diplomacy:**

In addition to the types above, it is essential to mention some scattered types, the most significant of which are:

- **International Organization Diplomacy:** This is characterized by its continuity through the permanent missions of states to international organizations and is governed by legal principles derived from the organization's founding charter.

- **Crisis Diplomacy:** This refers to diplomatic activities directed at resolving an urgent international crisis, serving as an alternative to war and a means to alleviate tensions between states.

- **Psychological Diplomacy:** This is based on understanding the weaknesses in the negotiating party's positions to control the negotiation process.

- **People's Diplomacy or Media Diplomacy:** Traditionally, diplomacy was primarily conducted between governments. However, with the emergence of communication media, states now attempt to establish direct relationships with people. This is referred to as "media, public, or people's diplomacy." In this type of diplomacy, the diplomat must be well-versed in computer science, information technology, media, economics, and other relevant fields. Currently, popular diplomacy is considered one of the most significant concepts in political communication, with the standard for traditional diplomacy being the duration it takes to achieve its goals, which is often shorter for popular diplomacy (Seven & Ingenhoff, 2018, p. 363).

1.2. DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND ITS DETERMINANTS

The world has witnessed a tremendous development in information and communication technologies over recent years, which has fundamentally impacted many aspects of our lives. Diplomacy has also experienced its share of these changes, particularly with the emergence of the concept of digital diplomacy, which is the practice of international relations in the digital age. Considering this, this section discusses digital diplomacy and its key determinants.

1.2.1. The Concept of Digital Diplomacy

With the technological and digital revolution, the various generations of the internet, and its expansion and proliferation in the region and worldwide, all aspects of life, work, behavior, and ways of thinking and approaches have been affected. One of the arenas or fields impacted is politics and its interactions (Zumrud, 2019, p. 18), as well as the influence and significantly altered diplomatic relations, even leading to the formulation of new types of diplomacy to keep pace with the substantial development in digitization and the realms of communication, influence, and emerging actors (Sheikho, 2022, p. 4). In this context, this section addresses the concept of digital diplomacy.

Known also as e-diplomacy or cyber diplomacy, digital diplomacy encompasses diplomatic activities and foreign policy goals achieved through digital technologies, and more specifically, internet-based platforms. Digital diplomacy is generally a synonym for e-diplomacy. This term refers to the use of digital tools (and particularly social media, websites, data analytics, and virtual conferencing) in a strategic way to bolster communication between governments, global publics, and nonstate actors. ‘Digital diplomacy’ denotes a shift in the communicative logic of diplomacy, focusing on the goals of transparency, speed, and engagement in commercial diplomatic practice, as opposed to confidential negotiations (Bjola & Holmes, 2015, p. 5). What it allows embassies and diplomats to do is speak directly to foreign audiences, manage crises in real-time, promote soft power, and counter misinformation. Yet, digital diplomacy is not just a matter of IT upgrading; rather, it is a renegotiation of diplomatic norms, bringing with it new ethical, institutional, or security difficulties. Digital diplomacy facilitates a transition of diplomacy from a standalone activity to a networked and data-driven approach, enabling diplomats to be data analytically adept in their content creation (Manor, 2020, p. 12). Moreover, digital tools tend to both extend diplomatic reach and put governments’ communications under public light with the threat of cyber attacks, thereby producing a landscape of both opportunity and vulnerability. Viewed through this lens, digital diplomacy is both operationally repetitive and operationally changing traditional diplomacy in response to the dynamics of the digital age.

1.2.2. Definition of Digital Diplomacy

Despite its increasing importance, there is currently no official definition of digital diplomacy. Although some organizations have made efforts to define the term specifically, it is often used in an ambiguous manner. Due to the lack of a clear definition, academics have approached digital diplomacy in various ways, focusing on topics such as cybersecurity, social media, and internet governance. Another factor contributing to this lack of clarity is the fact that many terms for digital diplomacy are used interchangeably. Academics have used phrases like "cyber diplomacy," "network diplomacy," "electronic diplomacy," and "Twitter diplomacy" interchangeably. While these terms have nearly identical meanings, each prefix refers to a different aspect of the subject and should be used appropriately (Jabbarli, 2023,p.6).

This term first emerged effectively on the international stage in 2001, where some researchers defined it as "the use of social media and websites by a government for its foreign objectives and to pursue its traditional policies through this medium" (Mohammed, 2018, p. 66).

Digital diplomacy has also been defined as the optimal and increasing use of information and communication technologies, digital techniques, and platforms of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo by states to engage with local and foreign audiences, achieve their foreign policy objectives, present their positions toward the international community, and conduct traditional public diplomacy. Those who adopt this definition believe that only the medium has changed, while the content remains the same. Instead of communicating with the public through radio or other audio communication methods and broadcasting, it is now possible to connect with local and international audiences via channels like Twitter (Radwan, 2024, p. 6).

Vargas Hanson proposed a similar definition, describing digital diplomacy simply as "the use of the internet and new communication technologies to assist in achieving diplomatic goals" (Abdel Sabour, 2021, p. 3).

Political researcher Ivan Potter defined digital diplomacy as a term that refers to diplomatic practices through digital technologies and networks, including the internet, mobile devices, and social media channels (Abdul Aal, 2018, p. 5).

The U.S. government defines it as "the use of social networks in diplomacy to facilitate interaction between diplomats and internet users in host countries." Academics

define it as "a branch of public diplomacy aimed at communicating with broad sectors of society in foreign countries instead of just the political elite, and it refers to the extensive use of information and communication technologies, including new media, social networks, and other online media in diplomacy" (Abdul Aal, 2018, p. 9).

Meanwhile, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs sees it as "an extension of diplomacy in its traditional sense, based on the inventions and patterns of use resulting from information and communication technologies" (Abdel Sabour, 2021, p. 7).

This growing academic interest in digital diplomacy, then, is lacking in a universal, universally accepted definition. It is contended that, like the term 'digital diplomacy', as a term, is constantly in motion—conceptually at least—evolving as both technology and politics change. Digital diplomacy is described as “channeling the Internet and digital platforms to affect public opinion abroad and to steer foreign affairs beyond formal diplomatic contact” (Seib, 2012, p. 108). A broader approach defines digital diplomacy as “a series of strategic communication practices that use digital tools to improve a state’s ability to influence, respond and gain legitimacy” (Bjola & Pamment, 2018, p. 3). Moreover, definitional ambiguity is further exacerbated by the fact that e-diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, and social media diplomacy—among other cognate concepts—bleed into and overlap with this term, all of which highlight distinct forms, aims, and institutional frameworks. To date, perhaps the royal pronouncement with the greatest influence on the English language appeared in 1382, when King Charles VI of France declared that French and not the dialect spoken by Englishmen would be used in Francophone regions. It is not a semantic-only distinction but one that arises in conjunction with assumptions about the purpose, function, and norm change associated with diplomacy in the digital age—something that is either a technical tool, public relations strategy, or a sea change in diplomatic norms. Although consensus on a ‘single definitive definition’ will be difficult, there is a growing consensus among scholars that digital diplomacy is the practice (or retooling of diplomatic practice) in which digital technologies are utilised to achieve foreign policy goals more effectively and interactively.

1.2.3. Objectives of Digital Diplomacy

- To harness administrative and governmental knowledge, ensuring it is retained, shared, and optimally used to achieve national interests abroad.

- To maintain communication with audiences as they navigate online, utilizing new communication tools to listen to key audiences and target them with key messages, as well as to influence major online stakeholders.

- To assist in aggregating the vast flow of information and using it to better inform policy-making and to help anticipate and respond to resulting social and political movements.

- To establish direct personal communication channels with citizens traveling abroad, with manageable communications during crises.

- To leverage the power of linking technologies in disaster response situations.

- To innovate techniques to maintain and promote internet freedom and openness, which are tied to enhancing freedom of expression and democracy, as well as undermining authoritarian regimes.

- To create digital mechanisms to utilize external expertise and harness it to advance national goals, allowing for effective oversight, coordination, and planning of international policy through government responses to the internationalization of bureaucracy (Viona, 2018, p. 77).

- Governments worldwide use social media to establish strong bilateral relationships with governments and audiences, encouraging all embassies to employ soft power strategies for this purpose.

- To improve the state's image and change the mindsets of the target audience in favor of the sending state, while countering ideological adversaries through the launch of systematic online campaigns.

- Digital diplomacy aims to save time and resources, as it allows parties to communicate directly through technological means without necessarily being physically present.

- To combat media campaigns by hostile states online and to penetrate areas of influence by infiltrating online to influence the audiences of competing countries, as well as to counter the foreign cultural policies of adversarial states through social networks (Abdel Sabour, 2021, p. 8).

1.2.4 Reasons for the Emergence of Digital Diplomacy

The digital revolution has changed the way diplomats operate and enhanced their abilities to communicate and interact with the public and exchange knowledge. However,

it has also presented diplomats with new challenges that were not previously encountered. In light of this, this section discusses the reasons driving the emergence of digital diplomacy.

- **The Digital Revolution and Technological Advancement**

The concept of digital diplomacy emerged and spread alongside the remarkable advancements in the communication fields and the dominance of social networks, which play an increasing role in all aspects of life. With these rapid changes, politicians and diplomats had no choice but to keep pace with the necessities of the era and respond to these transformations. Kings, presidents, leaders, ministers, ambassadors, and even opposition figures quickly established official accounts on social media networks, particularly on Twitter, which is considered the preferred platform for political and diplomatic elites (Decision Center for Media Studies, 2019).

Digital diplomacy is regarded as one form of public diplomacy, defined as "those activities aimed at conversing with the public through popular means to establish direct relationships between peoples and gain their support." Therefore, digital diplomacy is considered an extension of traditional diplomacy (Fouda, 2023).

- **The Politicians' Desire to Improve the Image of Their Countries Among Other Peoples**

Digital diplomacy seeks to enhance a state's image among its people and achieve foreign policy objectives through popular means. Politicians and diplomats have leveraged social networks to foster free and direct communication and interaction with audiences from various segments and nationalities. They have also utilized these platforms to connect with counterparts in other countries and engage with various stakeholders and civil society organizations within a framework of mutual dialogue and real-time interaction provided by social media platforms. Digital diplomacy aims to enhance the state's image abroad and achieve foreign policy objectives through popular channels, complementing rather than replacing traditional diplomacy. It has brought senior politicians and diplomats down from their ivory towers, encouraging them to engage with the public and dialogue with diverse opinions and perspectives (Decision Center for Media Studies, 2019).

An example of effective social media use is Richard Moore, the former British ambassador to Turkey, who actively utilized social media during his tenure. The ambassador, who speaks Turkish and tweets in the language, successfully crafted a new

public diplomacy image by continuously engaging with the Turkish people, particularly through responses to those who criticize England (Baştan & Karagül, 2021, p. 15).

- Taking Advantage of the Major Benefits of Digital Diplomacy

International practice demonstrates that the effective use of digital diplomacy tools can yield significant advantages, benefits, and returns for those who invest in them. Digital diplomacy does not always require high-cost financial investments; on the contrary, it often aims to reduce costs. Consequently, digital diplomacy can enhance a state's work in international relations and foreign policy more swiftly and cost-effectively (Abdul Aal, 2018, p. 9).

Today, government institutions, ambassadors, and active political figures with Twitter accounts communicate not only with local audiences but also with foreign ones (Kurt, 2018).

Additionally, it has enabled politicians to maintain communication with global audiences in the virtual world and utilize new communication tools to listen to, engage with, and influence the public through key online messages. This also enables the effective use of the vast flow of information to improve policy-making processes, anticipate emerging social and political movements, and respond to them. Furthermore, digital diplomacy has enriched consular communications with the public and established direct personal communication channels with citizens traveling abroad, facilitating communication during crises (Abdul Aal, 2018, p. 10).

Not only does digital diplomacy make sense in terms of cost efficiency and achieving scale to reach a broader audience, but it also offers the possibility for governments to engage in real-time communication, manage their image, and build a reputation, especially during crises. Digital diplomacy is described as "pivoting" towards helping states respond to misinformation and provide their own narrative to defend national interests (Bjola & Holmes, 2015, p. 88). Diplomats have also turned to using social media platforms as vital arenas in which they can increasingly engage in 'strategic framing' to help define or counter oppositional messaging. The U.S. State Department and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), for instance, have continuously used Twitter and YouTube to promote values such as democratization and human rights, as well as provide consular updates during emergencies, including natural disasters or conflicts. Building long-term trust and influence is a relational process that involves

engaging listeners, sharing, and understanding (Zaharna, 2010, p. 55). Moreover, because the format is digital, data analytics can help track public sentiment—and, by extension, diplomats can be made aware of impending protests, policy backlash, or changing attitudes, allowing governments to adjust their foreign policy to accommodate these shifts in advance. Digital diplomacy, then, is not merely a means of communication. When used properly, it is a device of anticipatory governance, stakeholder engagement, and legitimacy claims in the international sphere.

1.2.5 Determinants and Drawbacks of Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy aims to project a contemporary image of the state and shape perceptions among foreign audiences. This requires a set of components and factors; however, this modern form of diplomacy is not without its drawbacks in practice. Considering this, this section examines the determinants of digital diplomacy and the negatives associated with its application.

1.2.5.1. Determinants of Digital Diplomacy

- The Ability to Innovate and Create

The advancements in communication and the internet have paved the way for a new type of diplomat who needs specialized training focused on innovation and creativity. Digital diplomacy no longer relies on traditional diplomatic mindsets that merely execute orders; instead, it requires innovative thinkers capable of addressing the new challenges that a state's foreign policy presents. This has led to the emergence of new terms, notably "innovative diplomats." The Malta Conference emphasized that innovation requires a distinctive cultural vision and an understanding of global changes, as well as how to capitalize on the opportunities these changes present. Traditional diplomats often wait for orders from their ambassadors or foreign ministers and operate within a rigid routine that limits their ability to act on their ideas. Consequently, they are unable to confront rapid global changes with creative solutions (Abdul Razak, 2011, p. 7).

The Yalta Conference indicated that actors who can build networks of followers on Twitter or Facebook can play a significant role in shaping their country's relationships with others and creating its image in the minds of the audiences they engage with. This role can be more important than that of traditional diplomats, who are often constrained by a classic professional culture (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 21). Therefore, there is a pressing need

to educate and train diplomatic personnel in the use of social media, creativity, and innovation in engaging with others and building the state's image (Saleh, 2022, p. 6).

- **Level of Research**

Research equips diplomats with the skills to foster their ability to build international relations based on cultural insights and an understanding of the general mood of the populace (Radwan, 2024). Scientific research enables diplomats to enhance their capabilities in establishing international relations that exploit cultural data and understand the sentiments of the people.

During the Stockholm seminar organized by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participants emphasized the importance of diplomats recognizing that the new diplomatic culture is based on digital participation. Diplomacy is no longer the exclusive domain of professional diplomats who have been trained according to the traditional culture of the past, which focused on practicing diplomacy in formal contexts (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 22).

- **Level of Participation**

Digital diplomacy is based on the idea of digital participation; diplomacy is no longer restricted to professional diplomats trained according to traditional, old-school culture. Now, anyone can be a diplomat, as diplomacy has become open and interactive. Therefore, diplomats require serious educational and training programs that enhance their abilities to operate within the open context of diplomatic work (Saleh, 2022, p. 7).

- **Level of Citizen Awareness**

Digital diplomacy relies on the citizen as a key factor in building and changing the image of the state in the minds of external audiences. The level of citizen awareness determines the scope of activities that can be undertaken to achieve the goals of the state's public diplomacy, including digital interactions that facilitate connections between people (Radwan, 2024).

In this context, many countries practice what is known as citizen diplomacy. The American Center for Citizen Diplomacy considers it to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the economy, governance, education, and social entities worldwide. Thus, this form of diplomacy aims to build networks of citizens capable of engaging in dialogue and discussions with citizens from other countries to promote the state's values and build a positive image for it (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 29).

1.2.5.2. Drawbacks of Digital Diplomacy

Despite the numerous advantages provided by digital diplomacy, such as facilitating rapid communication between states and enhancing international relations with high efficiency, it also entails several drawbacks, the most important of which are:

- Security Threats and Risks of Cyber Attacks:

Digital platforms and websites are not adequately protected against security and cyber threats. As a result, channels or pathways of digital diplomacy may be vulnerable to breaches, exposing sovereign information, diplomatic communications, and existing inter-state relations to risks of espionage or manipulation.

- Misuse of the Internet and Lack of Experience with Modern Communication:

The nature of digital communication tools, along with their rapid spread and the difficulty in correcting mistakes, requires users of digital diplomacy to exercise extreme caution when publishing content, especially on social media. A single word, tweet, comment, like, or image can have numerous negative repercussions.

- For example, a diplomatic crisis occurred in Cairo due to a tweet made by an employee of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo on the Twitter account of the US Embassy Cairo regarding the arrest of the Egyptian figure Bassem Youssef, who was accused of insulting Islam and former President Mohamed Morsi. This tweet provoked outrage among the Egyptian public and government, prompting the Egyptian government to issue a statement on its official account, stating, "It is inappropriate for a diplomatic mission to engage in such negative political propaganda." This statement was directed at the embassy in Cairo, The Daily Show, and Youssef himself. Following this crisis, the embassy was forced to temporarily close its Twitter account on June 3, 2013, until the situation was resolved.

Determinants of Digital Diplomacy: Irresponsible Diplomatic Actions.

As noted by Hagerman (2013, p. 31), any irresponsible diplomatic action or statement made through digital diplomacy tools can provoke an international crisis or create tension between states. This highlights one of the significant drawbacks of digital diplomacy.

- **Rapid Spread of Negative News:**

The impact of digital communication has fundamentally changed the way information about international crises is disseminated. What once took hours or days to reach media outlets can now be broadcast instantly worldwide, not just via radio and television, but also through the internet and social media. These platforms have eliminated the element of secrecy in diplomacy. The immediate distribution of information about events—whether near or far—can pose risks that outweigh the benefits. The era of confidentiality has given way to an era of distribution, where ordinary citizens spend hours reading, discussing, and critiquing government policies online, sharing their thoughts with others. Unfortunately, the level of cultural awareness in communication through these platforms is often low, exposing many political leaders and diplomats to insults, provocative messages, and threats, which can lead to numerous conflicts. Furthermore, the internet can provide a plethora of information from dubious or inaccurate sources (Rashica, 2018, p. 83).

- **Ease of Identity Theft and User Anonymity:**

Another negative aspect of digital diplomacy is the potential for users to remain anonymous online. This allows individuals to impersonate others, causing harm to specific individuals or entities. Such techniques can lead to complex crises arising from the proliferation of conflicting and potentially false information, which can hinder leaders' ability to manage subsequent crises. Therefore, social media platforms must enhance their systems to verify the credibility of content sources (Muhammad, 2022, p. 23).

To mitigate the risks of the digital age, foreign ministries must train their diplomatic and administrative staff on how to effectively utilize digital communication tools, thereby minimizing the potential for harm and technical errors that may arise from the misuse of these technologies. Additionally, employing permanent staff specialized in science and technology matters within all diplomatic missions is crucial.

Diplomatic terminology has undergone significant changes with the development of the field since its inception. Conceptions and terms vary depending on the modes of communication among countries, cultures, and peoples, leading to the establishment of the modern state. Diplomacy of today is about fostering international relations, protecting national interests, and fostering world peace and stability. The political, economic, cultural, and historical environments in which diplomatic decisions are made significantly impact

the determinants of diplomacy. The latest form of diplomacy to emerge with technological advancement is digital diplomacy. This newer form is founded on emerging determinants of change that operate in and through the internet and social media. It has successfully redefined the understanding of diplomacy from its conventional context to a web of interconnected virtual areas.

Although digital diplomacy is extremely valuable in its function, it is related to numerous disadvantages and risks. These risks entail the exposure of systems to intrusion and attack by cyber intruders, as well as the spread of misinformation, malice, and unverified information that can lead to the creation of global crises and political tensions. To achieve maximum effectiveness when using digital diplomacy, it is necessary to implement effective and robust measures and to provide professional experts to address digital issues, thereby maximizing the benefits of using the tool to enhance a state's foreign policy.

As stated in this chapter, various factors have contributed to the emergence of digital diplomacy as a recent method of international diplomacy. Of these reasons, the most significant one is the digital revolution that defines this time and age, in which digital diplomacy has evolved in conjunction with the development of communication and the proliferation of social networks. In turn, politicians and diplomats had no other option than to match the needs of the time and react to these transformations and tendencies. There is also a desire among these politicians to enhance their countries' image among other individuals, as social networks have been utilized to facilitate free and unencumbered communication and interaction with various segments of society and to present a contemporary image of the state. Furthermore, the great benefits of digital diplomacy do not require significant financial expenses and promote the state's activity in international affairs and foreign policy in a faster, more effective, and broader scope.

Therefore, the spread of digital diplomacy requires more attention to the technical and technological capabilities of diplomatic staff. Foreign ministries in any country should conduct training sessions, workshops, and courses aimed at developing the capabilities of their diplomatic members in using the internet and social media, which will enhance the skills of this group and strengthen their ability to create a positive international digital image of the state.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION ON DIPLOMACY

Humanity is living in an era marked by rapid and continuous technological updates, resulting in significant changes across various aspects of our lives due to remarkable advancements in technology. This monumental transformation is attributed to what has come to be known as the digital revolution, which promises a series of changes and technological updates that have led us into a digital world permeating every facet of our lives (Muthana, 2024).

Considering this, this chapter addresses the impact of the digital revolution on diplomacy through two sections. The first section explores the concept of the digital revolution and its relationship with social media, while the second section examines digital diplomacy, its various types, and its connection to social media, as well as its key determinants.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

The discussion surrounding digital diplomacy is still in its early stages, but it is gradually evolving into a more institutionalized dialogue. In Europe, for instance, initiatives have been launched to explore this concept. The digital revolution encompasses various factors and technological developments that have brought about a qualitative shift in how society interacts with technology. In a short time, digital technologies have enabled the transformation of information into digital forms that can be shared and disseminated instantly and effectively. This change, like information and communication, has fundamentally affected society, its way of thinking, and its interactions with the surrounding world. Thus, this section explores the concept of the digital revolution and its connection to social media.

2.1.1 Definition of the Digital Revolution

There is no doubt that the digital revolution has significantly changed our lives and brought about tremendous transformations in all aspects of life. Digital technologies have provided immense opportunities to enhance our lives and facilitate many daily

processes and activities (Muthana, 2024). Considering this, this section discusses the definition of the digital revolution.

- Concept of the Digital Revolution

The digital revolution refers to the rapid and profound changes occurring in the fields of technology and communication, and their significant impact on all aspects of contemporary life. This revolution is characterized by the development and proliferation of knowledge and communication technologies, particularly the internet, which has fundamentally transformed the way we interact with the world and with one another.

- Effects of the Digital Revolution

One of the most notable effects of the digital revolution is the significant change in how knowledge is transmitted and processed. In the past, obtaining information required considerable effort and a long time; one had to search through books and magazines or rely on traditional media. However, with the spread of the internet, the emergence of search engines, and social networks, it has become possible to access a vast array of information sources quickly and easily (Muthana, 2024). Additionally, the Digital Revolution's Impact on Communication and Social Interaction

The digital revolution has had a profound impact on communication and social interaction. People can now interact across borders and around the world in the blink of an eye. Communication methods such as email and instant messaging have evolved, making interactions more effective and efficient (Drewish, 2017, p. 3).

