



T.C.

ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**U.S. DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AGAINST TERRORISM
IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 2009-2023**

Ph. D. DISSERTATION

Anwer ALJABALI

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Ankara 2025

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Supervisor:

Assist. Prof. Dr. Christian Lekon

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APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis “U.S. Digital Diplomacy against Terrorism in the Middle East, 2009 – 2023”, submitted by Anwer Aljabali, has been approved as a PhD Thesis by the committee members below by majority of votes at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all the data utilized in this study is collected with adherence to academic ethical considerations, and the sources consulted in producing this dissertation are duly acknowledged. I also declare that all published and unpublished works not original to this work are cited and referenced under the university standard (28/ 02 /2025).



Signature

Anwer ALJABALI

DEDICATION

To Pelin, Kerem and Mahir

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I owe my gratitude to Assist. Prof. Dr. Christian Lekon, who has always trusted me as a colleague, not as a student, who has always supported me, appreciated, and complimented me since the beginning of my PhD studies, which set me free in every sense of this thesis and allowed me to perceive scientific thought as a way of life.

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ABSTRACT

U.S. Digital Diplomacy against Terrorism in the Middle East, 2009 - 2023

The proliferation and subversive use of information and communication technology have resulted in nation-states developing a system of responses to enhance their national security from criminal elements who exploit social media to subvert human security. This study explored the United States' digital diplomacy against terrorism in the Middle East from 2009 to 2023.

The thesis adopted a mixed-method approach to collect data. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and quantitative data analysis approaches such as basic descriptive analysis and charts and content analysis was used to analyze data acquired through structured questionnaires and interviews, respectively.

The results show that the U.S. fights against terrorism in the Middle East primarily through a multilateral coalition; the U.S. posts target international terror organizations and mainly focus on structural causative factors of terrorism in the Middle East. Some other findings include that the US against terrorism posts focus on citizens of the Middle East, the posts use targeting, are posted in real-time, allow comments, and go in sequential order.

The study recommended creating a framework for an international digital coalition against terrorism, increasing investment in developing diplomats' digital skills, and developing civil society organizations' local digital capabilities in the Middle East.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Middle East, Terrorism, U.S.A.

ÖZET

Amerikan Ortadoğu'da Terörizme Karşı Dijital Diplomasi, 2009 - 2023

Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojisinin yayılması ve kötüye kullanılması, ulus-devletlerin sosyal medyayı insan güvenliğini bozmak için kullanan suç öğelerine karşı ulusal güvenliklerini artırmaya yönelik bir tepki sistemi geliştirmelerine neden olmuştur. Bu araştırma, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin 2009'dan 2023'e kadar Orta Doğu'da terörizme karşı dijital diplomasisini incelemiştir.

Bu tezde karma yöntemli veri toplama çalışması benimsenmiştir. Katılımcılar amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiş ve yapılandırılmış anketler ve görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilen verileri incelemek için , sırasıyla temel tanımlayıcı analiz, grafikler ve içerik analizi gibi nicel veri analiz yaklaşımları kullanılmıştır.

Sonuçlar ABD'nin çok taraflı koalisyon aracılığıyla Orta Doğu'daki terörizme karşı mücadele ettiğini göstermektedir. ABD'nin paylaşımları uluslararası terör örgütlerini hedef almakta ve temel olarak Orta Doğu'daki terörizmin yapısal nedenine odaklanmaktadır. Diğer bazı bulgular, ABD'deki terörizm karşıtı paylaşımların Orta Doğu vatandaşlarına yoğunlaştığını, hedefleme kullanıldığını, gerçek zamanlı olarak yayınlandığını, yorumlara izin verildiğini ve sıralı bir düzende ilerlediğini içermektedir.

Bu çalışma, terörizme karşı uluslararası bir dijital koalisyon çerçevesi oluşturmayı, diplomatların dijital becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik yatırımların artırılmasını ve Orta Doğu'daki sivil toplum örgütlerinin yerel dijital kapasitelerini geliştirmeyi önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD, Dijital Diplomasi, Orta Doğu, Terörizm.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAGR	Cumulative Annual Growth Rate
CSCC	Centre for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ETA
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FDIS	Foreign Direct Investment
IIP	Bureau of International Information Programs
INGO	intergovernmental organizations
IRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
IR	International Relations
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant's
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IVE	international violent extremism
JTFCND	Joint Task Force-Computer Network Defence
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNCs	Multinational Companies
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations

PD	Public Diplomacy
RRMT	Rapid Reaction Media Team
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
US	United States
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The digital era has significantly altered the conduct of diplomacy, presenting both novel opportunities and difficulties for international relations. The emergence of digital communication technologies, social media, and sophisticated data analytics has transformed the interactions among governments, international organizations, and non-state actors on the global stage. Diplomacy, previously limited to in-person negotiations and conventional communication methods, now functions within a progressively digital landscape where information disseminates swiftly across borders and public sentiment may be altered quickly. The digital age allows states to engage with foreign populations, circumventing conventional diplomatic routes directly. Social media platforms have emerged as potent instruments for diplomatic engagement, enabling countries to convey their thoughts instantaneously to a worldwide audience. Digital diplomacy facilitates expedited and more efficient communication among states, hence improving the swiftness and efficacy of talks. Nevertheless, the digital era presents considerable obstacles. Cybersecurity dangers, disinformation, and the deterioration of conventional state sovereignty in the digital realm are significant issues. The emergence of digital diplomacy has facilitated novel opportunities for cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns that can compromise diplomatic initiatives and destabilize international relations.

Digital diplomacy refers to the utilization of technological tools, such as social media, to further a state's diplomatic goals. Several causes underlie the events and processes that prompted the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) to embrace digital platforms. The Arab Spring occurred in 2010. Seib (2012) contends that MFAs were caught off guard by the democratic Arab uprisings due to their failure to observe the context in which these revolts emerged—namely, Facebook. Although Facebook did not instigate the Arab Spring, it functioned as a contemporary forum where digital citizens congregated to publicly denounce their rulers, a phenomenon unattainable in offline settings. After the Arab Spring, MFAs commenced transitioning to online platforms to enhance their capacity to foresee developments in foreign nations. The second factor contributing to the rise of digital diplomacy was the utilization of the internet by terrorist organizations to recruit young individuals for Jihadi movements (Hallam 2010). To counteract these actions and inhibit terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda from acquiring online support, the US State Department

engaged in a digital campaign to contest ideologies and persuade Muslim internet users. The third and last factor that prompted diplomats to embrace digital tools was their utilization by journalists and news organizations (Manor, 2016). Diplomats have always endeavored to sway media representations of events, individuals, and nations, as the media significantly influences public perception. Moreover, MFAs depend on journalists and the media for information about occurrences in foreign nations. Consequently, as the media transitioned to internet platforms, MFAs promptly followed suit. Collectively, these three processes indicate that digital diplomacy is, in essence, social media diplomacy.

This chapter contains basic introductory elements of this thesis. It includes the background to the research, the research problem, the aim, the objectives, and the scope.

1.1. Research Aim, Objectives, and Benefits

This thesis focuses on U.S. digital diplomacy and anti-terrorism in the Middle East, 2009–2023. Any scholar of U.S. digital diplomacy should pay close attention to this period, as it represents a significant period in the US's exploration of digital platforms for managing global issues. By 2009, social media had become established but was only beginning to be explored as a national instrument of diplomacy in the US. By the end of the Obama administration, the US had effectively shown that social media could be a veritable instrument for diplomacy. By the end of 2023, it could be established that there are differences and contrasts in how these administrations deployed social media platforms as tools for diplomacy. This thesis will interrogate these differences and contrasts and how they influenced US digital diplomacy in the Middle East.

Again, whereas some studies focus on digital diplomacy, including that of the US, several gaps still exist in this emerging field that demand attention. One is the absence of literature examining the differences and contradictions in the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations. How such digital diplomacy was directed towards the Middle East has also not been explored, and therefore, researchers must address it.

During this period, we also witnessed the internationalization of terrorist attacks, such as planning a terror attack in one country and carrying it out in another. In addition, many terrorists were drawn from across national boundaries, resulting in a global problem that

created interstate tensions that then required increased diplomatic activities to manage. In the context of globalization, which itself was enhanced by technology, diplomats had to explore platforms that are also transboundary and could reach various actors within the shortest possible time. Thus, studying how diplomats exploited such media platforms will no doubt contribute to our knowledge of international diplomacy and the nexus between diplomacy and technology.

The need to interrogate the nexus between technology and diplomacy is also necessary because writers are currently debating whether social media platforms have completely transformed diplomacy or are mere gadgets like preceding technologies used by diplomats.