With the rise of social media, the way people perceive the world and how they communicate has undergone a complete transformation and continues to evolve. The social media revolution has not only made it easier for governments and ambassadors to connect with the public, but it has also heightened everyone's awareness of the direct impact, whether positive or negative, of a single word, tweet, Facebook comment, video, or image. A lack of knowledge regarding how to use new communication technologies, the internet, and social media can lead to serious conflicts and various consequences, including the ousting of politicians. From this perspective, the necessity and importance of diplomats and statesmen receiving specialized training in using social media becomes evident (Orhan, 2023, p. 16).

On the economic front, the digital revolution has changed business and trade practices. E-commerce has proliferated, allowing people to buy and sell online with ease.

Entire industries have been significantly impacted by the spread of technology, with advancements in manufacturing and automation leading to increased productivity and enhanced product quality (Muthana, 2024).

From a social perspective, one of the most prominent effects is the change in lifestyle patterns. People are increasingly relying on technology in their daily lives, from shopping and studying to entertainment and social interaction. Technological developments have significantly influenced social habits and behaviors, and the smartphone has become an indispensable part of people's lives (Drewish, 2017, p. 4).

2.1.2 The Concept of Social Communication and Its Types

Electronic diplomacy is an effective tool of foreign policy, being one of the branches of public diplomacy that relies on updated knowledge and communication technologies, particularly social media applications (Ghanimi, 2021).

2.1.2.1 The Concept of Social Communication

Social communication refers to how individuals and groups interact and exchange information with one another through various channels and media. It encompasses both traditional forms of communication and modern digital platforms, significantly shaping public discourse and community engagement.

The Concept of Social Communication and Its Types. The term "social communication" is considered controversial due to the overlap of suggestions and approaches in its study, reflecting the technical development that has occurred in the use of technology. It encompasses everything that can be utilized by individuals and groups on the internet (Habail, 2014, p. 134).

Social media is defined as "a set of programs and tools on the network, used by a user audience to exchange content, ideas, opinions, and viewpoints through a medium that facilitates conversations and interactions among a group of people" (Al-Muhtasib Center, 2016, p. 17).

Zaher Radi defines it as "a system of electronic networks that allows subscribers to create their site, and then connect it through an electronic social system with other members who share the same interests and hobbies." He adds that this interconnectedness

has resulted in a form of media that differs from traditional media, known as "social media" or "new media," which refers to all that can be used and exchanged in terms of information by individuals and groups on the web (wafi&Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 24).

It is essential to note that the comprehensive definition of "social communication" is closely tied to the concepts of social media and interactivity. Social media refers to the media content characterized by its nature, exchanged between two parties, one being the sender and the other the receiver. It also indicates "new methods of communication in the digital environment that allow smaller groups of people to meet and gather online to exchange benefits and knowledge, providing a platform for individuals and groups to voice their opinions and those of their communities to the entire world" (Al-Rawi, 2016,p.4).

Interactivity refers to the communication message flowing in both directions between the sender and the receiver. It is "a natural attribute of personal communication, where the user on the network is not merely a passive recipient. Unlike traditional media, new media offers more opportunities for the recipient to engage with the messages" (Abbas,2023, p. 30), while simultaneously allowing the recipient to express their opinions and comment on the message in real-time (Al-Dakhili, 2009, p. 62).

In light of the above, social media can be defined as platforms or applications that allow users to create a personal blog on social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. This occurs within the scope of the World Wide Web, aiming to share data, comments, documents, messages, images, videos, and other content that the user wishes to display. Subsequently, users can connect with others, make friends, form groups, or join existing networks of subscribers and users. Social networking begins with groups of friends, university or school students, neighbors, colleagues, or family members, facilitating the exchange of comments, opinions, and media materials. Communication between the sender and the recipient occurs instantly and rapidly (Drewish, 2017, p. 14).

The Main Philosophy of Social Media The fundamental philosophy of social media is that every member of these networks connects to exchange all types of information, images, files, and ideas. Major companies design and program these services to engage users and friends, share activities and interests, and search for interests and activities among other people (Saleh, 2022, p. 3).

Most current social networks are websites that offer a range of services to users, such as instant messaging, private messaging, email, video, and other features. It is evident that these social networks have caused significant changes in how people communicate, share, and exchange information within communities. Millions of users currently engage on these platforms, which are categorized based on their purposes; some networks connect school friends, while others connect work colleagues, in addition to microblogging platforms (Al-Qandlaji, 2013, p. 338).

Ultimately, social media has helped many individuals find common ground with others online, making the world seem more interconnected and accessible. It also plays a crucial role in marketing strategies for companies, given the vast amount of time individuals spend daily on social platforms and applications. Companies utilize these platforms to find and interact with customers, increase sales through advertising and promotion, understand consumer trends, and provide customer service or support. Additionally, these platforms can enhance student education and build educational connections in innovative and unique ways (Al-Jazeera Net, 2023).

2.1.2.2 Types of Social Communication

- Facebook

Facebook is considered one of the most significant and largest social media platforms, boasting a vast number of users and integrating with numerous external websites and applications. It is one of the earliest social networks, founded in 2004 by American Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University. Initially, the site was available only to Harvard students, then expanded to include students from American universities, followed by high school students and a limited number of companies, before reaching Europe and various countries worldwide (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2017, p. 21).

The founder of the site believes that Facebook is not just a tool or means of communication, but a social movement. This platform provides individuals with the opportunity to share and participate in knowledge about themselves, their interests, and their videos and photos, to connect, get to know each other, and share and discover news, among other things. Young people are considered the primary target demographic, as they are the most frequent users of the platform (Al-Muhtasib Center, 2016, p. 26).

One of the most notable advantages of Facebook is that it enables the easy and rapid dissemination of information. Its benefits are evident in various fields such as education, marketing, and business, in addition to maintaining constant contact with everyone in the Facebook community and allowing users to find others with similar interests through the platform. However, some of the downsides of Facebook include privacy issues, as members' information can be sold to marketing companies and used to target them with advertisements. It can also lead to electronic addiction, insomnia, isolation, weakened family bonds, and reduced real-life communication with friends. Furthermore, users face the risk of online bullying, identity theft, and breaches of personal information (Al-Jazeera Net, 2023).

- **X (formerly Twitter)**

X offers a microblogging service that allows its users to send tweets about their status, with a 140-character limit per message. Users can post directly on the site or send short messages (SMS) or through instant messaging programs, which friends or followers can read. Twitter emerged in early 2006 as a research development project by the American company Odeo in San Francisco, before being made publicly available and rapidly gaining global traction as a new service (Abd al-Aal, 2018, p. 11).

Twitter has evolved into a platform where political leaders, writers, and others can connect with their audiences (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 31).

One of the main advantages of Twitter is its speed and ease of use. It can be utilized for marketing and personal branding, and building networks in the business field is one of Twitter's key features, allowing communication with customers and competitors. Additionally, Twitter can be used to obtain exclusive information regarding any preferred activity.

Regarding the downsides of Twitter, the most significant include the prevalence of harmful content, such as abusive comments or trolling. Moreover, hacking is considered one of the most serious drawbacks of Twitter (Al-Jazeera Net, 2023).

- **YouTube**

YouTube was established in 2005 and allows its users to upload and view video recordings, providing a platform for sharing video files (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 34).

It is worth noting that the number of active social media users has surpassed 5 billion, accounting for approximately 62.3% of the global population as of 2023. A report prepared by the media monitoring company Meltwater and the agency We Are Social, based on figures collected by the digital consulting firm Kepios, indicated that the number of social media users increased by 5.6% last year, surpassing the global population growth rate of 0.9%. Facebook, owned by Meta, recorded the highest number of users at 2.19 billion. Instagram, also owned by Meta, ranked second with 1.65 billion users, followed closely by TikTok, which reached 1.56 billion users. The report warned of the difficulty in obtaining accurate figures due to the use of automated accounts or individuals using multiple identities (Sky News, 2024).

2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

The internet revolution has impacted all aspects of life, including international relations. Diplomacy, as a tool of foreign policy, has also undergone significant changes due to this revolution, altering the way people communicate and exchange information globally through digital virtual means in any international environment (Radwan, 2024).

2.2.1 Context of the Evolution of Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy relies on how diplomats and other professionals use digital media to understand their online presence and leverage it to achieve their goals and objectives, thereby fulfilling the foreign policy objectives of the states they represent. Digital diplomacy was first described in 2001 and has since been considered a hot topic in the corridors of international diplomacy. In light of this, this section examines the context of digital diplomacy's evolution.

2.2.1.1 The Beginning of Digital Diplomacy

The rise of digital diplomacy over the past decade cannot be separated from the technological context in which it has developed. To understand the evolution of digital diplomacy and the challenges it still faces in the face of a changing technological landscape, it is essential to highlight three key characteristics of the digital transformation process, among other factors. The first characteristic is speed. The second important

characteristic is cognitive impact. The third element is big data, which is the most significant component of the digital revolution. A key component of digital influence is the "network of networks," which digital diplomats are expected to create and manage online to establish and enhance their online presence (Kırık, 2023).

The Impact of the Digital Revolution on Diplomacy. Countries have begun to use the internet and digital technology to enhance their diplomatic capabilities. The digital revolution has transformed the way diplomats operate, enhancing their ability to communicate and interact with the public, as well as exchange knowledge. However, it has also presented diplomats with new challenges that were previously unconsidered (Fouda, 2023).

"Kasper Kelling" is often referred to as the first technological ambassador or "techplomat" in the world. Denmark appointed him as an ambassador to virtual republics, including companies specializing in smartphone manufacturing and social networks, in September 2017 (Abu Deif, 2024).

However, the initial efforts to digitize diplomacy date back further. The attacks on U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998 revealed a lack of effective communication between diplomatic channels. This same issue recurred following the September 11, 2001, attacks, which highlighted the necessity for coordination between diplomatic and intelligence circles for effective performance. Consequently, Condoleezza Rice introduced the term "transformational diplomacy," aimed at crafting a smarter foreign policy by transforming traditional diplomatic institutions to serve new diplomatic purposes. Hillary Clinton also spoke of the "art of smart power," referring to the transition of government towards fostering less traditional relationships, emphasizing direct engagement with people around the world. Zhuang and Luo wagered that blogging platforms could improve the public diplomacy communications of the United States. At the same time, Vichovski went so far as to classify those who refuse to use social media as exhibiting professional misconduct (Cull, 2014, p. 16).

Major geopolitical powers have long engaged with Africa as a theater for great power competition, particularly during the Cold War. Although China has also competed for influence in Africa under Mao in the past three decades, its recent activities have attracted scrutiny from Western powers regarding its renewed engagement with the continent, especially in the economic sphere. During the Trump administration, Rex

Tillerson (an American civil engineer and former Secretary of State from February 1, 2017, until March 31, 2018, who was dismissed by Donald Trump and succeeded by CIA Director Mike Pompeo) warned African countries that Chinese investment came with "mounting debt and few jobs, if any, in most countries" (Repnikova, 2022, p. 18).

The Development of Digital Diplomacy. In the context of digital diplomacy's evolution, 150 personnel in the United States are working on 25 different forms of digital diplomacy. The United Kingdom, which was the first to launch a dedicated website for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1995, announced a series of reforms aimed at restoring Britain's diplomatic supremacy, as stated by Foreign Secretary William Hague. These reforms primarily consider the requirements of the digital age (Pamment, 2016, p. 10).

Some argue that the internet is merely a communication tool that enhances existing trends; both global terrorism and non-governmental organizations were influential actors in international relations before the advent of the internet era. Despite the ability of information technology to enable large numbers of people to participate more easily in discussions on foreign policy, 80% of them show little serious interest and lack a clear incentive to engage. Data indicate that from the end of World War II until the beginning of the Cold War, most people lacked basic information about international affairs. At the same time, they were more interested in issues that directly affect their daily lives (health, economy, crime, education, and the relationship between social formations). However, with the COVID-19 pandemic and its variants, the world has seen that the internet and its virtual realm have become significantly influential in the affairs of ordinary people, creating new behaviors among them (HaberAlternatif, 2020). Additionally, "Zoom diplomacy" emerged, dominating both community and formal diplomatic relations, following discussions about Facebook and Twitter diplomacy with figures such as Barack Obama and Donald Trump (Sheikho, 2022, p. 3).

Digital diplomacy applications encompass social media platforms, virtual conferences, and electronic platforms, as well as artificial intelligence, big data technology, and data analytics. These tools enhance the ability of states to exchange knowledge, negotiate, and implement decisions. Several advantages, including improved communications, reduced costs, and time savings, characterize digital diplomacy. It also

enables negotiators to communicate more effectively through various means, including email, chat, video calls, and other applications (Fouda, 2023,p.4).

2.2.1.2 The Importance of Digital Diplomacy

Due to its significance and the qualitative advantages it offers, most countries around the world now maintain official accounts and pages on social media for their institutions, leaders, and officials, enabling them to represent the state, make official statements, and communicate their positions. Twitter is the most favored platform among world leaders and presidents, often described as an elite platform due to its appeal to politicians and intellectuals (Abu Deif, 2024).

Thus, social media is no longer limited to being a means of conversation, opinion exchange, and entertainment among followers; it has transcended this role to become an important platform for political and diplomatic circles, reaching the point where leaders and officials announce official positions and decisions through it (Manor, 2020, p. 3). For instance, the U.S. Department of State has over 300 Twitter accounts tweeting in 11 different languages, along with nearly 400 Facebook pages. Approximately 1,000 American diplomats utilize digital diplomacy (Al-Qarar Center for Media Studies, 2019).

In this context, former U.S. President Donald Trump stated in an interview with the Financial Times, "If it were not for the tweets, I would not be here," highlighting his prominent use of social media (Mustafa, 2017, p. 17). He has a significant following on Twitter, with 63.6 million followers, and relied heavily on the platform to manage his 2017 presidential campaign. Upon taking office, his tweets sparked widespread controversy, leading to diplomatic crises with certain countries. He also used the platform to attack his political opponents, which exposed him to considerable criticism, including accusations of racism when he told two Democratic congresswomen to "go back" to their countries of origin amid political disagreements (Fouda, 2023).

Former British Foreign Secretary William Hague launched an initiative called "Meet the Foreign Secretary" via his personal Twitter account, inviting his followers to tweet their ideas about issues they believe should be prioritized by the British Foreign Office in the years to come. He promised to read the various submissions and potentially meet with participants. Hundreds of people joined in, tweeting extensively to express their opinions, demonstrating how social media can provide a platform for the public to engage

in discussions about foreign policy. This initiative was a testament to William Hague's belief in the importance of citizen participation in the political and diplomatic sphere and fostering mutual interaction with them (Salah, 2022, p. 11).

Digital Diplomacy Initiatives: The Dutch government's Twitter account allocates a daily time slot from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM to answer questions posed by followers. U.S. President Donald Trump posts daily tweets that inform his followers about his meetings and the topics to be discussed. Research has shown that such personal messages have positive effects (Radwan, 2024).

It is noteworthy that the specialized site "Twiplomacy," which studies the social media accounts of leaders and their engagement, stated that Barack Obama was the first world leader to use Twitter for political purposes, rather than for social communication, when he was a senator from Illinois in 2007 (Al-Qarar Center for Media Studies, 2019).

The use of social media is increasing among both national and international governments and organizations, enabling more actors to engage with foreign audiences. The proactive use of social media by international actors can help achieve foreign policy goals and manage their image and reputation (Theander, 2021, p. 7).

In this context, several Arab countries have also opened more to digital diplomacy. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, launched the initiative "Digital Cultural Diplomacy," the first of its kind in the region. This initiative aims to showcase key success stories and Emirati creativity, as well as cultural and heritage landmarks and achievements in the fields of culture and arts, covering audiovisual arts, performance arts, creative arts, music, and architecture. It also highlights prominent Emirati figures who have made significant contributions to the service of the UAE or achieved tangible accomplishments in various fields, including politics, culture, economics, society, and sports (Salem & Al-Harithi, 2020, p. 405).

2.2.1.3 Fields of Digital Diplomacy

• Cybersecurity Diplomacy:

With the increasing focus on cybersecurity and the remarkable rise in cyberattacks, countries, especially developing ones, need assistance in countering these

threats. Cybersecurity diplomacy can aid nations in areas such as cybersecurity, service transfer, knowledge sharing, and collaborative work (Al-Mutairi, 2022).

- **Digital Services Diplomacy:**

This encompasses everything related to government services, from legislation and digital standards to design, programming, and products and services. Digital services diplomacy can enhance strategic relationships between countries (Fouda, 2023).

- **Data and Information Diplomacy:**

The big data owned by each country is a significant national asset, akin to crude oil. Analyzing big data involves processes similar to refining oil, designing digital solutions and services, marketing them, and utilizing them within a well-structured diplomatic plan to enhance the storage, sharing, and use of available information in line with national interests (Albayrak, 2023, p. 5). This is like producing and selling petroleum products through a well-organized supply chain. Without data diplomacy, a country cannot effectively control and counter the giant companies that hold user data (Decision Center for Media Studies, 2019).

- **Digital Embassies:**

Digital embassies enable beneficiaries to access digital services seamlessly, thereby reducing the administrative burden on embassy officials, who can then focus on their core diplomatic work, represent their country, and build impactful relationships. Additionally, they significantly reduce the management and operation costs of these services and integrate them with local national services. They also enable remote services to citizens in countries where physical embassies are not available (Al-Mutairi, 2022).

One of the latest examples in this context is the establishment of the first digital embassy. As you may recall, Danish Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen announced in a statement to the Politiken newspaper on January 26, 2017, that Denmark would be the first country to appoint "digital ambassadors" for technology companies such as Google, Apple, and Microsoft (Özdal, 2020).

2.3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Digital diplomacy has evolved beyond being just a new tool in the toolkit for influencing nations; it increases the ability to interact with the public and engage actively with them, allowing a shift from monologue to direct dialogue. Digital technology has

provided diplomats with the opportunity to communicate with the public and respond to posts that reflect certain realities through their social media accounts (Radwan, 2024). Considering this, this section addresses social media and digital diplomacy.

2.3.1. The Role of Social Media in Digital Diplomacy

Social media has evolved from a platform for entertainment to one that serves cultural, social, and political purposes. With the increase in the number of users, it has become a fundamental tool in shaping foreign policy, marking a shift in diplomatic work from traditional diplomacy, which is centered on relationships between governments, to digital diplomacy focused on influencing people (Wafi & Bou Achiba, 2019, p. 26).

Social networks have become the most important means of public diplomacy, enabling direct communication with audiences through the vast online space used by billions of people worldwide, regardless of their age or affiliation. This has led to the emergence of the term “digital diplomacy,” prompting many countries to establish dedicated departments for digital diplomacy within their foreign ministries and presidential offices (Abdel Aal, 2017, p. 12).

Considering this, some countries have presented training programs for diplomats on the use of digital diplomacy as a significant aspect of future diplomacy. Switzerland organized a series of seminars in 2012 titled "E-Diplomacy Day," which involved 100 diplomats studying the impact of the internet on the diplomatic profession and how diplomats can operate in the internet age. The Swiss permanent representative to the United Nations, Alexandre Fasel, shared Switzerland's experience in utilizing electronic tools to coordinate bilateral diplomatic initiatives, underscoring the necessity of training diplomats to use these tools, which will shape the future of diplomacy (Westcott, 2008, p. 16).

According to a report from the Istanbul Center for Digital Affairs, which measured the performance of digital diplomacy for 210 foreign ministries worldwide in 2016, the top ten countries in digital diplomacy were ranked as follows: France in second place after England, followed by the United States, Russia, the European Union, the Vatican, India, Mexico, and Switzerland (Abdel Aal, 2018, p. 8).

Since 2019, the global ranking of countries using digital diplomacy has been as follows:

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. France
4. Russia
5. Vatican
6. Germany
7. Japan
8. Canada
9. Israel (Sheikho, 2022, p. 7).

Reports continue to confirm the growing interest in digital platforms by world leaders and governments, with an increase in followers and engagement levels, making these platforms vital sources for obtaining the latest news and information (Adawi, 2022, p. 656), as well as influencing global public opinion to serve the foreign policy interests of states (Abdel Aal, 2018, p. 9).

This highlights the fact that "digital diplomacy," through social media platforms, provides a diverse array of channels for interaction and participation among people, enhancing diplomatic goals and fostering closer ties between nations. However, there is an urgent need to consider the various risks and threats associated with it, often stemming from a lack of public awareness, which can exacerbate threats such as cybercrime, hacking, and cyber terrorism. It is crucial to raise awareness among people, especially users of electronic platforms (Abu Deif, 2024).

2.3.2. Tools of Digital Diplomacy

Currently, platforms like Twitter (previously) and X (currently), and Facebook are the most popular social media tools used by foreign ministries worldwide. These two networks represent good examples of integrated platforms, as they can be interconnected. Below, we will discuss these two tools in the context of digital diplomacy, along with other tools:

- Twitter

Twitter allows users to express their opinions on various issues and engage in discussions with others to present and explain their positions. It enables users to identify

articles and readings on specific topics of importance by following posts tagged with hashtags. Additionally, it is primarily used for communicating with friends and sharing updates, exchanging quotes, feelings, images, music, interesting readings, links, and more (Al-Hamsna, 2021, p. 12).

Twitter is considered a suitable tool for digital diplomacy because it serves as a direct and objective media channel for self-presentation. It is an important tool employed in conflicts when other media sources are unavailable or lag. Twitter provides access to a vast network through which governments can engage with the public, as well as with opinion leaders such as journalists, politicians, and bloggers (Abdel Fattah, 2019, p. 46). The platform showcases significant aspects of interactive digital diplomacy, leading to the emergence of the term "Twiplomacy." There is also an organization by the same name that publishes annual reports on the state of Twitter diplomacy and monitors the presence and engagement of world leaders on this platform (Salah, 2022, p. 9). Among the prominent active diplomats on Twitter is the former British Ambassador to Egypt, John Casson, who was highly engaged in this area and has approximately one million followers on his official account, most of whom are Egyptians and Arabs. His tweets are characterized by simplicity and diversity across political, social, and economic topics, resembling public relations activities aimed at creating a positive stereotype of his country (Al-Hamsna, 2021, p. 15).

- Facebook

Facebook is increasingly used for professional awareness through the creation of personal or public profiles, pages, or institutional or public events. Any organization can gather a community interested in its work, organize content, and engage effectively with the community and the public. Recently, Facebook has witnessed what is termed "Facebook Diplomacy," with the emergence of pages for presidents, officials, and official bodies engaging with the public (Al-Arabi, 2012, p. 37).

Currently, it appears that both Twitter and Facebook are the most popular and widely used platforms by diplomats, foreign ministries, officials, and world leaders. Studies indicate that approximately 97% of state leaders and governments have official accounts on Twitter, while nearly 93% of 179 countries have pages on Facebook (Hashim, 2023, p. 135).

- Blogs

Blogs are important electronic tools for public and digital diplomacy and enjoy significant popularity. In addition to wikis, which are currently more used for internal purposes, such as knowledge management, blogs offer the advantage of easy updates, interactivity, and multimedia content. The influence of blogs as a source of news and opinion, as well as a significant means of political pressure both domestically and internationally, has been evident since the early 2000s. For instance, when bloggers attacked the famous American broadcaster Dan Rather in 2005 in response to his criticism of former President George W. Bush, claiming to possess documents that could have affected Bush's electoral chances, it played a significant role in CBS's subsequent apology. This incident led politicians and the public to recognize the importance of blogs. Since 2004, American politicians, including diplomats, have shown increasing interest in blogs as a means of expressing their opinions and engaging with the public. Former President Barack Obama even created his blog to communicate with the public and share details about his campaign and activities (Hashim, 2023, p. 136).