In addition, this period also witnessed the adaptation of digital platforms by non-state actors to counter the global war on terror, sustain their recruitment and training, and ensure that their influence spread beyond their immediate territory. Hence, this study will seek to examine the nature of US digital diplomacy conducted through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook against terrorism in the Middle East. The choice of these two platforms was informed by their popularity among all classes of people, particularly among government officials (Twitter) and the general population of the Middle East. According to Statista (2022), 57.3% of the population of the Middle East use Facebook at a frequency of 72%. Similarly, Facebook is the world's most popular social media platform, having over 3 billion active monthly users as of April 2024 (Statista, 2024). Though Twitter ranks 12th out of 15 social media platforms, with just 600 million active monthly users (Statista, 2024), it is seen as an elite platform, attracting the highest class of any society and government institutions and agencies. Thus, the selection of both platforms is representative of all categories of people.

To achieve the aim of this study, the following specific questions will be pursued by this thesis:

- What are the contents of U.S. digital diplomacy anti-terrorism in the Middle East?
- Who do the contents of U.S. digital diplomacy anti-terrorism in the Middle East address?
- What are the communicational patterns of U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East?

- What are the factors that shape U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East?

This thesis will contribute to existing studies on digital diplomacy and counter-terrorism in general and specifically in the Middle East. It will further make practical contributions that will affect policies on digital diplomacy and counter-terrorism.

1.2. Scope and Limitation

This thesis focuses on U.S. digital diplomacy and terrorism in the Middle East. It limits its exploration of U.S. digital tools to Twitter and Facebook. It relies on contemporary developments in the Middle East, such as the Arab Spring, and more recent counterterrorism efforts to analyze the nature of US digital diplomacy in the Middle East. In addition, the study is only interested in digital diplomatic developments from 2009 to 2023. This era is significant in the development of the U.S. use of digital diplomacy for antiterrorism in the Middle East.

1.3. Research Methodology

This section examines the methodology and the methods that guide the study. The components discussed include research design, research philosophy, research approach, and methodological choice. Other areas covered include techniques and procedures for data collection, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

1.3.1. Research Design

Creswell and Clark (2007, p. 58) describe research design as "procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies." It refers to the overall plan for conducting a study and how it relates to the research challenge. According to Gray (2021), the study design specifies the research methodologies, required data, data collection and analysis techniques, and their relevance to the research objectives.

This exploratory study is appropriate for an emerging phenomenon since issues in digital technology and its nexus with diplomacy are still in their early stages and researchers do not know everything about them. Saunders et al. (2019) and Brown (2006) agree that exploratory design is best suited for emergent phenomena where the goal is to perform a preliminary study that may require more research in the future. Based on the literature reviewed, research on digital diplomacy has begun to appear, but many areas remain unexplored, including how digital technology affects the diplomatic responses of powerful states' policies on terrorism. Thus, the exploratory research design is suitable for such studies as this that seek to interrogate how the U.S. implemented digital technology in its global war on terror in the Middle East.

1.3.2. Research Philosophy

Žukauskas et al. (2018, p. 123) define research philosophy as "the development of research assumptions, knowledge, and nature." According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 130), research philosophy is "a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge." Research philosophy thus relates to how the researcher perceives reality. It is the sum of the researcher's views about the nature of the world, what is available, and how it may be obtained. Saunders et al. (2012) identified five research philosophies, including positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism. This categorization is continually debated among researchers. For example, Zukauskas et al. (2018) would like to eliminate postmodernism from their taxonomy. However, for this study, Saunders et al.'s (2019) categorization is used since it is more thorough and explicitly addresses the needs of social and management science students. Scientific forms of positivism are focused on identifying regular patterns and using regression-based models to explain phenomena. They aim to discover law-like principles. On the other hand, the strong interpretive or postmodern approach rejects the idea of explanation in favor of interpretation. It emphasizes hermeneutics and description but does not prioritize causation.

Positivism is based on empiricism, a major philosophical school that believes that real knowledge can only be gained from sensory experience (Preston, 2009). The analytical school of philosophy known as the "Vienna Circle" is responsible for positivism's present worldview. The core argument of positivism is that reality is not just singular and material

but also exists independently of consciousness (Al-Saadi 2004). Only the human experience allows authentic access to this reality. This implies for the social researcher that validity in knowledge is value-free and may be obtained through a measurable, observable, generalizable, and objective approach.

Saunders et al. (2019) distinguish critical realism from realism. They clarify that critical realism holds that reality is external and independent of the mind, although it cannot be directly observed or known. Critical realists use two methods to gain knowledge about reality. The first is accessing reality via the sense organs, and the second is the cerebral processing of knowledge gained via experiences. Critical realism defies easy definition due to its encompassment of several perspectives. However, its fundamental concepts, and likely the source of its intriguing appeal, lie in its intermediary position between positivism and interpretivism. According to Archer et al. (2016), critical realism provides a different option to realism.