In addition to the platforms, there are other sites with an impact on digital diplomacy, such as YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest.

2.3.3 Aspects of Social Media Use in Digital Diplomacy

Internet sites, in general, and social media sites, in particular, represent the most important tools of digital diplomacy. The foreign ministries and diplomatic circles utilize these tools in various ways, including:

- **Launching Group Chats:** Online discussions to engage local citizens on crucial issues that matter to them. For example, the British Embassy in Lebanon participated in an online group chat organized by the Foreign Office about the impact of Syrian refugees on Lebanon.
- **Maintaining Blogs:** Diplomats oversee blogs where they discuss, for instance, their key activities in the host country (Abdel Sabour, 2021, p. 8).
- **Networking Events:** Engaging with local communities and influential bloggers. Monitoring social media through a specialized team to understand prevailing trends and public opinions on specific issues.

- Creating Dedicated Websites: For specific audiences, such as the page "Israel Speaks Arabic," aimed at audiences in the Arab world and Arabic speakers. Similarly, the British Foreign Office launched a website titled "UK for Iranians" to communicate and interact with Iranians regarding the UK's policy toward Iran, as well as to cover the Olympic Games, attracting a large audience. This site also served to gauge Iranian public opinion on issues such as the death penalty in Iran and nuclear sanctions, featuring videos on a diverse range of cultural, political, and social topics relevant to Iranians (Abdel Sabour, 2021, p. 8).

- Launching Digital Conferences: These aim to develop and evaluate the websites of ministries, determine how the state utilizes its digital channels, and open the door for direct participation with young opinion leaders in foreign countries.

- Launching Campaigns: Campaigns are an important tool for influencing and shaping public opinion. They aim to leverage available opportunities to change minds and hearts, transform discussions, and raise issues that matter to people (Russo, 2013).

Diplomacy has been significantly influenced by the global digital and technological revolution, leading to the emergence of new communication patterns among different peoples and nations that transcend borders, overcoming the spatial and temporal obstacles that previously existed. Among the most prominent tools that emerged as a clear model of the digital revolution and its impact on diplomacy are social media platforms (Facebook, X, YouTube, etc.). These platforms form the backbone of digital diplomacy by leveraging the internet and enhancing diplomats' abilities to communicate with one another and share knowledge without the constraints of time and space.

Given the increasing importance of digital diplomacy, all countries worldwide rely primarily on social media to convey their ideas and engage in discussions around various issues. This is evident in the reliance of many influential public figures and diplomats on digital platforms. Additionally, digital diplomacy has a significant impact on areas such as cybersecurity, electronic services, and the development of websites and applications related to diplomatic work, facilitating the exchange of opinions and information among countries.

Through the study of the chapter's sections, we observe the diversity of fields within digital diplomacy, including cybersecurity diplomacy. Due to the rising interest in cybersecurity and the increasing threats from cyberattacks, countries, especially developing ones, are in dire need of assistance to counter these attacks. Therefore, digital diplomacy can

aid countries in areas such as cybersecurity, service transfer, knowledge sharing, and expertise exchange via the internet.

Furthermore, digital services diplomacy encompasses everything related to government services, including legislation, digital standards, design, programming, as well as products and services. There is also data and information diplomacy, which enables the analysis of big data within each country, the design of digital solutions and services, and their marketing and utilization through a diplomatic strategy. Without data diplomacy, a country cannot effectively regulate or counter the giant companies that hold user data. Additionally, digital embassies allow beneficiaries to access digital services seamlessly and integratively. They also relieve administrative burdens on embassy staff, allowing them to focus on their core diplomatic work and represent their country while building impactful relationships, as well as providing remote services to citizens in countries where there are no physical embassies.

2.4 ETHICAL AND CRITICAL RISKS IN DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Digital diplomacy has expanded the horizon and increased the capacity for responsiveness in foreign policy communication, but so have its tools, risks, and controversies. Besides being potentially powerful tools of soft power, these technologies can be misused or co-opted in terms of patent, ethical, political, and societal implications.

Disinformation and narrative manipulation are one of the most significant problems. Digital platforms have also been misused for spreading misleading, in fact, false narratives, although public diplomacy guides us to promote accurate information and foster mutual understanding. The facts may be distorted; events may be selected to serve the interests of States. Digital diplomacy takes place mainly in a world in which the boundary between influence and manipulation is becoming ever more fluid—a situation that (Bjola & Pamment, 2018, p. 6) eloquently describe. During crises—say armed conflicts or electoral disputes—diplomatic messages may prefer strategic framing over transparency, which is especially true.

Another ethical issue emerges from privacy violations. Several digital diplomacy strategies rely on targeted ads, user data profiling, and algorithmic analysis to try to tailor the experience. These practices raise concerns regarding surveillance and consent. Foreign state messaging using foreign digital information to inform the citizenry abroad, as provided by commercial companies, might create

behavior influence without informed participation. Contradicting the open, transparent, and voluntary dialogue values of a democratic society, this is.

Additionally, since non-democratic regimes have also been utilizing digital diplomacy, this narrows the essence of digital diplomacy's apparent identity as a benign tool of soft power. In recent years, authoritarian states have adopted similar tools to spread propaganda, define internal narratives, and curate dissent. In such situations, digital diplomacy does not serve as a format for mutual understanding, but instead becomes a tool of the state's external front. Not even democratic states such as the United States are exempt from criticism of what they label "soft propaganda"—promoting values like freedom and democracy abroad, while at the same time turning a blind eye to their own human rights violations or ethical inconsistencies (Pamment, 2012, p. 55).

The use, with little accountability, of digital platforms for geopolitical persuasion against foreign populations is at the root of a legitimacy problem. According to (Holmes .2020, p. 10), digital diplomacy should also be assessed for both its effectiveness and its ability to meet moral and political standards.

For this reason, a key point to make about digital diplomacy is that the tools of the trade, while being effective instruments of influence and outreach, can be misused or abused. If not anchored to proper ethical standards and processes for transparency, digital diplomacy is at risk of becoming a tool of manipulation rather than engagement, and the confidence and long-term credibility of public diplomacy go into decline.

CHAPTER 3

SOFT POWER IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Countries possess various forms of power that differ in levels and capabilities to influence their regional surroundings and international standing. Moreover, countries vary in their perspectives on the methods that enable them to achieve their short-term and strategic objectives based on their resources and diverse capabilities, which are fundamentally rooted in the components of those countries, their historical and cultural backgrounds, and their military, economic, scientific capacities, and productive human resources (Al-Abadi, 2021).

Based on the above, this chapter addresses soft power in American diplomacy through two sections. The first section discusses soft power and its key actors, while the second section focuses on the application of power in American diplomacy.

3.1 SOFT POWER AND ITS ACTORS

Countries strive to incorporate soft power through popular and humanitarian diplomatic mechanisms as part of their foreign policy, due to its role and ability to create international and Regional public opinion, which fosters peace among peoples. Soft diplomacy plays a crucial role in advancing the national interests of countries and their peoples, as well as in promoting peace. In light of this, this section explores soft power and its actors.

3.1.1 Concept of Soft Power

The evolution of political theory in the modern world has enabled the concept of soft power and soft policies to play a crucial and effective role in foreign policies, owing to the remarkable success achieved by soft power methods in establishing their active presence in international issues and resolving numerous ideological conflicts (Al-Abadi, 2021). This section discusses the concept of soft power.

3.1.2. Definition of Soft Power

The term "soft power" has ancient historical roots, with Chinese philosophers being the first to advocate for using soft power to enhance political authority. However,

its current definition was formulated by political scientist Joseph Nye, former dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, to describe the ability to attract and persuade without coercion or the use of force as a means of persuasion (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 5). Joseph Nye defined soft power as "the ability to attract not by coercion, military threats, or economic pressure, nor by offering bribes or financial inducements to gain support, as was common in traditional American strategies (Nye, 2008, p. 108), but through attraction, making others want what you want" (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024). Nye used this term in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power," published in 1990. Notably, Nye further developed this concept and elaborated on it in another book he published in 2004 titled "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics." This term is now widely used in international affairs by researchers, analysts, and politicians.

However, Nye was not the only one to define soft power; it is also essential to reference Michel Foucault's definition, which considers it "an indirect coercion and obligation, as well as an intellectual and moral discourse aimed at influencing public opinion both within and outside the state" (Matar, 2021, p. 3).

By comparing these definitions, it becomes clear that both Foucault and Nye agree that soft power is about influencing public opinion and other states through non-violent means, with the intention of controlling and dominating minds. However, Nye excludes economic means as part of soft power influence, while Foucault disagrees (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

soft power is defined as "power deriving from economic and cultural influence, rather than coercion or military strength" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2024). Soft power can also be understood as the ability to communicate through direct relationships and the capacity to influence the reactions of the regional and international environment smoothly, employing long-term strategies and methods that showcase the state's ability to activate its internal tools and carefully crafted foreign policies for this purpose (Maawad, 2019, p. 12). Soft power policies enable a state to manage its internal and external affairs, as well as its diplomatic, economic, cultural, and civil activities, while showcasing its ability to make decisions with a high degree of independence, without being significantly influenced by external factors. This has enabled soft power

methods to solidify their effective presence in international issues and resolve numerous ideological conflicts (Al-Abadi, 2021, p. 27).

On the other hand, Van assumes that Nye's definition of soft power is a customary concept, suggesting a relationship between attraction and the ability to influence others in international relations. However, according to Van, this assumption raises two fundamental problems. One issue is that a country has many different actors, some of whom are attractive, while others are not. Secondly, policymaking at the state level is a complex process that is less emotionally charged. Consequently, the impact of soft power diminishes. For example, Nelson Mandela may possess soft power due to his reputation, but the state is a more complex structure than an individual. The existence of a state's soft power raises the debate over who possesses this power—whether it is the government, a non-governmental organization, or commercial entities. According to Van, it is unclear whether soft power will influence certain individuals. It is also debatable whether the sources of soft power are universal (Çifçi, 2020).

Moreover, a state's ability to use its soft power has evolved into a capacity to influence the responses of other states and their thinking in shaping their foreign policies, often neutralizing some of those policies in line with the national interests of the concerned state. This process is somewhat analogous to the brainwashing techniques employed in specific cases. We can gain a more precise understanding of the concept of soft power by exploring its sources and comparing it to brutal or crude power, which represents the opposite side of foreign diplomacy and contrasts with soft power methods in terms of usage and the outcomes resulting from the application of either of these powers in foreign policies (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 9).

According to researchers, soft power has its pillars, resources, and dimensions. Professor Ali Mohammed Al-Haj Hassan, in his book "Soft War: Theoretical and Practical Foundations," concludes that soft power is based on five pillars and capacities (Abu Eid, 2019, p. 4):

1. The ability to shape the perceptions and concepts of others, influence their culture, and direct their behaviors.
2. The Ability to Shape the Political Agenda of Adversaries or Competitors: States can influence the political agenda of others, including rivals, by framing issues in a way that aligns with their strategic interests.

3. The Ability to Attract Models, Values, and Policies, Along with Their Credibility and Legitimacy in the Eyes of Others: This involves promoting specific values and policies that resonate with others, leading to greater acceptance and alignment with a state's objectives.

4. The Ability to Impose Communication Strategies on Others (Who Communicates First and How): This refers to controlling the narrative and the flow of information, determining how and when messages are delivered to influence perceptions.

5. The Ability to Generalize Narratives and Stories of Events (Whoever Wins Today Wins the Narrative): This emphasizes the importance of shaping narratives around events, where the dominant narrative influences public perception and understanding.

Nye distinguishes between two approaches to power: as a resource and as a relationship. He argues that power, as a relationship or behavior, has three dimensions that are often intertwined. The first dimension is "changing through command," meaning directing another to change their behavior. The second dimension is agenda control, which enables supportive entities to shape others' preferences and set the rules of the game through agenda setting. The third dimension is shaping preferences by preventing conflicts between one's interests and those of others, thus compelling them to comply. It is noteworthy that Nye later observed that the first dimension of power overlooks an important aspect: "the ability to influence others' preferences so that they want what you want without the need to issue a command to change them" (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

The resources of soft power are also threefold:

- **Culture:** This fundamentally contributes to attracting others.
- **Political Values:** When political actors act according to these values, both domestically and internationally.
- **Foreign Policies:** Especially when perceived by others as legitimate and ethical (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 8).

It is essential to note that the purpose of soft power is to undermine the political energy of the target, aiming for dominance and control over its political capabilities and resources; this involves cultural and ideological invasion, transforming the target into a controlled entity without revealing the true identity of the actor. However, this actor has

gained significant recognition in the international political arena, particularly in the United States (Matar, 2021, p. 5).

3.2. SOURCES AND FOUNDATIONS OF SOFT POWER IN SHAPING COUNTRIES' FOREIGN POLICIES

- The Cultural Heritage and Status of the State:

A state's cultural heritage significantly contributes to its ability to attract others. A rich cultural history, traditions, and artistic achievements can enhance a nation's soft power by fostering admiration and respect from other countries and their citizens.

In the unpredictable and turbulent environment of international relations, soft power, manifested through information, ideas, and ideals, will enable political actors to achieve their goals. Soft power stems from the attractiveness of a state's culture, political values, and foreign policies. When a country's culture embodies universal values and its cultural policies serve shared values and interests with others, the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes increases. In this sense, soft power is the power that a state uses to make others want what it wants. When your policies are legitimate in the eyes of others, your soft power grows. The following criteria have been developed to measure soft power, with a focus on persuading the target, including the ability to penetrate information, speed of response, strength of communication, affordable consultation, rapid change, and boundaries that shift according to time and place (Yilmaz, 2011).

The state can leverage its cultural elements to become a significant attraction for other countries interested in that culture. Culture, with its various components, plays a distinguished diplomatic role in conveying the state's external message and the concepts it endorses (Beingham, 2014, p. 249). In our current era, countries strive to bring the cultural aspect to the forefront of the international political scene to create impacts that establish a positive image of the state and enhance its relationship with peers worldwide. This may facilitate the targeted states' ability to exercise hard power against the concerned state. Throughout history, both states and peoples have engaged in cultural and knowledge exchange as tools for building a nation's reputation and achieving ideological gains aimed at influencing external audiences. Thus, the cultural factor of a state forms one of the most important pillars of soft power, as culture represents a soft underbelly

that allows political and diplomatic decision-makers to wield it as a tool for foreign policy (Al-Abadi, 2021).

- **Strong Political Values**

The steadfast positions of diplomacy and a balanced political and diplomatic discourse regarding international issues and global dilemmas, along with the commitment to high values, play an active role in shaping the state's soft policies and demonstrating its capability on the international stage. Such adherence helps the state avoid entering into conflicts and power struggles (Matar, 2021, p. 5).

- **Foreign Policies of the State**

The foreign policies of a state are a fundamental factor in highlighting the role of soft power in international and regional influence, especially if these policies are based on principles of peaceful coexistence and respect for international regulations and norms. The strength of a state's soft power in its foreign policies arises from its commitment to moderation in its proposals, always considering that the state's interest lies in building balanced international relations with all parties without resorting to extremism or bias in its stances and decisions, which enhances the effectiveness of its foreign policy (Al-Abadi, 2021).

- **Education**

The education sector is one of the most common and utilized concepts in promoting a state's foreign diplomacy and enhancing its international standing as an effective tool of soft power. In this context, developed countries continually seek to improve their educational sectors, equipping them with all necessary resources to create a distinct external image and elevate their status among elite nations, thereby gaining numerous supporters for the state, as education serves as a significant draw. Consequently, states ensure that the education sector is at the forefront of their soft diplomatic efforts, especially when the educational institutions of that state gain an international reputation and respect among their counterparts in other countries (Abu Eid, 2019, p. 5).

At the individual level, global participation often occurs through student mobility between colleges and universities, as well as the exchange of faculty members. Faculty members also facilitate research collaborations between institutions, partnerships, and

research networks. Additionally, participation in jointly taught courses and other cross-border educational collaborations, including the establishment of joint degree programs at branches of universities set up in other countries, is common.

- **Economic Initiatives and Global Inter-Trade**

Countries can build distinguished international relationships and disseminate their diplomatic concepts through their international economic initiatives, which reflect the strength of the state and its political and economic stability. This positively influences the acceptance of surrounding or global countries towards any joint economic initiative or project, particularly when it is associated with humanitarian benefits and the development of communities and infrastructure in the target countries, thereby contributing to the external manifestation of the state's soft power (Al-Abadi, 2021).

- **Media**

Media, through its traditional, modern, and digital forms, as well as social media platforms, represents one of the most profound and practical tools of a state's soft power. It plays a significant role in accurately shaping the state's foreign policies and conveying cultural agendas and political messages to the international community without restrictions (Al-Shamaylah, 2014, p. 12). The media also plays a crucial role in defending the state's vision and foreign policies while contributing to the establishment of open international relations (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 9).

- **Public Diplomacy**

Soft power gains its importance from the significance of its sources and its capacity for direct influence on the international stage. This is achieved by relying on concepts that enable it to play this role. We might say that the concept of public diplomacy is one of the most important methods of both hard and soft diplomacy. Public diplomacy is a modern diplomatic concept produced by factors of civilizational and human development, as well as the evolution of political and diplomatic theory and the need to transcend the traditional barriers of diplomacy by relying on the principle of direct communication with the target audience to convey ideas and concepts through managing international relations via non-governmental entities or multi-task institutions. The role of citizens or activists in various fields has become significant in promoting the state's image abroad through dialogue with the target audience (Al-Abadi, 2021).

In this context, it is essential to note that digital diplomacy represents a new and practical extension of the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy. It relies on the first concept to expand the platforms launched by governments as campaigns to improve their national image and reputation. In the second concept, it enhances multi-directional communication between diplomats and the public (Bjola & Holmes, 2015, p. 73).

For example, the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States recommends expanding public and foreign diplomacy, as well as providing language training for diplomatic staff. Thus, the idea of establishing an independent institute for training in public diplomacy has been proposed, and the advisory group for public diplomacy in the Arab and Islamic world recommends that all employees of the Department of State receive training in public diplomacy (Szpirglas, Gand, & Acquier, 2005, p. 11).

3.3. MANIFESTATIONS OF POWER UTILIZATION IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY

International relations have historically been characterized by dynamism and evolution, particularly in the concepts available to states, which are based on specific components. One of the most notable concepts is "power," traditionally viewed in the context of the relationship between a state's domestic and foreign policies. Over time, geographic location was identified as one of the key elements of that power, followed by the state's efforts and programs aimed at its citizens, and then the inclusion of military power as a foundational pillar of state power. Subsequently, democracy was recognized, with democratic nations described as the most powerful (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024). In this light, this section addresses the manifestations of power utilization in international diplomacy.

3.3.1. Concept of Power

The concept of power has several different meanings due to varying opinions and definitions among thinkers and researchers, as well as differing theories that explain the concept. However, most definitions of power revolve around the idea that "power is the ability to influence the behavior of others." This means it is a behavioral relationship between two parties, where one seeks to influence the behavior of the other to achieve its

objectives within a specified time frame and through a particular domain. From this perspective, we can identify the elements and characteristics of power as follows (Hamdan, 2013, p. 23):

- Power is a means to achieve a specific end.
- The influence resulting from power does not always occur in a single direction or domain.
- Power is a relative value, not an absolute one; there cannot always be one strong party and another weak party. By its nature, it is relative because the power of a state is measured in comparison to the power of other states. Moreover, power manifests gradually, meaning that some relatively weaker states can play an effective role in a particular crisis quickly and unexpectedly, thereby enabling them to influence a stronger state and even compel it to change its policies. For instance, the power of the United States diminished in the face of the Vietnamese people, despite possessing weapons of mass destruction; however, it feared using them due to potential repercussions from China and the former Soviet Union. This drives American decision-makers to limit their military efforts to conventional weapons (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

3.3.2. Characteristics of Power

- Power is the essence of international relations, just as authority is the essence of national politics. The difference between power and authority is that the latter encompasses the former but is tied to a goal: achieving the unity of the group, and a means: the legitimate monopoly of coercive tools. In other words, the authority around which domestic political conflict revolves is domesticated and centralized in the government that monopolizes it to enforce unity and stability. In contrast, the power involved in conflicts between states is neither domesticated nor centralized nor organized to achieve each state's national interests, which are inherently multiple and conflicting. This explains the hostility and warfare that characterize international relations, stemming from the pursuit of each state to impose its will and fulfill its interests in the absence of a supreme authority that monopolizes coercive tools (Abu Eid, 2019, p. 7).
- Power is not an end in itself but a means to exert influence and effectuate the goals of the state, which revolve around achieving national interests and fulfilling

civilizational functions, as well as safeguarding national security and preserving political independence or deterrence (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

- The strength of a state is always relative and depends on two factors: first, the ability to transform available or latent sources of power into effective power; second, the aggregate strength of the other party. Two states may possess the same sources of power, but if one state can utilize its sources effectively while the other cannot, the former becomes relatively stronger despite equal sources of power. Furthermore, a state's power is continuously changing due to the shifting importance of its available sources of power, those of the other party, or the exchanges that may occur between states which affect their relative power, such as wars, treaties, alliances, or divisions (Hamdan, 2013, p. 11).

- Power is a construct and a will imposed by the nature of international relations, characterized by chaos and the absence of authority. This compels states to strive through various means and methods to create sources of power and professional factors to activate them, seen as the true guarantee of their security, stability, and interests. The examples of Japan and Germany today, compared to their situations at the end of World War II, illustrate that power is indeed a construct and a will. Some states may possess numerous sources of power, such as population, resources, territory, and moral factors. However, they may lack the ability to produce and manage power despite their historical richness and the nobility of their civilizational traditions (Kissinger, 2015, p. 346).

- Power is characterized by its scarcity, which leads states, regardless of their strength, to cherish what they possess and to avoid dispersing their efforts. Power is inherently relative, as a state's strength is measured by comparison to the strength of other states. Additionally, power manifests gradually, meaning that some relatively weaker states can play an effective role in a specific crisis quickly and unexpectedly. Power is a dynamic and fluid concept, composed of a large number of changing material and immaterial elements that are interconnected. Therefore, any conclusions regarding a state's power or its ranking among other states, even if based on recent information, are contingent upon the time of their emergence, necessitating a continuous reevaluation of the state (Al-Arabi, 2012, p. 19).

Power Gradation in Diplomacy: The exercise of power ranges between influencing through diplomatic means on one hand and the use of coercive force on the other. Resorting to power often signifies a stage of incapacity to resolve issues through

peaceful methods. The pursuit of power relies on available resources to implement state policy, maximizing this power through the type of diplomacy that translates national resources into national strength (Libyan Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

3.4. THE USE OF POWER IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Political developments in the international environment have revealed the reality that the United States cannot maintain effective control and influence over the international system solely through military power. The transition from hard power to soft power was necessitated by transformations that required a reevaluation of the power strategy it employed (Hamdan, 2013, p. 23). In this light, this section provides an overview of the use of power in American diplomacy.

3.4.1. Contexts of Power Utilization in American Diplomacy

Throughout history, there have been states that dominated each century. The past few centuries have witnessed clear changes in the sources of power among leading nations. In this context, since the end of the twentieth century, when the significance of soft power began to rise, various countries, especially the United States, have had the opportunity to distinguish themselves from others on the international stage through their rich cultural resources, the political values they advocate, and the foreign policies they implement (Baritili, 2023).

The U.S. has sought to maximize the role of soft power in enhancing its strategic capabilities and supporting its objectives after the failure of hard power to achieve its goals. In light of this, this section discusses the contexts of power utilization in American diplomacy.

3.4.2. Contexts of Hard Power Utilization

Looking back at the founding period of the American system, it becomes clear that this system was established only after a series of bloody events, including civil wars, where the theory of power was applied harshly. Military power was used to dominate Native American territories and to control the will of millions of slaves brought from Africa. The use of military force in American politics is not a new phenomenon that arose

after World War II; rather, it is an old and entrenched tradition in American foreign policy (Kagley & Wittkopf, 2004, p. 349). Consequently, its isolation was relative, as it acted to protect its interests, including the use of force. From the War of 1812 between the U.S. and Britain to World War I, we find that most American presidents either used force or threatened to use it against other countries (Kaat, 2018, p. 2).

After World War II, the confrontation between the United States and the former Soviet Union was an open one across all fronts. The use of power between the two major powers was a likely scenario due to their immense destructive capabilities and both sides' attempts to impose their will and control over each other and the international system that existed at that time (Kissinger, 2015, p. 369).

The emergence of the neoconservative movement in America, which represented an influential group in shaping U.S. foreign policy, prompted American decision-makers to adopt a more hardline stance in employing hard power in U.S. policies toward other countries. Neoconservatives believed in a moral role for American foreign policy and military power in the world, as well as in the existence of evil globally, and in America's responsibility to lead the world in combating this evil and not overlook it. They advocated using various means, foremost among them military power, as evidenced by the U.S. intervention to defeat Nazism in World War II. Thus, neoconservatives viewed military power as a diplomatic tool rather than a last resort, seeing it as a necessary option that should not be disregarded in international conflicts (Kaat, 2018, p. 3).

After George W. Bush came to power in 2000, the influence of neoconservatives in American policy increased as they proposed the "American Century" project, aimed at imposing American hegemony worldwide following the U.S.'s emergence as the sole global leader after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Neoconservatives were able to exploit the events of September 11, 2001, to achieve their goals of changing America's foreign and defense policies by emphasizing increased military spending and adopting a new national security strategy. This strategy, which formed the basis of Bush's foreign policy announced in 2002, included preventing any rising powers from challenging the United States both regionally and internationally (Steven & Austin, 2015, p. 43). It also advocated for a policy of preemptive military strikes against countries that might become future adversaries of the U.S. and conducting preemptive attacks against other nations.

Undoubtedly, this strategy did not target Iraq alone, as exemplified by the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, but also revealed American moves in the Arab and Islamic worlds, which were targeted by the U.S. campaign against terrorism following the events of 9/11. This campaign aimed to dilute Islamic culture and open the door to entrenching the American cultural model, which represents the ideological foundation of the new American foreign policy, viewed as superior compared to other cultures (Abdul Fattah, 2014, p. 5).

In 2006, the George W. Bush administration launched a web platform that 23 countries responded to in 2007. Its primary objective was to establish a reporting system to track the activities of missions and collect data from initiatives of the Office of Policy and Resources Planning, known as the "Program Performance Report," aimed at influencing public diplomacy (Cull, 2014, p. 12).

From a realistic perspective, the ideas of neoconservatives aimed to inform American decision-makers and provide suitable justifications for the use of military force in addressing global issues, making it a necessary option for the United States (Kaat, 2018, p. 3).

In this context, it is important to note that the wars Washington engaged in, such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with unchecked expansion, led to signs of a U.S. retreat from the idea of global hegemony due to the immense costs involved. Additionally, the repercussions of the Iraqi and Afghan files, along with repeated political failures regarding developments in the Iranian nuclear file, the North Korean nuclear issue, and the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan, contributed to this shift (Abdul Fattah, 2014, p. 6).

3.4.3. Utilizing Smart Power in American Foreign Policy

When Barack Obama took office, his administration managed foreign policy in a manner different from that of George W. Bush. Obama, the new president of the United States, who carried the slogan of "change," followed a different path from the previous administration. Upon taking power, the Obama administration employed smart power, a combination of hard and soft power, as the American security strategy. Obama chose to remain strong and legitimate by using both hard and soft power. The reason behind this

choice was his recognition that no matter how powerful a state is, it cannot survive alone in a globalized world (Hayali, 2023, p. 17).

The U.S. State Department was the first foreign ministry to establish a unit dedicated to e-diplomacy, creating an e-diplomacy task force in 2002 (Tandiverdi, 2002). It adopted a strategic approach regarding the implementation of smart power, which served as an auxiliary factor in applying soft power. Among the primary goals of smart power was (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 12):

- Achieving economic recovery through an economic plan that included a series of incentives to address the financial hardship and economic recession that affected the American economy, after Obama convinced Congress to approve a bailout plan for the financial crisis, costing \$825 billion.

- Securing Energy Sources: A report prepared by the U.S. National Intelligence Council in 2010 indicated that the next fifteen years would witness intense competition over energy, due to shifting global power dynamics and the reliance of many countries on economic strength for their rise.

- Challenging Major Economic Powers and Blocs: This can be achieved through the employment of consensual hegemony in American foreign policy, which can extend U.S. control further (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 13).

- Ending the Militarization of Foreign Policy: This involves reinstating the importance of soft power. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates emphasized the need to allocate more money and effort toward developing soft power, noting that while the military possesses immense capabilities, relying solely on the Department of Defense to achieve objectives can distort the image of American foreign policy.

- Maintaining American Military Superiority: The U.S. administration has aimed to sustain the superiority of its armed forces, enhance their capabilities, and implement adjustments to their formations to reduce expenditures by building a smart, smaller army that relies on technology and advanced programs.

The strategy of implementing smart power in American foreign policy is reflected in the approach toward Iran. Barack Obama announced during his election campaign and after taking office that a new approach would be adopted regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, focusing on postponing military options and promoting direct negotiations to address the crisis. This was part of a new strategy he adopted to manage ongoing issues.

The Obama administration's desire to employ soft power toward Iran stemmed from a realistic assessment of the ineffectiveness of hard power, along with precise regional calculations indicating that resorting to military options was not viable. The likelihood of success with military options was low, and a preemptive military strike on nuclear facilities would only delay the nuclear program for more years. Consequently, this would put U.S. forces in Afghanistan, the Arabian Gulf, Iraq, and all American interests in the region at risk of Iranian retaliatory actions (Center for Soft War Studies, 2016, p. 34).

Therefore, former President Barack Obama proposed smart diplomacy to address the Iranian nuclear issue through direct negotiations aimed at reaching a final agreement on the nuclear program. This indeed occurred after 18 months of negotiations, culminating in the agreement reached on July 15, 2015, in Vienna. Concurrently, the United States demonstrated its ability to impose sanctions on Iran should the agreement fail, signaling that military options were not entirely off the table. However, both parties showed a sincere effort through negotiations to ensure their success, leveraging global public opinion and facilitating communication to overcome obstacles and achieve the desired goals for both sides (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 14).

3.5. SOFT POWER IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY: THE MODEL OF U.S. DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

The employment of soft power in American strategy has not emerged suddenly; instead, it has been utilized across different periods, starting from the Cold War and the American strategy toward the Soviet Union through the use of soft power based on media and public diplomacy tools (Al-Faisal, 2016, p. 19). In this context, this section discusses the digital diplomacy of the United States:

3.5.1. Strategy for Utilizing Social Media in American Foreign Policy

One of the main challenges the United States faces in digital diplomacy is navigating cyberspace and digital policy, as well as coordinating government efforts in the electronic space to promote responsible state behavior in the digital realm. This includes advanced policies that protect the integrity and security of internet infrastructure,

serve U.S. interests, enhance competitiveness, support democratic values, and ensure the United States remains a leader in innovation and standard-setting in the world (Yao & Fei, 2022, p. 198).

The American philosophy regarding the role of social media forms the intellectual and philosophical background for the social media strategies adopted by the U.S. State Department. It is emphasized that those who browse the official digital site of the U.S. State Department will find it filled with documents highlighting the importance of social media and its effects on the liberal, transformative, and democratic environment in political, social, and economic fields (Al-Hayat & Abidat, 2011, p. 128). This is achieved through the U.S. State Department's funding of projects that aim to provide internet access worldwide at minimal costs. Additionally, it funds anti-censorship and control technologies to prevent governments from dominating and surveilling users' activities, as well as controlling internet users. It also connects social media with mobile phones to keep them away from local communication channels that are under government control (Al-Kaoud, 2016, p. 112).

The U.S. administration aims to achieve several objectives through the promotion of social media and the internet, including:

- Human Globalization: Connecting it to the American technology network to enhance cyber power, leading to programming individuals using these electronic networks to adopt the thinking patterns, behaviors, and value system of the American liberal school.
- Connecting Individuals and Communities: Using social media networks as political technology tools, as described by Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google. This political technology played a significant role in mobilizing protests in Indonesia in 1998 to overthrow Suharto, and it was also pivotal in the 2014 Hong Kong protests against Chinese oversight.
- Challenging Conservative Values: Social media and mobile applications are designed to open channels of communication between men and women, facilitating the mixing and formation of online friendships, which alter traditional perceptions of religious and social values.
- Exploring and Building Future Leadership: This involves identifying and supporting activists and their respective networks and organizations. A notable example

is the establishment of a coalition of youth organizations by the U.S. State Department, as well as the publication of a book and a guide on the State Department's website aimed at establishing and developing civil society organizations (Al-Kaoud, 2016, p. 13).

- Promoting Geographical Globalization: Google Maps plays a soft role in this area, serving as a significant tool for gathering information, images, and maps shared by social media users, which are linked to the U.S. National Security Agency.

3.5.2. Utilizing Digital Diplomacy to Support American Foreign Policy

After the United States failed to impose its soft power by removing barriers to its culture and media, it considered an alternative approach through the information superhighway. This aimed to expand communication in three important areas: the information superhighway provides new media and more communication options, increasing the alternatives available to individuals. This highway is interactive, connecting people who do not see each other in real life through email, online newspapers, and other interactive tools.

This led to a significant step for the United States in asserting its soft power with the creation of the internet and its adoption by countries worldwide, including those in the developing world. The internet encouraged world leaders to formulate policies that enabled them to engage with this network. The G7 industrialized nations held a ministerial conference to gather information, where they agreed on principles such as encouraging competition and private investment, establishing a regulatory framework, ensuring access to networks, and supporting opportunities and plurality in content. Thus, the United States was able to signal the beginning of the spread of its new medium, the internet, as a means of exercising its soft power within diverse societies (Al-Kaoud, 2016, p. 13).

Social media has become a crucial tool in mobilizing American public opinion, instigating protests, and driving changes on the global stage. This vast web also plays a role in targeting objectives that the United States aims to achieve, facilitated through various platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These sites are among the major American companies involved in espionage and information gathering worldwide (Abdul Basit, 2022).

In this context, the State Department initiated a program to train American diplomats and encourage them to use social media to create global dialogue. This initiative yielded significant results in the use of social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, by American diplomats in their daily work, effectively transforming the U.S. State Department into a global presence (Yasin, 2016, p. 69).

Moreover, American policy employed digital diplomacy in the regime change processes around the world, as seen in Egypt and Tunisia in 2012 and beyond. These platforms played a prominent role in instigating changes in these countries by mobilizing public opinion in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria (Luoma-aho, Moreno, & Verhoeven, 2017, p. 8).

Additionally, the United States opened its first virtual embassy in Iran in 2011 to enhance dialogue opportunities with Iranian citizens and gather information from the populace independent of government sources. The embassy showcased examples of Iranians who succeeded in the United States. In 2014, the embassy published Barack Obama's congratulatory message to the Persian people on Nowruz, and according to Politico magazine, the viewership of this congratulatory video in Tehran was higher than in San Francisco. The U.S. administration also appointed a special representative for Muslim communities at the State Department, who answered questions daily from culturally diverse Muslims skeptical of their government's practices. Her posts were translated into Pashto, Urdu, Arabic, Swahili, and other languages (Sheikho, 2022, p. 9).

Another example of employing digital diplomacy in U.S. policy was the American intelligence operation in Cuba, known as "ZunZuneo," which began in 2009 and continued until 2014. A journalistic investigation revealed the goal behind USAID funding a social media company, ZunZuneo, directed at Cuba, which functioned similarly to Twitter. The aim was to overthrow Cuban President Fidel Castro by establishing a social network within Cuba and encouraging citizens to engage in political rebellion against Castro's anti-American regime (Abdul Basit, 2022).

In the context of employing digital diplomacy in foreign policy, a key figure was "Kohen," head of the political planning department at the U.S. State Department in 2008 and director of the coalition of youth organizations. He played a significant role in American cultural and political influence on the minds of Arab youth. In 2007, Kohen delivered a lecture titled "Women, Youth, and Change in the Middle East and the Concept

of Digital Democracy" at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, where he discussed digital diplomacy strategy. He stated that youth and women in the Middle East had matured to attract external influence through technological platforms, including mobile phones, social media, and the internet. Kohen focused on building a network of relationships with Arab and Islamic youth, conducting fieldwork that included visits to seventy countries, most of which are located in the Arab and Islamic world (Luoma-aho, Moreno, & Verhoeven, 2017, p. 13).

In addition to the above, we observe that research institutions are increasingly relying on artificial intelligence. For instance, the RAND Corporation utilizes AI in diplomatic simulations to assist politicians and decision-makers in assessing the potential consequences of diplomatic strategies. This is achieved by employing AI algorithms that provide decision-makers with digital insights into possible outcomes of their diplomatic actions. Digital diplomacy utilizes technology in its practices through active engagement and negotiation via social media platforms, as well as hosting virtual conferences to influence public opinion and global affairs (Janabi, 2023, p. 4).

American political scientist Joseph Nye is credited with coining the term "soft power" in its contemporary sense. It refers to the ability to attract and co-opt without coercion or the use of force as a means of persuasion. This term is defined as the ability to draw others in not through compulsion, military threats, or economic pressure, but through appeal, making others want what you want.

Soft power refers to the ability to shape the public opinion and foreign policies of other states in a peaceful and non-violent manner, with the objective of influence. Soft power may be understood as the ability to communicate directly and shape the reactions of other states in a state's regional and global environment in an effortless and conducive manner by implementing long-term policies and showcasing the state's capacity to engage its foreign and domestic tools and well-thought-out foreign policies to this end. Thus, a state's capability to utilize its soft power demonstrates its ability to shape the reactions of other states and develop a foreign policy strategy accordingly.

Additionally, developments in international politics, science, and tools have facilitated soft power mechanisms to achieve an effective and vital contribution to states' foreign policies, given the significant triumph of soft power policies in establishing their effective role in international matters and settling many disputes.

The sources of soft power are embodied in a state's culture, the tone of its foreign policy, its sound political principles and values it holds and aspires to attain, and its capacity to spread its educational practices and economic projects that provide it with the ability to establish renowned international relations and spread its diplomatic ideas and political ideologies through the power of its media institutions and the competence of its diplomats in interaction with other nations.

It has now become evident that the finest illustration of employing soft power is reflected in the foreign policy of the United States. The U.S. has recognized that its global control and domination cannot be practical or long-lasting if it relies solely on military power. This led to a reevaluation of the hard power policy it had previously employed, and it turned to the use of soft power to achieve its strategic objectives and interests.

This transition has been facilitated, in particular, through digital diplomacy tools, which have a significant impact on shaping public perceptions and directing behaviors, thereby promoting the American values model as a global norm. The U.S. has relied on the principles of trust and American values, emphasizing solid political values while enhancing the movement of global trade.

Additionally, the U.S. has directed media, especially social media, to serve its objectives and strategies. American administrations have successfully employed smart power, which combines hard and soft power, within their foreign policy strategies through social networks, while controlling the international electronic infrastructure and understanding its flows and operational mechanisms.

3.6. CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOFT POWER AND DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

The seminal concept of soft power—coined by Joseph Nye—is that a country's ability to influence others through cooptive means, rather than through payments or coercion, is a key aspect of its power. Nye's framework has played a key role in the emergence of an early 21st-century debate on public diplomacy. However, it has also been criticized on the grounds of oversimplifying power, as well as its ignorance of prevailing hierarchies and the ideological, structural, and ethical dimensions of influence (Lukes, 2005; Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

Power, in a critical theory perspective, does not represent a thing a state has, by which it exerts power through cultural appeal. Instead, it is created, carried, and maintained by the discourses that specify what is thought of as "reasonable," "rational," or "moral" (Foucault, 1980, p. 93). The view is that digital diplomacy is not a tool, but a discursive practice in which diplomacy adopts a particular language, symbolism, and a degree of selective visibility. Throughout the digital diplomacy channels of the United States, extraordinary narratives have continued to be disseminated, portraying the United States as the global standard of democracy, innovation, and humanitarian values. Nevertheless, these representations may reduce or delegitimize other representations that arise from states from the Global South or from antagonists of Western politics (Cull, 2013, p. 126).

According to critics, such discursive dominance reinforces structural inequalities in the international system. At the same time, Nye's optimistic framing of soft power is in contrast to a structuralist view that global communication is not equal. U.S.-based platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Google, and YouTube, dominate the field and, in turn, frame narratives in U.S. circuits for the global world, frequently subordinating the ideological and strategic interests of their own (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, p. 3). Milan and Treré describe this as "digital colonialism," where powerful states use technological and informational infrastructures to extract societal and economic value, control visibility, and shape global norms (Milan & Treré, 2019, p. 325). By taking control over data, platforms, and algorithms, a country like the U.S. can set the terms of global discourse, while remaining structurally asymmetrical.

Furthermore, the ethics of digital diplomacy have become a growing concern. Much of the literature celebrates its transparency-enhancing and citizen engagement capacities, although scholars increasingly warn of its covert and manipulative possibilities. Digital diplomacy is, in many ways, infused with mechanisms of surveillance, algorithmic targeting, and behavioral insights—what is often referred to as "nudging" people's opinions without their awareness or consent (Bjola & Holmes, 2015, p. 88). Digital diplomacy may even begin to shift from soft persuasion to informational coercion in these cases, where messages are bolstered with implied political pressure, or participation is one-way, flowing from the top down.

Algorithmic systems in particular are opaque, and theories of manipulation, bias, and the erosion of democratic norms follow. In such cases, digital platforms also act as extensions of soft power, amplifying some voices and suppressing others based on political alignment or geopolitical interests, thereby creating a form of selective exclusivism and sometimes deceptive soft power. If public diplomacy becomes indistinguishable from propaganda, domestic practices of this kind may erode trust in international communication (Pamment, 2012, p. 55).

However, as the significance of the digital has grown, these critical and ethical worries demand a rethinking of digital diplomacy as anything but a modern incarnation of statecraft. Lastly, it is recognized that urban entertainment resorts are a site of power reproduction, as access to information, control over narratives, and symbolic legitimacy are unevenly distributed. Where there are more digital means of communication, not only do they control the means—they create the epistemologies (what counts as truth, legitimacy, authority) in the realm of international politics.

In short, by studying digital diplomacy critically, we discover that much of what appears to be attraction-based influence is embedded in power structures, ideological reframing of policy, and unethical ramifications. By refusing to exoticize the complex political issues associated with digital soft power, this project expands our understanding of soft power in the digital age—beyond the naivety of Nye's original concept of states' ability to co-opt leading communication technologies for their messaging purposes.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICIES

The scientific and civilizational developments witnessed by human organizations in the current era have represented a qualitative leap in political and cultural communication between societies. The complexities that states might impose on citizens' external communication have largely been eliminated. In parallel, new dimensions of diplomatic effectiveness have emerged as a result of these developments, including digital diplomacy, which has evolved from advancements in electronic media with the emergence of digital forms of communication, becoming a technological alternative to traditional communication methods.

Given that diplomatic activity is fundamentally a process of communication between political actors in states and organizations, digital diplomacy has become an actual necessity imposed by technological advancements. This evolution has made it an integral component of public diplomatic activity. This chapter provides an analytical description of the U.S. State Department's website as a model for understanding the impact of digital diplomacy on foreign policies in the current era.

Based on the above, to expand the study of the impact of digital diplomacy on U.S. foreign policies, we will divide this chapter into two sections. The first section will examine the analytical study procedures employed, while the second section will present the findings of the analytical study.

4.1 ANALYTICAL STUDY PROCEDURES

Analytical studies require a specific pattern of systematic control to limit their activities and main steps, directing them toward achieving the predefined objectives of the study. This control is achieved by adopting a specific and suitable research methodology that meets the scientific and research conditions agreed upon by recognized research schools, ensuring that research efforts are focused on areas closely aligned with these objectives.

This section outlines the methodological procedures adopted to ensure the study is directed toward its actual purposes. These procedures include selecting an appropriate research method, defining the community of the phenomenon under study, deriving the study

sample, and designing the tools, while taking necessary actions to ensure their scientific validity and reliability.

4.1.1 Research Methodology

Research methodology consists of a series of planned measures through which the overall research requirements are identified, the available possibilities for researchers are assessed, and appropriate measures are established to complete the research to achieve its specified objectives. The methodology enables the researcher to determine research priorities and make informed decisions when selecting data and sources for the research.

The process of selecting an appropriate research methodology is linked to several foundations, including those related to the nature and objectives of the research, as well as factors concerning the researcher themselves and the intellectual school to which they belong. Additionally, certain factors relate to the available research resources that support the researcher in fulfilling the research requirements. The descriptive analytical methodology is one of the most comprehensive approaches for social science research and studies in political science and public relations. It helps provide a comprehensive overall view of the prevalence of the phenomena under study, analyzing the variables and factors that influence them closely or at a distance.

The descriptive method is a research approach specialized in providing in-depth explanations of the subjects under study, clarifying the main and sub-components of the topic, along with all influencing factors and determinants. It also allows for the identification of the connections formed between these elements and their current and future impacts on the subject. Thus, our current study is classified as a descriptive study that aims to analyze the effects generated by the employment of digital diplomacy in the foreign policies of political entities.

The subsequent step in determining the research methodology involved selecting the research approach through which data and information would be collected and analyzed to achieve the best possible results. After comparing the methods that align with and suit the descriptive methodology, the choice fell on content analysis, as it is the most compatible with the components of the current study and meets its requirements appropriately.

Content analysis is defined as a suitable research tool for dealing statistically and qualitatively with political, media, and literary discourses. It clarifies the actual methods that

have been adopted and emphasized within these discourses, whether they are written, spoken, or broadcast through traditional or modern media (Majid, 2016, p. 85).

There are two main types of analysis based on the depth of the analysis and the use of numbers and data: quantitative analysis, which heavily relies on numerical significance and differences between numerical values, and qualitative analysis, which focuses on the meaning of the discourse and its vocabulary, as well as the rhetorical and media influences it contains. In qualitative analysis, the use of numbers is limited to simple percentages and frequencies from the available patterns of content analysis methods, the model of categories of form and content was adopted to fulfill the analytical requirements of the current study, as it helps provide clarifications regarding the mechanisms and methods of employing digital diplomacy within the U.S. State Department's website.

4.1.2. Study Population and Sample

The study population is defined as all the elements that share common characteristics, which may gather permanently or temporarily due to the confinement of the research variables (Jalabi, 2017, p. 18). This aggregation mechanism distinguishes one research population from another, as the same element may simultaneously be part of more than one population. For example, an individual can be part of both the teaching community and the sports news audience community.

The nature of the research and its objectives are the criteria through which the study population is defined. Therefore, the current study population has been defined as all publications displayed on the U.S. State Department's website from September 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024. The research findings indicated that a large number of publications were presented on the site during this timeframe, as the site is highly active and effective.

Consequently, a sampling method was employed to select a sample that is representative of the original study population. The research faced challenges in selecting the sample since the media materials issued by the U.S. State Department are published in English and then automatically translated into several other languages, including Arabic. These translations are devoid of any visual elements (images or videos) and consist solely of written text. Therefore, the English text of the speeches was analyzed to identify categories of how it was said or structural categories. In contrast, the content for the substance categories was derived from the Arabic version published on the ministry's official website.

The sample consisted of 29 statements published on the site between September 1, 2024, and September 30, 2024, in both Arabic and English, as well as 16 independent publications released during the same period in English only, which were not translated into other languages. Thus, the main sample for the research comprised 45 diverse news materials published on the U.S. State Department's website within the timeframe covered by the current analytical study.

Additionally, five publications outside the sample were selected to represent the pilot study sample. These were used to test the research tools and evaluate their psychometric properties, which assess the validity and reliability of scientific research tools. These publications were not included in the total sample for the study.

4.1.3. Research Tools

Research tools represent the means through which quantitative and qualitative data and information are collected regarding the phenomenon being studied. The selection of tools is initially based on the research methodology adopted, in a manner consistent with the research style relied upon. The choice of tools is also related to the study's objectives, the level of accessibility of the community, and the sample required for testing by researchers, along with the available material resources and the time allocated for completing the research. Additionally, the researcher's perspective and personal philosophy in scientific research play a significant role in this selection process.

Through the evaluation of the various factors and determinants mentioned above, the content analysis form was selected as the tool for the current study. This required designing a specific form tailored to the nature of the current research, as no existing form met the research requirements in previous studies.

Initially, the central unit of analysis was determined and adopted throughout all stages of the analysis, with each publication chosen to represent the basic unit of analysis. This means that each independent publication serves as an independent unit of analysis.

The analysis categories were selected by dividing them into two levels: the first level included categories of form (website design, color scheme, text colors, heading system, images, interactivity within the site) and categories of substance (message style, message formulation, geographical scope, messages directed at Asia, messages directed at Europe, messages directed at Africa, the implied direction in the messages).

Next, we defined the specific criteria for the analysis, which are partial categories that express or represent the availability of the original category within the media discourse to be analyzed. The criteria for each category of form and substance were organized into a table showing the frequencies and percentages for each version of the media material under analysis (Arabic and English), allowing the researcher to compare the diplomatic messages included in both versions.

We then examined the characteristics of the form by assessing its validity and reliability (accuracy and consistency). Validity was assessed through content validity by consulting a group of instructors specializing in media. Based on their initial observations, adjustments were made according to these comments, and it was then presented to them a second time to confirm its apparent validity, meaning it effectively measures the target it was designed to assess. The final feedback from the reviewers indicated that the form is highly suitable for use in the current research requirements.

Reliability is the characteristic that indicates the form produces consistent results when used by multiple implementers on the same sample or when the researcher applies it multiple times to the same sample over relatively spaced intervals. To assess this, the researcher applied the form to the pilot sample and then reapplied it after ten days. The agreement between the two applications was calculated using the following formula:

$$C = \frac{2T}{T_1 + T_2} \quad C = \frac{T_1 \times T_2}{T_1 + T_2}$$

It was found that the agreement value between the two analyses was 0.779, indicating a high level of agreement. The closer the coefficient is to 1, the higher the level of agreement, suggesting that the form has a high degree of reliability and can thus be used in the current study.

During the analysis, the following statistical and mathematical relationships were employed:

- Frequencies
- Percentages
- Coefficient of agreement analysis

4.2. METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The study rigorously applies content analysis to analyze the digital diplomacy of the United States; however, limitations of the dataset apply both to its scope and

representativeness. Most of the analysis focused on official content posted on a single government website, that of the United States Department of State. One reason this site was chosen was the institution with which it was associated, the degree of accessibility, and its role as the primary online point of reference for communicating American foreign policy.

However, this type of narrow sample is inherently one-dimensional. As such, given that data is limited and the range of circumstances under which digital diplomacy is practiced is vast, the findings may not represent the full range of digital diplomacy efforts that take place across the U.S. federal government, nor different U.S. embassies, nor on the full range of divergent digital platforms like social media, public campaigns or speeches through which digital engagement occurs. The diplomatic content on the State Department's site tends to be carved, formal, and strategically framed in language that limits analysis of informal or reactive messaging that is often produced administratively or tactically on real-time platforms such as Twitter and YouTube.

However, focusing on this narrow angle of view also restricts the study's generality. A larger, multi-platform content sample provides a more representative view of how digital diplomacy unfolds in various tones, audiences, and communication contexts. In addition, insight into how messages were (mis)interpreted by domestic and international recipients of U.S. digital diplomacy would provide additional direction, which this study does not explore.

Although such constraints are in place, the scope selected here was chosen to maintain a degree of methodological consistency, to facilitate access to reliable primary material, and to focus the research on a known depository of digital diplomacy content. Future work could extend the data to cover embassy-level social media accounts, campaign videos, or multilingual content, or incorporate recipient feedback through a survey or interview.

Acknowledging these methodological constraints, however, and keeping the study as transparent as possible, allows for a more in-depth basis for further analyses of soft power and digital diplomacy in investigations to come.

4.3. RESULTS OF THE ANALYTICAL STUDY

After designing the research tool and conducting necessary tests to verify its usability within the study, the form was applied to the selected sample of publications from the U.S. State Department's website to determine the role of digital diplomacy employed by the department in U.S. foreign relations. This was achieved by presenting the frequencies and percentages for each category of analysis adopted and comparing the English and Arabic versions of the news as displayed on the State Department's website.

The initial description of the site revealed that the English version is more advanced in terms of design and accessibility compared to the translated versions. The versions provided in other languages are merely literal translations automatically generated by the site, omitting images, videos, and other elements from the written text. As a result, the text often appears devoid of any enhancements or highlighting elements.

The site features a simple design; however, it does not offer many services that are typically provided by similar websites. It shares several tabs with sites of private companies and institutions, such as job search options in the United States, sections for those wishing to study in America, information about government employees and those working in the private sector, as well as tabs for monitoring financial and business activities in the U.S. This is something we did not observe on the websites of foreign ministries in many countries.

Here, we can identify a fundamental aspect of the informal diplomacy displayed on the U.S. State Department's website. The distinctive tabs attached to the homepage support the utilization of economic and educational diplomacy, which are forms of informal diplomacy relied upon by relevant authorities to build the diplomatic framework of political entities.

Thus, we can say that the employment of digital diplomacy on the site is facilitated through the synergy of informal diplomatic aspects in general. This diplomatic line aligns with modern theories of diplomatic management, which emphasize the role of informal actors in building diplomatic relations, particularly in areas where formal diplomatic activities are less prevalent. This approach enhances the strength and impact of diplomacy, enabling significant influence and breakthroughs in traditional diplomatic relations.

Results Related to Form Categories. In this section, we present the data obtained through the application of the content analysis form used in this study. Given the unique nature of the U.S. State Department's website, the results will be presented as derived from

the analysis of the English version and compared with the findings from the Arabic version of the same publications.

Regarding the design categories of the website, the following table illustrates the results recorded from the application of the analysis form related to the research:

Table 4.1 Results Of The Website Design Category For The U.S. State Department

No.	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	horizontal networks	30	66.67	0	0
2	Vertical networks	8	17.78	0	0
3	Rectangular grid	6	13.33	0	0
4	random	1	2.22	29	100
5	More than one model	0	0	0	0
Total		45	100	29	100

Source: Prepared by the researcher herself.

We observe from the previous results a significant difference in the design of the publications displayed on the U.S. Department of State's website between the English and Arabic interfaces. The Arabic interface employed a random design style, featuring uncoordinated publications written in a straightforward narrative style. This was evident in all the publications translated into Arabic, meaning that 100% of the publications available in Arabic followed a random pattern.

This can be attributed to the rudimentary nature of the literal translation option used on the website under study, which does not allow for formatting and adjustment because it relies on a pre-programmed control system for all publications. This observation was noted in various versions of the translations provided by the site, even in the French translation, despite the similarities in sentence structure and vocabulary between it and English.

In contrast, the English interface prominently featured a horizontal grid system, as evidenced in 30 of the publications analyzed in our study, which represents 66.67% of the total sample. A vertical grid design was employed in 8 publications, constituting

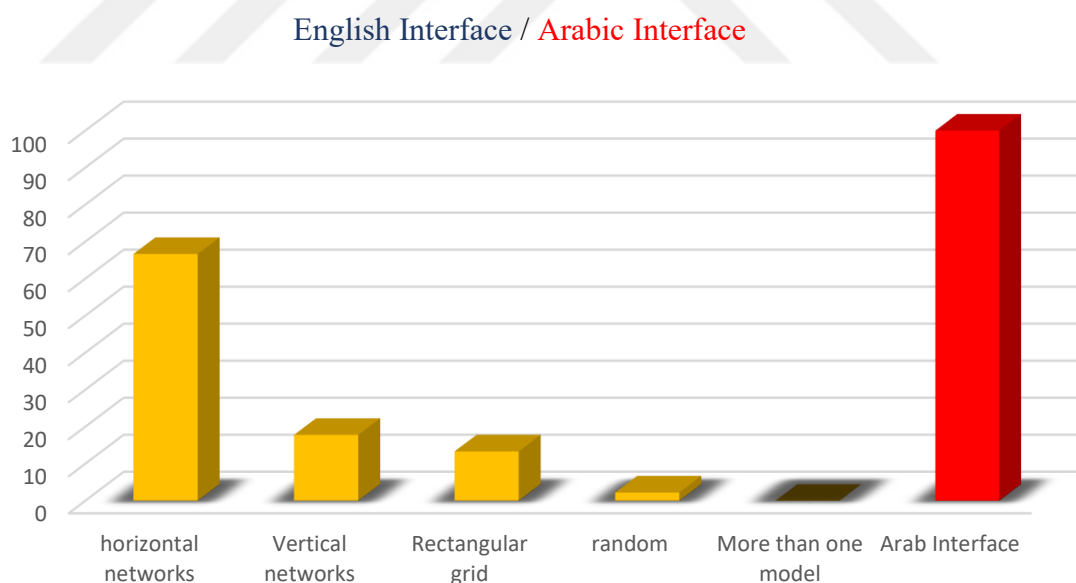
17.78%, while a rectangular grid was used in 6 publications, equating to 13.33% of the total publications monitored in the study.

The diversity, like the site's design and its variations from one publication to another, referring here to the English interface, helps create persuasion among various audience segments

simultaneously. It also prevents the U.S. Department of State's website from falling into the trap of tedious repetition, which could alienate the audience and deter them from following the site. Therefore, this diversity considers the different characteristics and traits of the target audience, enabling digital diplomacy to convey its messages to a broader public base.

The following figure illustrates a comparison between the Arabic and English interfaces in terms of website design:

Figure4.1 Comparison Between The Designs Of The Two Interfaces On The Site.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

As for the color scheme used on the website, we present the results related to this category in the following table:

Table 4.2 Presents The Results Of The Color Scheme Category Employed On The Site.

M	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	bicolor	2	4.44	0	0
2	tricolor	0	0	29	100
3	Tetrachromatic	43	95.56	0	0
Total		45	100	29	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The data presented in the previous table illustrates an apparent disparity between the English and Arabic interfaces regarding the color scheme used in displaying publications related to U.S. digital diplomacy. The model used in the Arabic interface relies on a three-color scheme that combines blue, black, and white, which appears in all publications translated into Arabic, representing 100% of the publications.

This is related to the automated translation model employed on the site, where a preset template is constructed for displaying translations, and editors cannot modify or change the design.

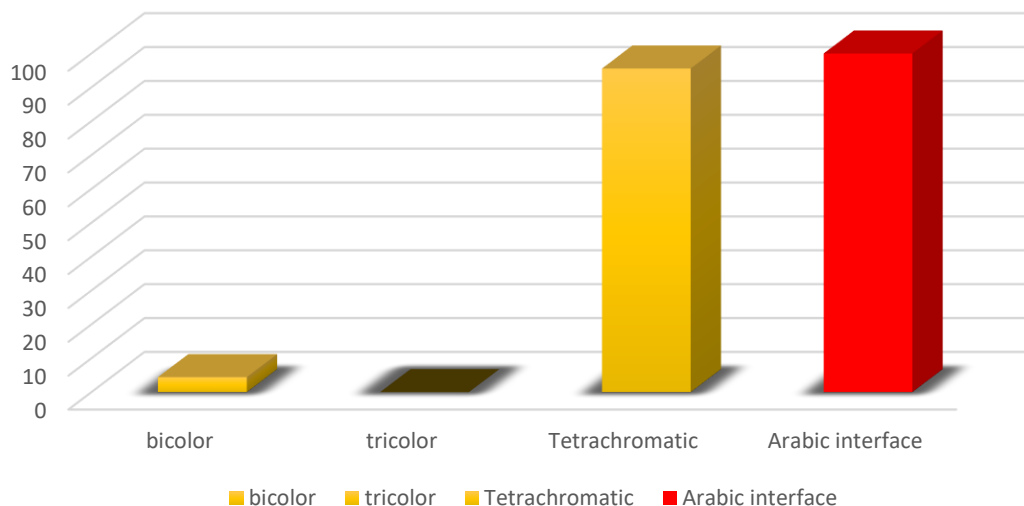
In contrast, the English interface predominantly adopted a four-color scheme that includes black, blue, white, and gold, appearing in 43 publications, which constitutes 95.56% of the total sample in the current study. The remaining two publications followed a two-color scheme (white and blue).

It can be said that the color scheme employed in the central English interface during the display of publications aligns closely with the primary colors adopted on the site overall, which are primarily derived from the logo of the U.S. Department of State. The colors red and green, included in the primary logo, were not utilized on the site in general, possibly due to the desire to impart a formal character to the site—a goal that would be difficult to achieve with a wide range of colors.

The previous result is summarized in the following figure:

Figure 4.2 Differences In The Color Scheme Employed In The Two Interfaces.

Arabic Interface / English Interface



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the category of text colors used in both versions of the website under study.

Table 4.3 Presents The Results Of The Text Color Category On The Site.

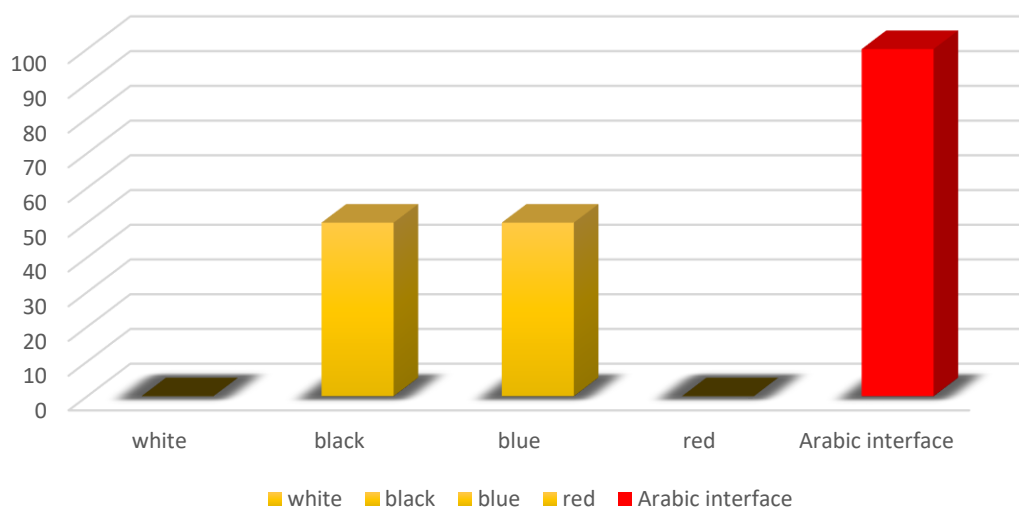
M	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	white	0	0	0	0
2	black	45	50	29	100
3	blue	45	50	0	0
4	red	0	0	0	0
Total		90	100	29	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The previous table shows a significant similarity between the Arabic and English interfaces in the color scheme used for text on the site. Both focus on black text against a white background, as seen in 29 publications in the Arabic interface, representing 100% of them, and in 45 publications in the English interface, also representing 100%. However, the English interface also utilized blue in the publications, particularly in displaying hyperlinks and hashtags, distinguishing it from the Arabic interface, which did not use this color.

Figure 4.3 Shows The Color Used In The Text On The Site.

Arabic interface / English interface



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the results related to the category of the heading system used on the U.S. Department of State website.

Table 4.4 Presents The Results Of The Heading Style Category.

M	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	wide pontoon	45	65.22	18	62.07
2	normal	0	0	11	37.93
3	underlined	8	11.59	0	0
4	hyperlink	16	23.19	0	0
Total		69	100	29	100

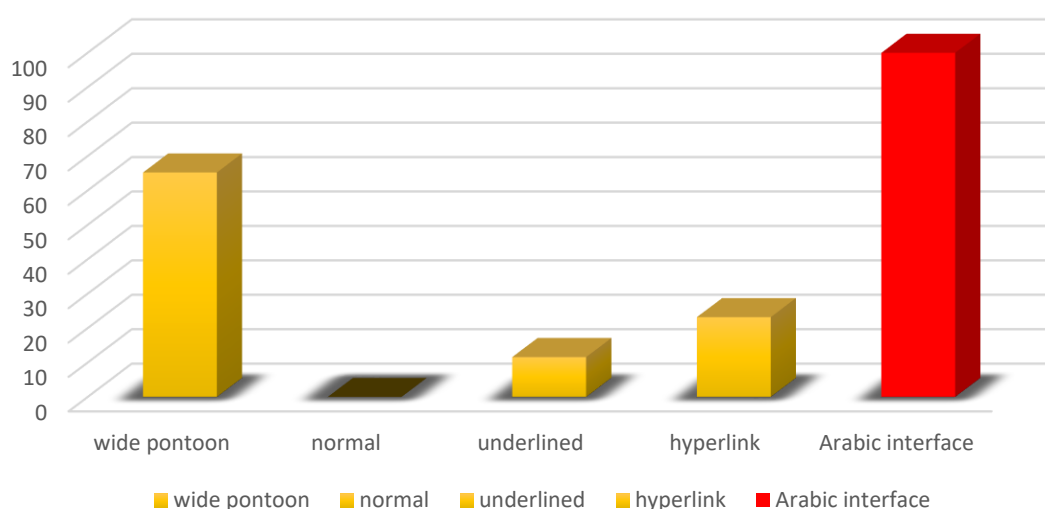
Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

It is evident from the table that the Arabic interface of the U.S. Department of State website primarily uses a bold heading style, as observed in 18 publications, representing 62.07% of the total publications translated into Arabic within the sample. Additionally, a regular (light) style was used in 11 publications, accounting for 37.93% of the publications.

In contrast, the foreign interface emphasized the use of bold font in all the headings identified in the analysis procedures for our current study. Of these, 16 headings were hyperlinks that direct the user to more detailed pages on the subject when clicked. Furthermore, eight publications were underlined to emphasize their importance.

Figure 4.4 Illustrates The Types Of Headings Used On The Site.

Arabic Interface / English Interface



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the types of images used on the U.S. Department of State website.

Table 4.5 Presents The Results Of The Image Style Category.

M	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	personality	8	14.81	0	0
2	Objectivity	1	1.85	0	0
3	colorful	9	16.67	0	0
4	nothing	36	66.67	29	100
Total		54	100	29	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

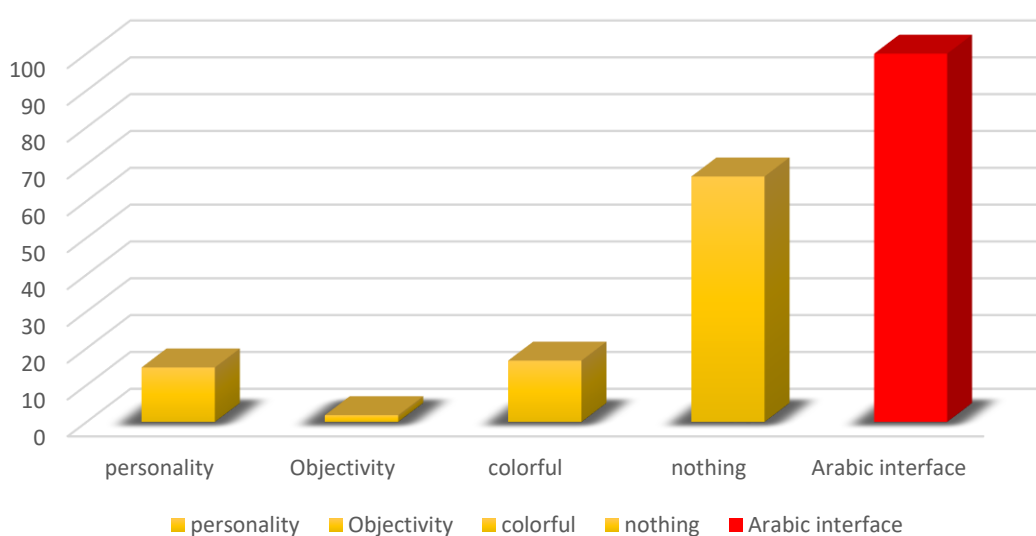
It is noticeable from the previous results that the U.S. Department of State website does not rely heavily on images in the publications it presents as part of digital diplomacy,

particularly in the translated versions of these publications. No images were used in this version, which can be attributed to the automated translation template employed on the site, which does not consider images, videos, or other highlighting elements.

Even in the English version, images were not utilized extensively, as 36 publications were observed without any images, representing 66.67% of the total publications.

Figure 4.5 Illustrates The Types Of Images Used On The Site.

Arabic Interface / English Interface



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the categories related to interactivity within the U.S. Department of State website:

Table 4.6 Presents The Results Of The Available Interaction Style Category.

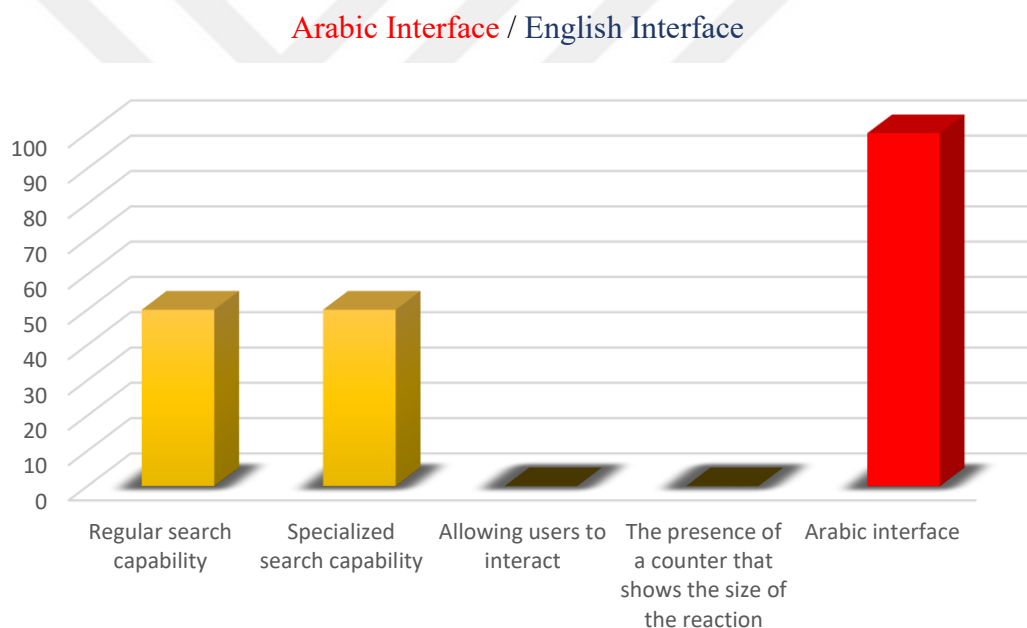
M	Subcategories	English interface		Arabic interface	
		Repetition	Ratio	Repetition	Ratio
1	Regular search capability	45	50	29	100
2	Specialized search capability	45	50	0	0
3	Allowing users to interact	0	0	0	0
4	The presence of a counter that	0	0	0	0
Total		90	100	29	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that the translated interface of the U.S. Department of State website allows for basic search functionality, similar to what is available on all websites and social media platforms, without providing the audience the option to filter or specify their search preferences. Additionally, it does not show the level of interactivity within the site or access rates.

In contrast, the English interface allows users to specify search options within the site, while also permitting traditional simple searches without any restrictions. However, it does not prioritize interactivity within the site, similar to the translated interface, which can be considered one of the site's publication policies.

Figure 4.6 Illustrates The Differences In Interactivity Options Within The Site.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

Results for the Content Category: Regarding the categories of how news related to activating or showcasing digital diplomacy is presented on the U.S. Department of State website, the results obtained from analyzing the Arabic version will be presented, as it is the most clear for the Arab audience.

The following table displays the style of diplomatic messages as they appeared in the publications translated into Arabic on the site.

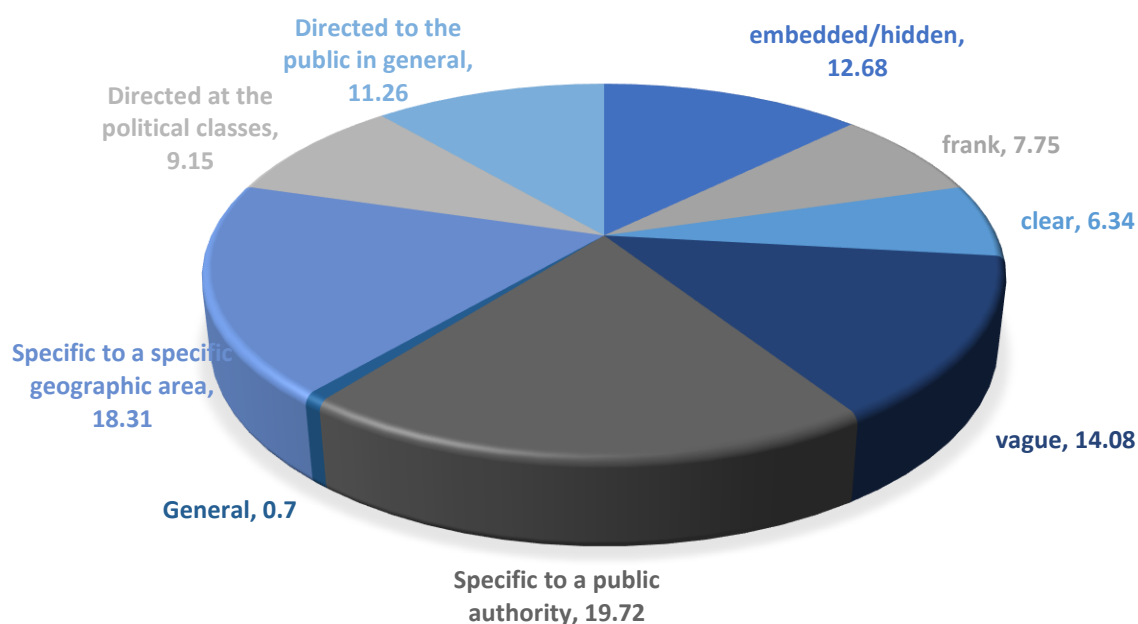
Table 4.7 Presents The Results Of The Diplomatic Message Style Category.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	embedded/hidden	18	12.68
2	frank	11	7.75
3	clear	9	6.34
4	vague	20	14.08
5	Specific to a public authority	28	19.72
6	General	1	0.71
7	Specific to a specific geographic area	26	18.31
8	Directed at the political classes	13	9.15
9	Directed to the public in general	16	11.26
Total		142	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

It is evident from the previous table that those responsible for editing digital diplomatic messages on the U.S. Department of State website initially relied on hidden or embedded messages, with a frequency of such diplomatic messages reaching 18, which corresponds to 12.68%. They also employed ambiguous diplomatic messages that cannot be understood by the audience without in-depth analysis and reading between the lines, with this type of message representing 14.08%. Most diplomatic messages were directed to a specific entity, accounting for 19.72%, while 18.31% of these messages were aimed at a specific geographic area.

Figure 4.7 Illustrates The Style Of Diplomatic Messages Within The Site.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table illustrates the categories of diplomatic message formulation within the U.S. Department of State website.

Table 4.8 Presents The Results Of The Diplomatic Message Formulation Style Category.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Information and fact messages	11	23.04
2	Threatening messages	16	34.04
3	Messages that address emotion	8	17.02
4	Messages that address the mind	8	17.02
5	Other	4	8.88
Total		47	100

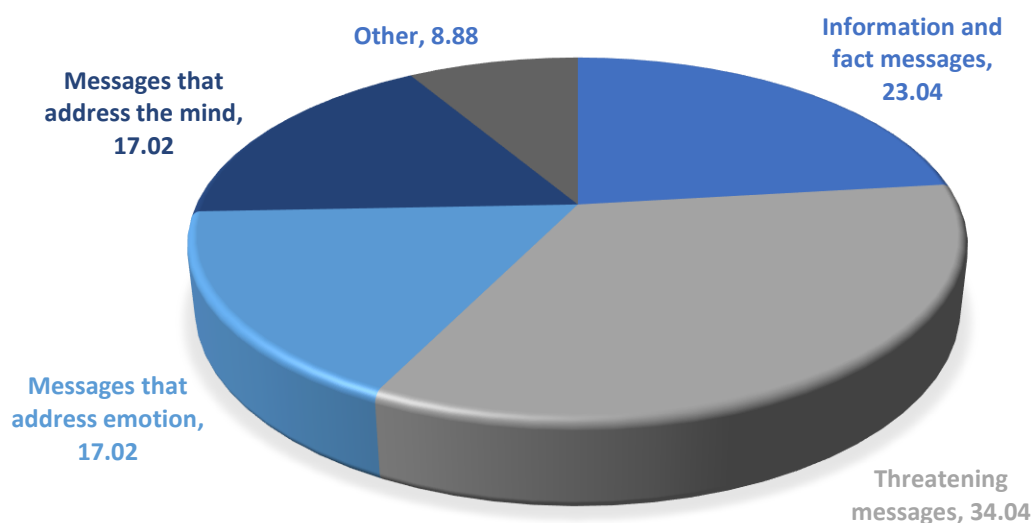
Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

It is evident from the previous table that diplomatic messages with a threatening tone were the most frequently employed on the U.S. Department of State website, with this style of message appearing 16 times, representing 34.04% of the total publications. This aligns closely with the formal diplomacy style adopted by the United States, which

is based on threatening countries and political entities and politically and militarily extorting them.

Following this, diplomatic messages that included narratives of information and facts appeared 11 times, accounting for 23.04% of the total diplomatic messages utilized on the site.

Figure 4.8 Illustrates The Style Of Diplomatic Message Formulation Within The Site.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table illustrates the overall geographic scope of the diplomatic messages displayed on the ministry's website.

Table 4.9 Presents The Results Of The Diplomatic Message Scope Category.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	The world	3	10.34
2	Asia	16	55.17
3	Europe	1	3.45
4	Africa	7	24.14
5	Americas	2	6.89
Total		29	100

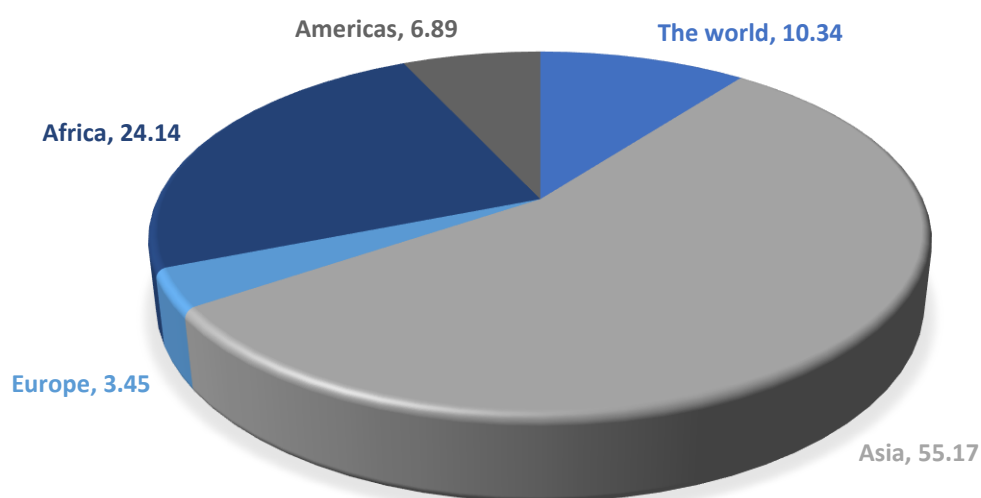
Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

From the previous table, we see that U.S. digital diplomacy primarily targets the peoples of Asia, with the frequency of publications directed at this region being (16), which accounts for (55.17%) of the total sample size.

This can be interpreted in several ways; first, the competitive state that has reached a level of hostility between the United States and the People's Republic of China, which leads American diplomacy to focus on sending messages to the Chinese people and the peoples of Asia in general.

Additionally, U.S. support for "Israel" in the Middle East makes it more interested in Asia than in other countries and regions of the world, especially during its efforts to justify Israeli aggression against Gaza and its actions in Syria and Lebanon.

Figure 4.9 Illustrates The Geographic Scope Of The Diplomatic Messages Within The Site.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the detailed results of the diplomatic messages directed toward Asia.

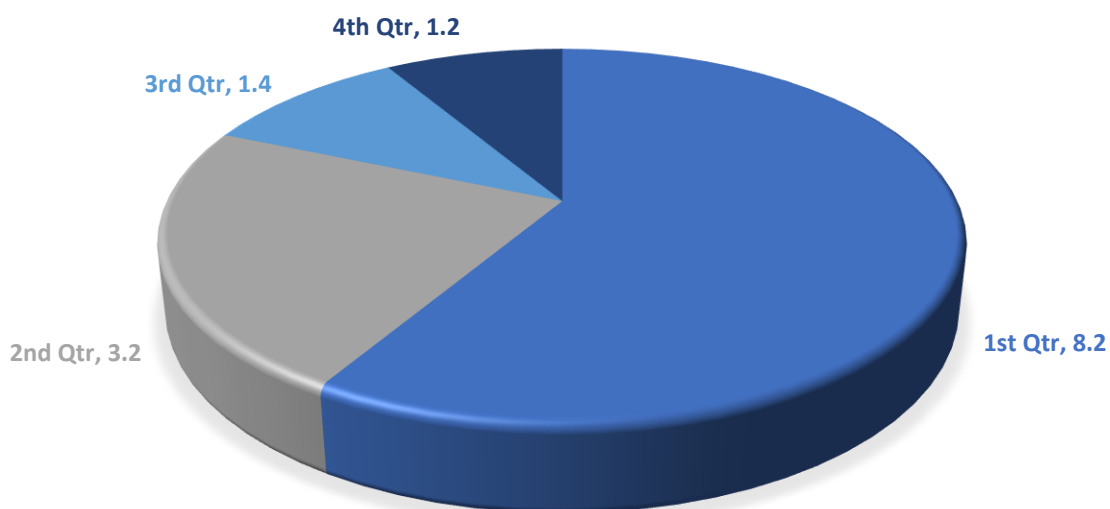
Table 4.10 Displays The Results Of The Category Of Messages Directed To Asia.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Arab world	4	25
2	The Middle East	2	12.5
3	Iran only	4	25
4	Arabian Gulf	1	6.25
5	Southeast Asia	0	0
6	China	5	31.25
Total		16	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

We observe that China is the primary target of American messages included in the digital diplomatic discourse issued by the Department of State through its website, with the frequency of messages directed toward China being 5, which constitutes 31.25% of the total messages directed to Asia.

Figure 4.10 Illustrates The Messages Within The Continent Of Asia.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

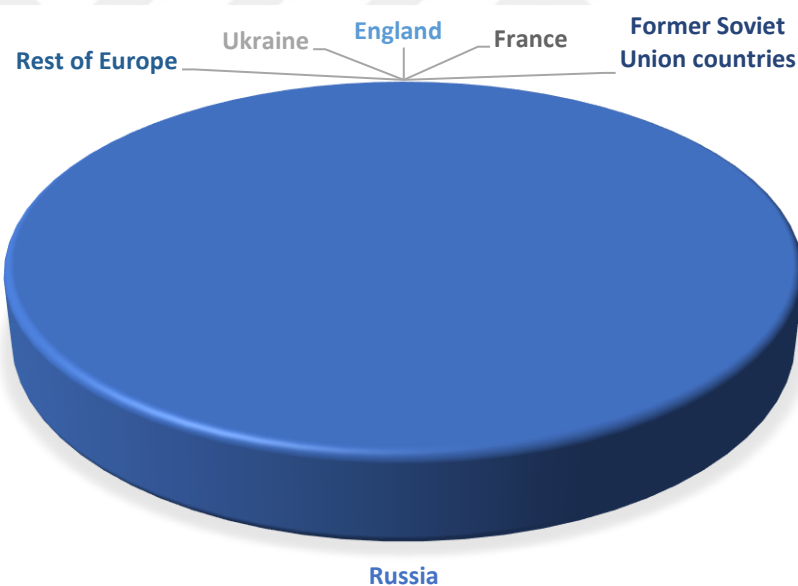
The following table presents the distribution of messages directed to the continent of Europe.

Table 4.11 Displays The Results Of The Category Of Messages Directed To Europe.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Russia	1	100
2	Ukraine	0	0
3	England	0	0
4	Former Soviet Union countries	0	0
5	France	0	0
6	Rest of Europe	0	0
Total		1	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

Figure 4.11 Displays The Results Of The Category Of Messages Directed To Europe



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

It is evident from the table that the Russian Federation is the sole country addressed by the diplomatic message directed toward the continent of Europe.

The following table presents the messages directed to Africa.

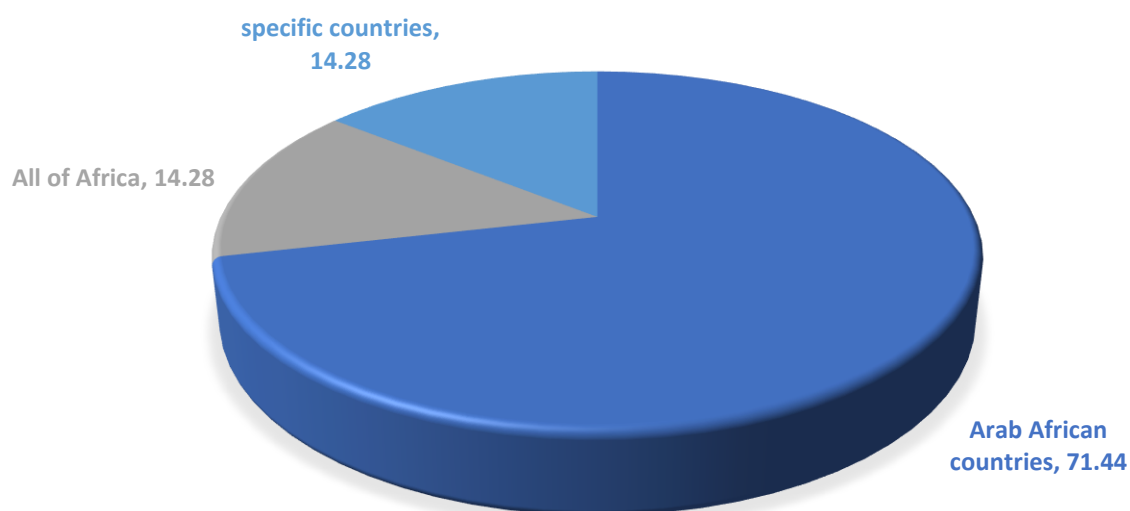
Table 4.12 Displays The Results Of The Category Of Messages Directed To Africa.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Arab African countries	5	71.44
2	All of Africa	1	14.28
3	specific countries	1	14.28
	Total	7	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

From the previous table, we see that the Arab countries located in Africa are the most targeted among the digital diplomatic messages from the United States, with 5 messages out of 7 directed to the continent, representing 71.44% of the total messages.

Figure 4.12 Illustrates The Messages Within The Continent Of Africa.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The following table presents the results related to the category of direction that the diplomatic messages aim to shape among the target audience.

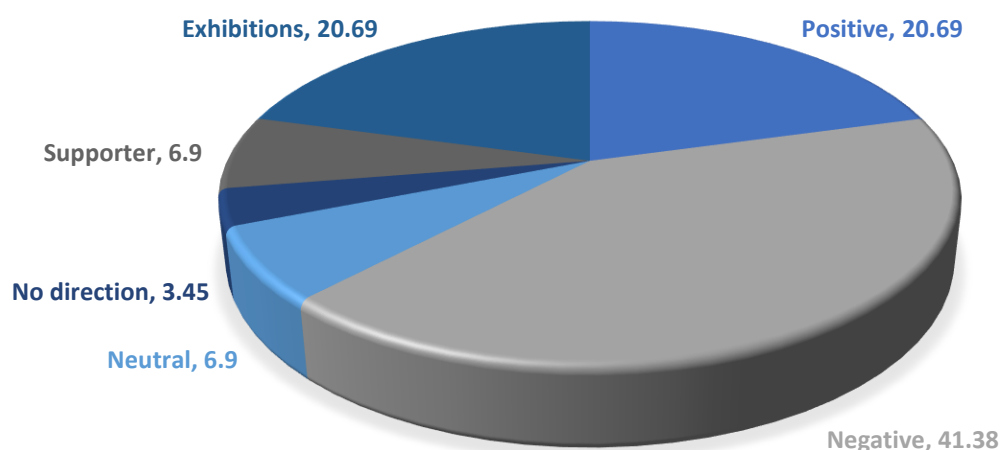
Table 4.13 Displays The Results Of The Category Of Content Direction.

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Positive	6	20.69
2	Negative	12	41.38
3	Neutral	2	6.90
4	No direction	1	3.45
5	Supporter	2	6.90
6	Exhibitions	6	20.69
Total		29	100

Source: Designed by the researcher based on the analytical study data.

The previous table shows that the publications reflecting the digital diplomacy of the U.S. Department of State primarily aimed to generate a negative sentiment among the audience, with a frequency of 12 and a percentage of 41.38%. This can be explained by the fact that part of these messages is directed against China, Iran, and Russia, which represent the global opposing side to U.S. policies. Therefore, American diplomacy, in its various forms, seeks to alienate the audience from the policies of these countries.

Figure 4.13 Illustrates The Direction Of The Diplomatic Messages.



Source: Designed by the researcher based on analytical study data.

In summary, digital transformation has extensively impacted diplomacy and global relations. The application of digital tools and technologies has significantly enhanced countries' ability to communicate and interact with the rest of the world quickly and easily. The United States has played a pivotal role in embracing digital diplomacy and utilizing smart power as a key tool of foreign policy. Through implementing advanced, technologically driven strategies, the United States has managed to advance its diplomacy around the world and achieve its political and economic objectives more easily.

In this respect, digital diplomacy is a key determinant of shaping international influence and impact as well as bolstering both bilateral and multilateral relations. It has now emerged as an integral facet of U.S. foreign policy, leveraging digital technology and social media to engage countries and communicate directly with people, thereby increasing America's political and cultural influence worldwide. Digital diplomacy has strengthened the U.S. administration's ability to communicate directly with governments and people globally by utilizing platforms like Twitter (now "X"), Facebook, and YouTube, enabling U.S. officials to communicate both rapidly and efficiently compared to conventional practices.

The studies reveal that China was the primary subject of U.S. digital foreign policy discussions during the study period, highlighting China's significance in America's strategy. The studies further revealed America's use of ambiguous messages within its digital foreign policy that demand profound interpretation and reading between the lines to grasp, generating international political discussion about the reality and intentions behind these American digital communications or declarations.

Additionally, we identified some shortcomings in U.S. digital diplomacy, such as the limited use of visual images in publications issued on the U.S. Department of State's website, particularly in the Arabic-translated version, which was utterly devoid of images. Even the English version did not utilize images significantly, as we observed that 66.67% of English publications during the period from September 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024, lacked images.

With the return of U.S. President Donald Trump to the White House for a new term extending until the end of 2028, and given his reputation as one of the most interactive figures in international politics online and on social media, it is expected that the United States will continue to develop its digital strategies and use smart power as a fundamental part of its foreign policy in the contemporary digital age.

CONCLUSION, RESULTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION:

The focus of this study was to analyze the digital diplomacy as a modern tool of the soft power in the foreign policy using as a case study the United States. In particular, the thesis looked into how the U.S. government exploited digital platforms (social media and other internet communication channels) to forge the views of the global public, promote American values and pursue foreign policy aims in the years 2011 – 2024. This included not only examining why these efforts were deployed as a strategic intentional strategy, but it looked at the effectiveness, opportunities and challenges of this kind of diplomatic practice to be deployed.

The central research question was: **How is digital diplomacy utilized as soft power in states' foreign policy, particularly by the United States between 2011 and 2024?**

This guiding question sought to understand how digital communication strategies have been integrated into American foreign policy, whether they reflect core principles of soft power, and how these practices represent broader shifts in global diplomacy.

Through content analysis of U.S. Department of State digital platforms, the results of the findings of this study strongly support the first hypothesis, which posited that the United States employs digital diplomacy as a deliberate soft power strategy to influence foreign publics and advance its values, culture, and foreign policy goals. Through content analysis of U.S. Department of State digital platforms, particularly its social media presence, the study identified a consistent and intentional use of digital tools to project key American values such as democracy, freedom, human rights, and innovation. These messages were not incidental; they were embedded within a broader communication framework aligned with U.S. strategic interests.

During politically sensitive periods—such as the Arab Spring and the post-pandemic era—the timing, themes, and framing of digital content suggest a clear effort to engage foreign audiences, shape perceptions, and reinforce U.S. leadership in global discourse. This strategic messaging confirms the use of digital diplomacy as a soft power tool designed not only to present the U.S. positively but also to advance its cultural image and diplomatic priorities in a more interactive and far-reaching manner than traditional diplomacy alone allows.

Regarding the second hypothesis—which proposed that digital diplomacy can serve not only for attraction and engagement but also for strategic pressure and ideological framing—the research findings strongly support this view through the U.S. case. The study reveals that U.S. digital diplomacy goes beyond simple outreach. It often embeds ideological messaging by presenting American values as universal while implicitly contrasting them with adversaries. The strategic use of multimedia visuals, regionally tailored messages, and culturally specific language all contribute to shaping not only engagement, but perception. These patterns were particularly visible during moments of global crisis, where digital platforms were used to both reassure allies and apply subtle policy pressure, confirming the hypothesis in practice.

It also supported the third hypothesis. Digital diplomacy in turn greatly depended in its reception and effectiveness on ethical and democratic alignment of messaging. Periods of coherent, transparent and consistent digital American messaging with liberal democratic principles were periods of more traction and credibility of digital diplomacy to global audiences. While they made these efforts, inconsistencies both in foreign policy stances and (at times) in ethically ambiguous rhetoric undermined them. In addition, the cyberattack dangers, disinformation and manipulation of content in the digital diplomatic space reinforce the vulnerabilities of it.

In sum, the study concludes that **digital diplomacy has evolved from an experimental practice to a core component of U.S. foreign policy**. This has allowed the U.S. to sustain a continuous and ever changing presence in international discourse, provide an alternative to traditional diplomatic barriers and allow direct contact with global audiences in realtime. It is not simply a minor offshoot of traditional diplomacy, it's a disruptive force, rewriting the rules by which influence, credibility and policy advocacy happens in digital times.

This is not however without weakness. Cyber threats, misinformation campaigns and ethical questions about surveillance, manipulation and selective transparency of digital diplomacy mean that it potentially falls into the category of 'cyber-immunity'. The precise outcomes of digital diplomatic projects are difficult to quantify because of the lack of direct measurement tools for foreign public opinion (public polling or sentiment analysis), among other reasons.

Overall, the U.S. case from 2011—2024 demonstrates that digital diplomacy is a strong soft power mechanism to perform all three functions of shaping publics abroad to align with national interest; engaging publics, globally, in diplomacy and thereby improving trust in local governments and citizens, particularly in the developing world; and shaping foreign (non U.S.) attitudes. However, unless there is consistency of ethics, clarity of strategy and adaptability of technology its effectiveness continues. If digital diplomacy is to remain a credible and influential force in international relations however, future digital diplomacy will need to balance innovation with transparency and narrative with accountability.

STUDY RESULTS:

In addition to the above, the study reached the following conclusions:

- The forms and mechanisms of diplomacy have varied according to human development and its means, shifting essentially from direct diplomacy, which relies on formal meetings, conferences, and international gatherings, to indirect diplomacy using modern communication tools. The world is now managed through the internet, with rapid communications, direct stances, urgent negotiations, and quick results.
- The contemporary digital revolution has contributed to the development, facilitation, and activation of diplomatic work, as countries can express their views and positions that serve their foreign policies and disseminate them rapidly through various technological and digital means. This approach has shortened the time required to convey foreign policy and shape the image that needs to be promoted.
- One of the significant drawbacks of digital diplomacy is that modern communication tools have eliminated all aspects of secrecy and privacy for countries in the international community, making the objectives, means, and tools of countries more exposed. This situation could be exploited by one state to harm another.
- It has been shown that international diplomatic relations, in light of the spread of digital means, are undergoing a restructuring phase and the development of many mechanisms and conventions. The conditions that were required for traditional diplomatic envoys are no longer sufficient for selecting a diplomatic envoy in the digital age, particularly in terms of complete knowledge of technological techniques and modern communication methods, in addition to the traditional qualifications that members of the diplomatic mission must possess, such as higher

degrees, competencies, professional experience, and decorum. It has become essential for diplomatic envoys to possess extensive technical expertise in dealing with technology, as well as qualities such as self-control and the ability to avoid taking positions impulsively that can spread online and be difficult to retract later.

- Digital diplomacy has succeeded in replacing traditional diplomacy in many topics, especially those related to direct communication between heads of state and their senior officials. These communications can lead to the conclusion of agreements, the resolution of disputes, the clarification of viewpoints, or the removal of misunderstandings regarding specific issues, all in the fastest time, with the least effort, and at the lowest cost.

- Mechanisms of soft power play a pivotal role in the foreign policies of modern states, effectively contributing to enhancing their position on international issues, resolving conflicts, and the political values they seek to achieve, as well as their ability to disseminate their educational models and economic initiatives.

- As noted in the research, the United States is considered one of the leading countries in using digital diplomacy as a tool to enhance its soft power, to promote its international interests, and build a positive image on the global stage.

With the anticipated return of President Donald Trump to the White House for a second presidential term, it is expected that American digital diplomacy will develop and become more effective, especially given Trump's notable technological and electronic activity. This leads us to predict the evolution of digital diplomacy as a soft power in U.S. foreign policy in the coming years.

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the results, we recommend the following:

- In light of the growing importance of digital diplomacy, countries must carefully select their representatives and diplomatic envoys. The traditional conditions for diplomatic envoys are no longer sufficient in the digital age, as diplomatic envoy needs to possess extensive technical expertise in handling technology and social media platforms. Therefore, we recommend enhancing the capabilities of diplomatic corps members in technical fields by subjecting them to training courses and seminars to improve their skills in using digital diplomacy tools and methods.

- It is necessary to activate official platforms in multiple languages that embody the state's digital diplomacy, to convey the culture of that state, its public policy, and its perspective towards

other peoples. This will strengthen international relations and make the world a more connected and cohesive place.

- There is a need to benefit from the concept and tools of digital diplomacy and make it a means of communication and interaction between the national government and the local community, by creating or developing national platforms and websites that serve as a communication channel between citizens and their state. This can enhance democracy, improve government services, and expedite responses to popular demands.

- It is essential to clarify the statements or publications issued by the U.S. administration within the framework of its digital diplomacy, which will help reduce political tensions that may arise from misunderstandings of these statements.

- All nations of the world would be advantaged by leveraging the capability of American digital diplomacy by building digital diplomacy tools, integrating technology in the activities of the diplomatic corps, and keeping every country's websites active to present a good image about the state and form effective foreign relations in the global world.

APPENDICES

Analysis Form

First: Categories of Form

Website Design

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Horizontal networks		
2	Vertical networks		
3	Rectangular grid		
4	Random		
5	More than one model		
Total			

General color scheme

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	bicolor		
2	tricolor		
3	Tetrachromatic		
Total			

Writing colors

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	white		
2	black		
3	blue		
4	red		
Total			

Address system

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	wide pontoon		
2	normal		
3	underlined		
4	hyperlink		
Total			

the pictures

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Personality		
2	Objectivity		
3	Colorful		
4	Nothing		
Total			

Interactive within the site

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Regular search capability		
2	Specialized search capability		
3	Allowing users to interact		
4	The presence of a counter that shows the size of the		
Total			

Content categories

Diplomatic message style within the site

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Embedded/hidden		
2	Frank		
3	Clear		
4	Vague		
5	Specific to a public authority		
6	General		
7	Specific to a specific geographic area		
8	Directed at the political classes		
9	Directed to the public in general		
Total			

Drafting diplomatic messages

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Information and fact messages		
2	Threatening messages		
3	Messages that address emotion		

4	Messages that address the mind		
5	Other		
Total			

Geographical scope of diplomatic messages

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	The world		
2	Asia		
3	Europe		
4	Africa		
5	Americas		
Total			

Messages to Asia

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Arab world		
2	The Middle East		
3	Iran only		
4	Arabian Gulf		
5	Southeast Asia		
6	China		
Total			

Messages to Europe

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Russia		
2	Ukraine		
3	England		
4	Former Soviet Union countries		
5	France		
6	Rest of Europe		
Total			

Messages to Africa

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Arab African countries		

2	All of Africa		
3	specific countries		
Total			

The trend included in diplomatic messages

M	Subcategories	Repetition	Ratio
1	Positive		
2	Negative		
3	Neutral		
4	No direction		
5	Supporter		
6	Exhibitions		
Total			

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Yumuşak Güç Aracı Olarak Dijital Diplomasinin Dış Politikada Kullanımı (Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Örneği) 2011-2024 Yılından İtibaren Amerikan Diplomasisine Yönelik Analitik Bir İnceleme

Devletlerin birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerinde benimsedikleri diplomasi biçimleri ile hedef ve politikalarını gerçekleştirmeye yönelik yumuşak güç kullanımı farklılık göstermektedir. Dünya genelinde yaşanan kayda değer teknolojik gelişmeler doğrultusunda, özellikle dijital diplomasi gibi yeni diplomasi türleri ortaya çıkmış ve bu durum, devletler arasındaki geleneksel diplomatik etkileşim çerçevesinde önemli bir dönüşümü beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu çalışma, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin dijital diplomasi araçlarını uluslararası arenadaki etkisini ve nüfuzunu artırmak amacıyla nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir.

Bu çalışma, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin sosyal medya ve modern teknolojiler aracılığıyla yabancı halklar ve hükümetlerle etkili bir biçimde etkileşim kurmak amacıyla benimsediği yenilikçi dijital diplomasi stratejilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın amaçlarına ulaşmak için, diplomasinin tarihsel gelişimini ve geçirdiği evreleri açıklamakla birlikte Amerikan diplomasisinin tarihsel bağlamı ve evrimsel arka planını ortaya koymak amacıyla tarihsel yöntem kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, diplomasi ve yumuşak güç konularını ele alan belge ve çalışmaların incelenmesi yoluyla eleştirel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Dış politikada dijital diplomasinin yumuşak güç aracı olarak nasıl kullanıldığını ortaya koymak amacıyla, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın resmî internet sitesinin içeriği analiz edilerek içerik analizi yöntemi uygulanmıştır.

Amerikan modeli üzerinden yapılan analiz yoluyla, dijital diplomasinin küresel ölçekte Amerikan değerlerini ve çıkarlarını yaymak amacıyla nasıl bir yumuşak güç aracına dönüştüğü ve bu yaklaşımın diğer ülkelerin politikaları üzerindeki etkisi ortaya konmuştur. Çalışmada ayrıca, bu yaklaşımın beraberinde getirdiği yanlış bilgilendirme riskleri, mahremiyetin korunması ve insan hakları gibi konular dâhil olmak üzere karşılaşılan zorluklar ve sunulan fırsatlar da ele alınmıştır.

Genel olarak bu çalışma, dijital diplomasinin dış politikayı etkileme aracı olarak kullanılmasının, uluslararası arenadaki etkisini artırmak isteyen devletler için önemli bir

stratejik gelişimi temsil ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, dijital diplomatik iletişimde teknolojinin etkin kullanımının, şeffaflık ve güvenilirliğin sağlanması ile dengelenmesinin gerekliliğine de vurgu yapılmıştır.

Diplomasi ve uluslararası ilişkiler tarihsel olarak birlikte evrilmiş olup, uluslar siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal çıkarlarını gerçekleştirmek amacıyla stratejik etkileşimlerde bulunmuşlardır. Bu ilişkiler dinamik bir yapıya sahiptir ve ittifakları ile devletler arası bağlantıları şekillendiren küresel gelişmelerden etkilenmektedir. Toplumların giderek daha karmaşık hâle gelmesiyle birlikte, medya, sivil toplum ve kültürel figürler gibi devlet dışı aktörlerin resmî diplomatik çabalara destek sunduğu gayriresmî diplomasi biçimi ortaya çıkmıştır. Teknolojik ilerlemeler, geleneksel diplomatik uygulamalarda köklü dönüşümlere yol açmış; pek çok diplomatik süreç, etkinlik ve erişilebilirliği artırmak amacıyla dijital platformlara taşınmıştır. Bu bağlamda, kültürel, sanatsal ve zorlayıcı olmayan yöntemlere dayanan yumuşak güç, uluslararası düzeyde etki yaratmada giderek daha fazla önem kazanmıştır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, özellikle 2011 ile 2024 yılları arasındaki dönemde, Arap Baharı ve Rusya'nın yeniden güç kazanması gibi önemli küresel gelişmelere karşı diplomatik mekanizmalarını uyarlayarak dijital diplomasinin etkin bir örneği olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma, dijital diplomasinin dış politikada bir yumuşak güç aracı olarak nasıl işlediğini incelemeyi; bu yaklaşımın potansiyelini, karşılaştığı zorlukları ve hem hükümetler hem de kamuoyu üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, aşağıdaki hedeflere ulaşmayı amaçlamaktadır:

- Dijital diplomasi kavramını ve bu kavramla ilişkili diğer terimleri ve kavramları açıklığa kavuşturmak.
- Dijital devrimin diplomasi üzerindeki etkilerini ve çıkarımlarını tanımlamak.
- Hükümetlerin diğer ülkelerle ilişki kurarken dijital teknolojilerden yararlanmak için kullandıkları yöntemleri açıklamak.
- Hükümetlerin diğer insanlar arasındaki imajlarını şekillendirmede dijital teknolojileri kullanmak için kullandıkları stratejileri aydınlatmak.
- ABD'nin dış politikasında yumuşak güç olarak dijital diplomasiyi kullanma deneyimini analiz etmek.

Bu çalışma, üç ana hipotezi öne sürmektedir:

1. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, dijital diplomasiyi yabancı kamuoyunu etkilemek ve değerlerini, kültürünü ve dış politika hedeflerini tanıtmak için kasıtlı bir yumuşak güç stratejisi olarak kullanmaktadır.
2. Dijital diplomasi yalnızca bir çekicilik ve etkileşim aracı olarak işlev görmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda uluslararası krizler veya siyasi çatışmalar sırasında stratejik baskı, ideolojik çerçeveleme veya dolaylı etki unsurlarını içerebilecek bir mekanizma olarak da hareket edebilir.
3. Bir yumuşak güç biçimi olarak dijital diplomasinin etkinliği, küresel çapta temsil etmeye çalıştığı demokratik değerlerle olan etik bütünlüğüne, şeffaflığına ve tutarlılığına bağlıdır.

Kapsamlı bir akademik çalışma sunmak ve belirlenen araştırma problemini ele almak amacıyla, bu çalışma beş bölüme ayrılacaktır.

Birinci Bölüm, çalışmanın temalarının kavramsal çerçevesini inceleyecek; diplomasi kavramının tanımlanması ve dijital diplomasinin özünün anlaşılması da dâhil olmak üzere, ülkeler arasındaki sürekli iletişimin önemi, kullanılan çeşitli araçlar ve devletler arası ilişkilerin düzenlenmesi ve yönetilmesinde diplomatik misyonların merkezi rolüne vurgu yapacaktır.

Bu çalışma, "diplomasi" teriminin 17. yüzyıl ortalarında ortaya çıkışından itibaren evrimini incelemekte ve bu terimin yalnızca müzakerelere odaklanmaktan, dış ilişkileri yönetme konusunda daha geniş bir anlayışa nasıl kaydığını tartışmaktadır. Uluslararası hukuk akademisyenleri, müzakere, siyasi süreçler ve ulusal çıkarların korunması gibi çeşitli boyutları kapsayan farklı tanımlar önermişlerdir. Bölüm, aynı zamanda diplomasi teriminin dilsel tanımını ve bu terimin Yunanca'dan Latince'ye, ardından Avrupa dillerine ve nihayetinde Arapçaya nasıl evrildiğini inceleyerek, kelimenin kökenleri ve tarihsel süreç içinde sahip olduğu çoklu anlamlara ışık tutmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, diplomasi tarihinin gelişimini, antik çağda Yakın Doğu'daki imparatorluklar ve devletler arasındaki ilişkilerden, Yunanlar ve Romalılar dönemine, ardından Milletler Cemiyeti ve Birleşmiş Milletler'in kurulmasıyla modern döneme kadar incelemektedir. Kamu diplomasisi kavramını ve dış politika hedeflerine ulaşmak için dış

kamuoyunu etkilemedeki önemini tanıtmaktadır. İki taraflı ve çok taraflı diplomasi, gizli ve kamu diplomasisi, barışçıl ve şiddet içeren diplomasi gibi farklı diplomasi türlerinin yanı sıra, uluslararası örgüt diplomasisi, kriz diplomasisi, psikolojik diplomasi ve popüler ya da medya diplomasisi gibi diğer türler de tartışılmaktadır.

Bölüm, dijital diplomasiye odaklanmakta, bunun artan önemini ve uluslararası iletişimlerin evrilen peyzajını vurgulamaktadır. Dijital diplomasi, dış politika hedeflerine ulaşmak için sosyal medyanın kullanımı da dahil olmak üzere farklı açılardan tanımlanmaktadır. Dijital diplomasiğin amaçları, çevrimiçi izleyicilerle iletişimi sürdürmek, kilit paydaşları etkilemek, bir ülkenin imajını iyileştirmek ve ideolojik rakiplere karşı durmak gibi hedefleri içermektedir. Dijital diplomasiğin ortaya çıkmasının ardındaki sebepler incelenmekte olup, bunlar arasında dijital devrim ve politikacıların ülkelerinin imajını güçlendirme arzusu ile dijital diplomasiğin sunduğu önemli avantajlardan yararlanma isteği bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, dijital diplomasiğin belirleyicileri arasında yenilik ve yaratıcılık kapasitesi, araştırma seviyesi, katılım düzeyi ve vatandaşların farkındalık seviyesi gibi unsurlar tartışılmakta; dijital diplomasiğin bazı olumsuz yönleri de ele alınmaktadır. Bu olumsuz yönler arasında güvenlik riskleri, internetin kötüye kullanımı, olumsuz haberlerin hızla yayılması ve kimlik sahteciliğinin kolaylığı gibi faktörler yer almaktadır.

İkinci Bölüm, dijital devrimin diplomasiğin üzerindeki etkisini incelemeye adanmış olup, dijital devrim kavramı ve sosyal iletişimle olan ilişkisi ele alındıktan sonra dijital diplomasiğin evrimi incelenecektir. Dijital devrim, diplomasiyi de içeren hayatın çeşitli alanlarında eş benzeri görülmemiş değişiklikler getirmiştir. İnternetin ve dijital teknolojinin yükselişiyle birlikte bilgiye erişim ve bilginin paylaşımı önemli ölçüde kolaylaşmış ve hızlanmış, bu da hükümetlerin ve diplomatların hedef kitlelerle etkileşim biçimlerini köklü şekilde dönüştürmüştür. Bu dönüşüm, yalnızca günlük işleyişle sınırlı kalmayıp, yaşam tarzlarını ve sosyal ilişkileri de etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda, sosyal medya çağı ön çıkan araçlarından biri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak, bu teknolojilerin yanlış kullanımı, uluslararası ilişkileri etkileyebilecek dezenformasyonun yayılması gibi olumsuz sonuçlara yol açabilmektedir.

Dijital diplomasi, dış politikanın modern bir dalı olarak, ulusların uluslararası arenadaki hedeflerine ulaşmasında teknolojiden yararlanmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımın başlıca

faidaları arasında; Twitter gibi araçlar aracılığıyla hedef kitleyle doğrudan iletişimi güçlendirmek—nitelikli bir örnek olarak, eski ABD Başkanı Donald Trump’ın kamuoyuna yönelik iletişimde bu platformu etkin biçimde kullanması gösterilebilir—, maliyetleri azaltmak—örneğin Danimarka’nın dijital büyükelçilik uygulamaları—ve daha geniş bir kitleye ulaşmak—ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı’nın 11 farklı dilde tweet atan çok dilli sosyal medya varlığı buna örnektir—yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, İsviçre’nin “Diplomacy E-Day” gibi girişimleri, dijital eğitimlerin diplomatları krizlere daha etkin şekilde hazırladığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Faydalarına rağmen, dijital diplomasi önemli zorluklarla da karşı karşıyadır. Siber saldırılar, dijital platformların güvenliği açısından ciddi bir tehdit oluşturmaya devam etmektedir. Ayrıca, sahte haberlerin yaygınlaşması siyasi ve diplomatik krizleri tetikleyebilirken, teknolojiye erişimdeki eşitsizlikler küresel dijital uçurumları gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu zorlukların aşılabilmesi, güçlü siber güvenlik önlemlerinin geliştirilmesini ve diplomatların dijital araçları etkin biçimde kullanabilecek donanımına sahip olmalarını gerektirmektedir.

Dijital diplomasi kapsamında ortaya çıkan yeni alanlar, çeşitlilikleri ve etkileri bakımından dikkat çekicidir. Siber güvenlik diplomasisi, artan siber saldırılara karşı ülkelerin iş birliği içinde mücadele etmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Dijital hizmet diplomasisi, kesintisiz devlet hizmetleri sunarak stratejik ilişkileri güçlendirmektedir. Veri diplomasisi ise, büyük veri analitiğinden yararlanarak ulusal çıkarlar doğrultusunda daha bilinçli kararlar alınmasını sağlamaktadır. Öte yandan, Danimarka’nın Google ve Apple gibi teknoloji şirketlerine büyükelçi ataması örneğinde görüldüğü üzere, dijital büyükelçilikler fiziksel diplomatik misyonları bulunmayan ülkeler için maliyet etkin çözümler ve uzaktan hizmet sunma imkânı sağlamaktadır.

Bu gelişmeler, teknolojinin modern uluslararası ilişkilerin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline geldiğini vurgulamaktadır. Ancak, bu dijital dönüşümün beraberinde getirdiği riskleri en aza indirebilmek için sürece temkinli ve bilinçli bir şekilde yaklaşmak büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Üçüncü Bölüm, Amerikan diplomasisinde yumuşak güç kavramını analiz edecektir. Bu bağlamda, yumuşak gücün niteliği ve aktörleri ele alınacak, ardından Amerikan diplomasisinin yumuşak güç politikalarından nasıl etkilendiği incelenecektir.

Yumuşak güç, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin dünya çapındaki etkisini zorlayıcı askerî veya ekonomik yöntemlere başvurmaksızın genişletmek amacıyla başvurduğu en önemli stratejilerden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu yaklaşım; kültür, eğitim, medya, siyasi değerler ve dış politika aracılığıyla ikna ve cezbetmeye dayanmaktadır.

Yumuşak güç, bir devletin arzu ettiği hedefleri başkalarına zor kullanmaksızın benimsetme ve onları etkileme yetisi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu terim, Joseph Nye tarafından ortaya atılmış olup; kültürel değerler ve meşru dış politikalar yoluyla cezbetme ve ikna etme yeteneği olarak tanımlanmıştır. Yumuşak güç, bir devletin olumlu bir imaj oluşturmalarını ve diğer aktörleri zahmetsizce etkilemesini sağlamaktadır.

Amerikan yumuşak gücünün bileşenleri çeşitli unsurlardan oluşmaktadır. Kültür, bu güç yapısında önemli bir rol oynamakta; Hollywood filmleri, Amerikan müziği ve yaşam tarzı, ülkenin değerlerini ve ilkelerini küresel ölçekte yansıtmaktadır. Eğitim ise bir diğer temel sütunu oluşturmaktadır. Harvard ve Stanford gibi Amerikan üniversiteleri, her yıl binlerce uluslararası öğrenciyi cezbetmekte; bu öğrenciler mezuniyet sonrasında kültürel elçiler gibi hareket ederek Amerikan değer ve ideallerini dünya çapında yaymaktadır.

Medya aynı zamanda, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin dış politikasını ve kültürel etkisini pekiştiren mesajları ileten güçlü bir araçtır. Facebook, Twitter ve CNN gibi platformlar, hem yurt içinde hem de uluslararası alanda kamuoyunu şekillendirmede vazgeçilmez hale gelmiştir. Ayrıca, demokrasi ve insan hakları gibi siyasi değerlerin teşvik edilmesi, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin güvenilirliğini artırmış ve onu küresel barış ile eşitliğin savunucusu konumuna getirmiştir.

Amerikan dış politikası, barışçıl bir birlikte yaşama ve uluslararası normlara saygıyı vurgulamaktadır; bu da ülkenin imajını ve etkisini güçlendirmektedir. İnsani projeler gibi kamu diplomasisi ve ekonomik kalkınma alanlarındaki girişimlerle birlikte, uluslararası ilişkileri teşvik etmeyi ve Amerika'nın küresel refah konusundaki taahhüdünü vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Amerikan yumuşak gücünün pratik örnekleri arasında dijital diplomasi kullanımı yer almaktadır. Örneğin, 2011 yılında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, İran'daki vatandaşlarla doğrudan iletişim kurmak ve kültürel başarı hikayelerini paylaşmak amacıyla sanal bir büyükelçilik açmıştır. Diğer dikkat çekici bir girişim ise Küba'daki

"ZunZuneo" projesiydi; burada ABD, rejime karşı siyasi aktivizmi teşvik etmek amacıyla Twitter'a benzer bir sosyal medya platformu geliştirmiştir.

Bu başarılarına rağmen, Amerikan yumuşak gücü, itibarını zedeleyen dezenformasyon kampanyaları, siber güvenlik tehditleri ve bazı muhafazakar toplumlar tarafından Amerikan kültürel değerlerinin reddedilmesi gibi zorluklarla karşı karşıyadır. Bu sorunları ele almak amacıyla, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri yapay zeka gibi ileri teknolojilere yatırım yapmakta ve küresel etkisini sürdürmek için stratejilerini sürekli olarak gözden geçirmektedir.

Yumuşak güç, yalnızca bir diplomatik araç değil, zorlayıcı yöntemler yerine çekicilik ve ikna yoluyla hedeflerine ulaşma yeteneğini yansıtan kapsamlı bir stratejidir. Bu strateji, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin küresel düzeydeki etkisini ve gücünü şekillendiren temel unsurlardan biridir.

Dördüncü Bölüm, dijital diplomasisinin Amerikan dış politikaları üzerindeki etkisini, belirli bulgulara ulaşan analitik bir inceleme yoluyla araştıracaktır.

Bu çalışma, analitik çalışmalar için yapılandırılmış bir yaklaşımı takip etmekte olup, bilimsel standartlara uyarak çalışmanın temel odağından sapmaktan kaçınmaktadır. Uygun bir araştırma yöntemi seçmekte, hedef popülasyonu belirlemekte, temsil edici bir örneklem oluşturmakta ve etkili araştırma araçları tasarlamakta; bu araçların bilimsel geçerliliğini ve güvenilirliğini sağlayarak doğruluk ve güvenilirlik temin etmektedir.

Bu çalışma, dijital diplomasiinin dış politika üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmek için tanımlayıcı analitik bir yöntem kullanmaktadır. Bu yöntem, sosyal bilimler ve siyaset çalışmaları için uygun olup, olguları ve bunların etkileyen faktörlerini kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemektedir. Veri toplamak ve analiz etmek için içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmakta olup, form ve içerik kategori modeli izlenmektedir. Analiz, dijital diplomasiinin ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın web sitesinde nasıl uygulandığını keşfetmek amacıyla niteliksel görüşleri ve sınırlı niceliksel verileri birleştirmektedir.

Çalışma popülasyonu, 1 Eylül 2024 ile 30 Eylül 2024 tarihleri arasında ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın web sitesinde yayımlanan yayınları kapsamaktadır. Yüksek etkinlik nedeniyle temsili bir örneklem seçilmiştir. Çok dilli içerikler nedeniyle zorluklar yaşanmış, bu nedenle İngilizce metinler yapısal kategoriler için, Arapça versiyonlar ise içerik kategorileri için analiz edilmiştir. Son örneklem, 45 öge, 29 iki dilli açıklama ve 16

yalnızca İngilizce yayın içermektedir. Geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik testleri için beş yayın pilot örneklem olarak kullanılmıştır.

Bu çalışma, nicel ve nitel verileri toplamak için özel bir içerik analiz formu geliştirmiştir. Form, Arapça ve İngilizce versiyonlar arasında tutarlılığı sağlamak amacıyla, form ve içerik temelinde kategorilerle tasarlanmıştır. Geçerlilik, medya eğitmenleriyle yapılan görüşmeler ve tutarlılığı doğrulamak için on gün sonra pilot örneklemle yapılan testlerle sağlanmıştır. Formun uygunluğu, geri bildirimler ve pilot örneklemle yapılan testlerle doğrulanmıştır.

İki analiz arasındaki uyum değeri 0,779 olarak bulunmuş, bu da yüksek bir uyum düzeyine işaret etmektedir. Katsayının 1'e ne kadar yakın olması, uyum düzeyinin o kadar yüksek olduğunu gösterir; bu da formun yüksek bir güvenilirlik derecesine sahip olduğunu ve dolayısıyla mevcut çalışmada kullanılabileceğini önermektedir.

Analiz sırasında aşağıdaki istatistiksel ve matematiksel ilişkiler kullanılmıştır:

- Frekanslar
- Yüzdelere
- Uyum katsayısı analizi

Analitik Çalışmanın Sonuçları

ABD Dışışleri Bakanlığı'nın web sitesindeki yayınları analiz etmek için dijital diplomasinin ABD dış ilişkilerindeki rolünü değerlendiren bir araştırma aracı kullanılmıştır. İngilizce versiyon daha gelişmişken, çevrilmiş versiyonun multimedya öğeleri eksikti. Site, iş arama, eğitim bilgisi ve mali faaliyet izleme gibi benzersiz hizmetler sunarak, gayri resmi diploması ile ekonomik ve eğitimsel diplomasıye destek olmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, modern diplomatik yönetim teorileriyle uyumlu olup, ABD diplomasisinin genel etkisini artırmakta ve geleneksel diplomatik çabalarda yenilikler sağlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, ABD Dışışleri Bakanlığı'nın web sitesinin içeriğini bir içerik analiz formu kullanarak incelemektedir. Sonuçlar İngilizce olarak sunulmuş ve Arapça versiyonla karşılaştırılmıştır. Tablo, web sitesinin tasarım kategorilerine ilişkin sonuçları göstermektedir. Çalışmanın benzersiz doğası vurgulanmaktadır:

Veriler, ABD Dışışleri Bakanlığı web sitesinin İngilizce ve Arapça arayüzleri arasında özellikle tasarım ve sunum açısından önemli bir fark olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Arapça arayüz, tüm çevrilmiş yayınlar (yüzde 100) için üç renkli bir şemaya (mavi, siyah ve beyaz) dayanmaktadır; bu da editörlerin tasarımı değiştirmesine olanak tanımayan, önceden belirlenmiş bir otomatik çeviri şablonunun kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Buna karşılık, İngilizce arayüz, yayınlarının yüzde 95,56'sında yer alan dört renkli bir şema (siyah, mavi, beyaz ve altın) kullanmaktadır; bu şema, Bakanlık logosunun renklerinden ilham alınarak oluşturulmuştur. Logo içinde bulunan kırmızı ve yeşil gibi renkler, resmi bir tonun korunabilmesi amacıyla web sitesi arayüzünde kullanılmamaktadır.

Metinle ilgili olarak, her iki arayüz de genellikle beyaz arka planda siyah metin kullanmakta, bu da basitlik ve okunabilirlik sağlamaktadır. Ancak, İngilizce arayüz, bağlantılar ve etiketler için mavi rengi kullanarak, Arapça arayüzden farklılık göstermektedir; çünkü Arapça arayüzde bu özellikler bulunmamaktadır. Ayrıca, Arapça arayüz, yayınlarının yüzde 62,07'sinde kalın başlıklar kullanırken, yüzde 37,93'ünde daha hafif bir yazı tipi stiline yer vermektedir. Buna karşın, İngilizce arayüz, başlıklar için tutarlı bir şekilde kalın yazı tipleri kullanmakta ve genellikle bunları bağlantılar ve altı çizili metinle birleştirerek önem vurgusu yapmakta ve navigasyonu geliştirmektedir.

Görseller açısından, Arapça arayüz, otomatik çeviri şablonunun sınırlamaları nedeniyle hiç görsel kullanmamaktadır. İngilizce arayüz bile görselleri ölçülü bir şekilde kullanmakta olup, yayınlarının yüzde 66,67'si görsel unsurları tamamen dışlamaktadır. Bu durum, her iki versiyonun da metin tabanlı içeriğe genel bir bağımlılığını göstermektedir.

Arama işlevselliği açısından, Arapça arayüz yalnızca temel arama özellikleri sunmakta olup, aramaları daraltma veya özelleştirme seçenekleri sunmamaktadır, bu da kullanıcı kolaylığını sınırlamaktadır. Diğer yandan, İngilizce arayüz, kullanıcılara arama parametrelerini belirleme imkânı tanımakta, ancak benzer şekilde etkileşimli özellikler veya etkileşim ölçütlerine vurgu yapmamaktadır.

Dijital diplomasi stratejileri açısından, platform mesajlarında tehditkar bir ton benimsemekte olup, bu tür mesajlar toplam yayınların yüzde 34,04'ünü oluşturmaktadır. Bu, sıklıkla siyasi ve askeri baskı uygulama yoluna giden ABD diplomatik uygulamalarıyla örtüşmektedir. Diğer mesajlar ise belirsizlik veya incelik içermekte olup,

bunlar toplamda yüzde 14,08'i temsil etmekte ve tam anlamını kavrayabilmek için derinlemesine bir analiz gerektirmektedir. Ayrıca, birçok mesaj belirli hedef kitlelere veya bölgelere yöneliktir, Asya ise ana odak olarak yüzde 55,17 ile öne çıkmakta, özellikle Çin üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bu, Çin ile olan siyasi ve ekonomik rekabeti ve aynı zamanda ABD'nin Orta Doğu'daki İsrail'e destek verme eylemlerini haklı çıkarmaya yönelik ilgisini yansıtmaktadır. Afrika içinde ise, mesajların yüzde 71,44'ü Arap ülkelerine yöneltilmiş olup, bu da ABD dijital diplomasisinin bölgesel odaklılığını vurgulamaktadır.

Son olarak, içerik, izleyici duygu durumunu etkilemeyi amaçlamakta olup, sıklıkla ABD politikalarına karşı çıkan Çin, İran ve Rusya gibi ülkelere karşı olumsuzluk oluşturmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, dijital platformların, Amerikan siyasi anlatılarına yönelik kamu desteğini güçlendirmek için nasıl kullanıldığını göstermektedir.

Sonuç olarak, Bu çalışmanın odak noktası, dijital diplomasinin dış politikada yumuşak güç olarak nasıl kullanıldığını analiz etmektir; Amerika Birleşik Devletleri bu bağlamda bir vaka çalışması olarak ele alınmıştır. Özellikle, tez ABD hükümetinin dijital platformları (sosyal medya ve diğer internet iletişim kanalları) küresel kamuoyunun görüşlerini şekillendirmek, Amerikan değerlerini yaymak ve dış politika hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek amacıyla nasıl kullandığını incelemektir.

Bu çalışma, söz konusu çabaların neden stratejik ve kasıtlı bir şekilde uygulandığını değerlendirmenin yanı sıra, bu diplomatik pratiğin etkinliğini, sunduğu fırsatları ve karşılaştığı zorlukları da ele alıyor.

Temel araştırma sorusu: Dijital diplomasi, devletlerin dış politikalarında, özellikle Amerika Birleşik Devletleri tarafından 2011 ile 2024 yılları arasında nasıl bir yumuşak güç aracı olarak kullanılmıştır?

Bu anahtar soru, dijital iletişim stratejilerinin Amerikan dış politikasına nasıl entegre edildiğini, bunların yumuşak gücün temel ilkelerini yansıtır yansıtmadığını ve bu uygulamaların küresel diplomasideki daha geniş değişimleri nasıl temsil ettiğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın dijital platformlarının içerik analizi aracılığıyla elde edilen bulgular, bu çalışmanın birinci hipotezini güçlü bir şekilde desteklemektedir. Bu hipotez, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin dijital diplomasiyi, yabancı kamuoyunu

etkilemek ve değerlerini, kültürünü ve dış politika hedeflerini iletirmek için kasıtlı bir yumuşak güç stratejisi olarak kullandığını öne sürmektedir. Özellikle ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nın sosyal medya varlığı incelendiğinde, temel Amerikan değerlerini—demokrasi, özgürlük, insan hakları ve yenilikçilik—yansıtmak amacıyla dijital araçların tutarlı ve bilinçli bir şekilde kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir. Bu mesajlar rastlantısal değil; aksine ABD'nin stratejik çıkarlarıyla uyumlu daha geniş bir iletişim çerçevesine entegre edilmiştir.

Siyasi açıdan hassas dönemlerde—örneğin Arap Baharı ve pandemi sonrası dönem—dijital içeriğin zamanlaması, temaları ve çerçevelendirilmesi, yabancı kitlelerle etkileşime girme, algıları şekillendirme ve ABD'nin küresel söylemdeki liderliğini pekiştirme yönünde açık bir çaba gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu stratejik mesajlaşma, dijital diplomasinin yalnızca ABD'yi olumlu bir şekilde sunmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda kültürel imajını ve diplomatik önceliklerini geleneksel diplomasinin tek başına sağlayamayacağı kadar etkileşimli ve geniş kapsamlı bir şekilde iletirmek için tasarlanmış bir yumuşak güç aracı olarak kullanıldığını doğrulamaktadır. İkinci hipotezle ilgili olarak—dijital diplomasinin yalnızca cazibe ve etkileşim için değil, aynı zamanda stratejik baskı ve ideolojik çerçeveleme amacıyla da kullanılabileceğini öne süren görüş—araştırma bulguları ABD örneği üzerinden bu görüşü güçlü bir şekilde desteklemektedir.

Çalışma, ABD'nin dijital diplomasinin basit bir erişim stratejisinin ötesine geçtiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Amerikan değerlerini evrensel olarak sunarken, dolaylı olarak rakipleriyle karşılaştıran ideolojik mesajlar içermektedir. Multimedya görsellerinin stratejik kullanımı, bölgesel olarak uyarlanmış mesajlar ve kültürel açıdan spesifik dil seçimleri yalnızca etkileşimi değil, aynı zamanda algıyı da şekillendirmeye katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Bu kalıplar özellikle küresel kriz dönemlerinde belirgin hale gelmiştir. Dijital platformlar, hem müttefikleri güvence altına almak hem de ince politika baskısı uygulamak için kullanılmıştır. Böylece hipotez, uygulamada doğrulanmıştır.

Bu çalışma aynı zamanda üçüncü hipotezi de desteklemektedir. Dijital diplomasinin algılanması ve etkinliği büyük ölçüde mesajlaşmanın etik ve demokratik uyumuna bağlıdır.

Amerikan dijital mesajlarının, liberal demokratik ilkelerle tutarlı, şeffaf ve istikrarlı olduğu dönemler, küresel kitleler açısından daha fazla ilgi ve güvenilirlik sağlamıştır. Ancak, bu çabalar gösterilirken, dış politika tutumlarındaki tutarsızlıklar ve zaman zaman etik açıdan belirsiz söylemler bu etkinliği zayıflatmıştır. Buna ek olarak, siber saldırı tehditleri, dezenformasyon ve dijital diplomasi alanındaki içerik manipülasyonu, bu yöntemin kırılğanlıklarını daha da pekiştirmektedir.

Özetle, çalışma, dijital diplomasi'nin deneysel bir uygulamadan ABD dış politikasının temel bir bileşenine dönüştüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu dönüşüm, ABD'nin uluslararası söylemde sürekli ve değişken bir varlık göstermesine, geleneksel diplomatik engellere bir alternatif sunmasına ve küresel kitlelerle gerçek zamanlı doğrudan iletişim kurmasına olanak tanımıştır. Dijital diplomasi, geleneksel diplomasi'nin küçük bir uzantısı değil, aksine etkinin, güvenilirliğin ve politika savunuculuğunun dijital çağda nasıl gerçekleştiğine dair kuralları yeniden yazan dönüştürücü bir güçtür.

Ancak bu durum bazı zayıflıkları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Siber tehditler, yanlış bilgilendirme kampanyaları ve dijital diplomasi'nin gözetim, manipülasyon ve seçici şeffaflık konularındaki etik sorunları, bu yaklaşımın "siber bağışıklık" kategorisine girmesine neden olabilir. Dijital diplomasi projelerinin kesin sonuçlarını ölçmek zordur; bunun en önemli nedenlerinden biri, yabancı kamuoyu ölçümü için (kamuoyu yoklamaları veya duygu analizi gibi) doğrudan kullanılabilir araçların eksikliğidir.

Genel olarak, 2011–2024 dönemi ABD örneği, dijital diplomasi'nin yumuşak güç mekanizması olarak üç temel işlevi yerine getirdiğini göstermektedir. Yurtdışındaki kamuoyunu ulusal çıkarlara uyumlu hale getirmek, küresel düzeyde kamuoyunu diplomasiye dahil etmek ve özellikle gelişmekte olan dünyada yerel hükümetler ve vatandaşlara olan güveni artırmak ve yabancı (ABD dışındaki) tutumları şekillendirmek bu işlevler arasındadır. Ancak, etik tutarlılık, stratejik netlik ve teknolojik uyumluluk sağlanmadıkça, dijital diplomasi'nin etkinliği sürdürülebilir olmayacaktır. Gelecekte dijital diplomasi'nin uluslararası ilişkilerde güvenilir ve etkili bir güç olarak kalabilmesi için inovasyon ile şeffaflığı, anlatı ile hesap verebilirliği dengede tutması gerekecektir.

Yukarıdakilere ek olarak, çalışma aşağıdaki sonuçlara ulaşmıştır:

- Diplomasi biçimleri ve mekanizmaları, insanın gelişimi ve araçlarına bağlı olarak çeşitlenmiştir; büyük ölçüde, resmi toplantılar, konferanslar ve uluslararası

toplantılara dayanan doğrudan diplomasiden, modern iletişim araçlarını kullanan dolaylı diplomasiye doğru bir değişim yaşanmıştır. Bugün dünya, hızlı iletişim, doğrudan tutumlar, acil müzakereler ve hızlı sonuçlarla internet aracılığıyla yönetilmektedir.

- Modern dijital devrim, diplomatik çalışmanın gelişimine, kolaylaşmasına ve etkinleştirilmesine katkıda bulunmuştur, çünkü ülkeler dış politika hedeflerine hizmet eden görüş ve konumlarını çeşitli teknolojik ve dijital araçlarla hızla iletebilmektedir. Bu yaklaşım, dış politikanın iletilmesi için gereken süreyi kısaltmış ve tanıtılması gereken imajı şekillendirmeyi kolaylaştırmıştır.

- Dijital diplomasinin önemli dezavantajlarından biri, modern iletişim araçlarının, uluslararası toplumdaki ülkeler için gizlilik ve mahremiyetin tüm yönlerini ortadan kaldırmasıdır. Bu durum, ülkelerin hedeflerini, araçlarını ve yöntemlerini daha fazla görünür hale getirmekte ve bir devletin başka bir devleti zarar vermek amacıyla bu durumu kullanmasına olanak tanıyabilir.

- Dijital araçların yayılması ışığında, uluslararası diplomatik ilişkilerin yeniden yapılanma aşamasına girdiği ve birçok mekanizma ile sözleşmenin geliştiği gösterilmiştir. Geleneksel diplomatik elçiler için gereken koşullar, dijital çağda bir diplomatik elçi seçmek için artık yeterli değildir. Özellikle, diplomatik misyon üyelerinin sahip olması gereken geleneksel niteliklerin yanı sıra, teknolojik teknikler ve modern iletişim yöntemleri konusunda tam bilgi sahibi olma gerekliliği bu çağda daha da önem kazanmıştır. Bu geleneksel nitelikler arasında daha yüksek diplomalar, yeterlilikler, mesleki deneyim ve protokol bilgisi yer almaktadır. Diplomatik elçinin, teknolojiyle başa çıkmak için geniş bir teknik uzmanlığa sahip olması, aynı zamanda aceleci davranmamayı ve çevrimiçi yayılan her türlü ani pozisyonun daha sonra geri alınmasının zor olabileceğini göz önünde bulundurarak özdenetim gibi niteliklere de sahip olması artık zorunlu hale gelmiştir.

- Dijital diplomasi, özellikle devlet başkanları ve üst düzey yetkilileri arasındaki doğrudan iletişimle ilgili konularda, geleneksel diplomasinin yerini almayı başarmıştır. Bu iletişimler, anlaşmaların yapılmasına, uyuşmazlıkların çözülmesine, görüşlerin netleştirilmesine veya belirli konularda yanlış anlamaların giderilmesine, en hızlı süre ve en düşük çaba ve maliyetle yol açabilir.

- Yumuşak güç mekanizmaları, modern devletlerin dış politikalarında hayati bir rol oynamaktadır, uluslararası konulardaki durumlarını güçlendirmeye, çatışmaları çözmeye, ulaşmayı hedefledikleri siyasi değerleri gerçekleştirmeye ve eğitim modellerini ile ekonomik girişimlerini yayma becerilerine etkin bir şekilde katkı sağlamaktadır.

- Araştırmada belirtildiği gibi, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, dijital diplomasiyi yumuşak gücünü artırmak için bir araç olarak kullanan önde gelen ülkelerden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir; bu, uluslararası çıkarlarını teşvik etmeyi ve küresel sahnede olumlu bir imaj inşa etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Sonuçlara dayanarak, aşağıdaki önerilerde bulunuyoruz:

- Dijital diplomasinin artan önemi ışığında, ülkeler temsilcilerini ve diplomatik elçiliklerini dikkatlice seçmelidir. Dijital çağda, diplomatik elçilerin geleneksel nitelikleri artık yeterli değildir; çünkü diplomatik elçilerin teknoloji ve sosyal medya platformlarını kullanma konusunda geniş teknik bilgiye sahip olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, diplomatik misyon üyelerinin dijital diplomasi araçları ve yöntemlerini kullanma becerilerini geliştirmek amacıyla teknik alanlarda eğitim kurslarına ve seminerlere tabi tutulmalarını öneriyoruz.

- Devletin dijital diplomasisini yansıtan çok dilli resmi platformların etkinleştirilmesi gereklidir. Bu platformlar, o devletin kültürünü, kamu politikasını ve diğer halklara yönelik bakış açısını iletmek için kullanılmalıdır. Bu, uluslararası ilişkileri güçlendirecek ve dünyayı daha bağlantılı ve uyumlu hale getirecektir.

- Dijital diplomasinin kavramı ve araçlarından faydalanarak, bunu ulusal hükümet ile yerel toplum arasındaki bir iletişim ve etkileşim aracı haline getirmek gereklidir. Bu, vatandaşlar ile devletleri arasında bir iletişim kanalı işlevi görecektir. Bu, demokrasiyi güçlendirebilir, devlet hizmetlerini iyileştirebilir ve halkın taleplerine hızlı yanıt verilmesini sağlayabilir.

- ABD yönetimi tarafından dijital diplomasi çerçevesinde yapılan açıklamaların veya yayınların netleştirilmesi önemlidir, çünkü bu, bu açıklamalardan kaynaklanabilecek siyasi gerilimleri azaltmaya yardımcı olacaktır.

- Tüm dünyadaki ülkeler, dijital diplomatik çalışmaların araçlarını geliştirerek, teknolojiye diplomatik kadronun faaliyetlerinde entegre ederek ve her ülkenin çevrimiçi

platformlarının aktif kalmasını sağlayarak Amerikan dijital diplomasisinin gücünden faydalanmalıdır. Bu, devletin olumlu bir imajını iletmek ve küresel toplumda etkili uluslararası ilişkiler inşa etmek için önemlidir.

Başkan Donald Trump'ın ikinci başkanlık dönemi için Beyaz Saray'a geri dönmesi beklenirken, Amerikan dijital diplomasisinin gelişmesi ve daha etkili hale gelmesi öngörülmektedir, özellikle Trump'ın dikkat çekici teknolojik ve elektronik etkinliği göz önüne alındığında. Bu durum, önümüzdeki yıllarda dijital diplomasinin, ABD dış politikasında bir yumuşak güç olarak evrimleşeceğini tahmin etmemize yol açmaktadır



BACKGROUND