Similar to positivism, critical realists acknowledge the existence of objective realities and consensus regarding those realities. However, they contend that relying solely on positivist thinking is insufficient for comprehending the world. Critical realism is occasionally cited as an illustration of post-positivist posture or even post-post-positivism.

The third research philosophy examined by Saunders et al. (2019) is interpretivism, which emerged from the writings of French, German, and English authors in Europe. Interpretivism, like critical realism, emerged in response to positivism. Its primary thesis is that humans and their subjective perceptions are fundamentally different from physical reality because they may construct meaning from their experiences. According to interpretivists, the researcher is accountable for investigating and interrogating these meanings (Saunders et al. 2019). Because of the diversity of human experiences and social systems, interpretivism rejects the positivist notion of universally applicable rules. According to it, "the social world of business and management science, which is too complex to be treated as a physical science due to complex management studies in the social world, will be lost if its complexity is reduced to law-like generalizations" (Al-Ababneh 2020, pp. 80-81). Crotty (1998) distinguishes three types of interpretivism. These include phenomenology, hermeneutics, and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenology challenges the notion that natural science alone determines what is real and what is not and that all conceptions we consider important must be

explainable using concepts from the exact sciences. Phenomenology posits that the exact sciences do not depict a reality that is distinct from the everyday world. Instead, they utilize innovative approaches to articulate and elucidate the existing world, thereby facilitating the acquisition of a more accurate understanding. The reasonable scientific aspiration to accurately describe reality, namely from a third-person perspective, is commendable. However, it is important to remember that objectivity, explanation, comprehension, and theoretical constructs all rely on a first-person perspective as their fundamental basis and requirement. The notion that science can offer an unequivocal portrayal of reality, devoid of any subjective or experiential bias, is a fallacy. Science is based on experiences and individuals who have physical bodies carry out knowledge gained from the non-scientific world, and it. According to phenomenologists, science is more than just a set of organized and widely accepted statements. Science is not just a concept, but also rather an activity that individuals engage in. It is a distinct and predominantly theoretical approach to understanding and interacting with the world.

Hermeneutics presents humans as active agents rather than passive recipients. Hermeneutics originated as a philosophy and approach for interpreting texts and symbolic content. The hermeneutic tradition, originating from ancient philosophical traditions, has developed into a fundamental aspect of the humanities and social sciences. Hermeneutics has its origins in the interpretation of religious scriptures and legal documents, marking its historical growth. Over time, it extended beyond these limitations, transforming into a comprehensive structure for comprehending not just written texts but also spoken tales, cultural occurrences, and even social customs. This growth signifies the increasing acknowledgment of human comprehension and communication's intricate and multifaceted nature.

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that aims to comprehend the connection between individuals and society. The fundamental concept of symbolic interactionism posits that human behavior and interaction can only be comprehended through the interchange of significant messages or symbols. This approach depicts humans as active agents rather than passive recipients. As a result, the interpretivist is concerned with developing new meanings and understandings for the many human experiences within a given environment.

Pragmatism, a research paradigm attributed to John Dewey, Charles Pierce, and William James, maintains that experiences, facts, and values are different and must be understood within a specific context (Saunders et al. 2019). Pragmatism is problem-solving focused.

The next is postmodernism, which traces its roots to the writings of French philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Jacques Derrida, among others. Postmodernism aims to emphasize the importance of language and power dynamics, question established ways of reasoning, and give voice to disadvantaged viewpoints. According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 150), postmodernists reject the present objectivist, realist ontology of objects and instead highlight the chaotic primary of flux, moment, fluidity, and change'.

This study adopts interpretivism as a research paradigm to guide its work because it deals with the interpretations of human activities, such as the diplomatic actions of states within cyberspace. The interpretive thesis of many realities, meanings, and practices is consistent with the researcher's perspective on reality as it manifests itself in organizations throughout the world. Critically examining how the U.S. deploys digital technology in diplomatic conduct concerning anti-terror efforts in the Middle East necessitates a research strategy that embraces subjective and descriptive methods for dealing with complicated situations and knowledge generation.

1.3.3. Research Approach and Methodological Choice

Two primary research methodologies have been identified; inductive and deductive (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). Saunders et al. (2019) introduced a third strategy, called the abductive approach. As a methodological approach, the qualitative research technique is described as inductive; the researcher begins by acquiring information from participants and then organizes it into themes. Furthermore, quantitative research strategies are distinguished by a deductive approach. Bryman (2004, p. 8) called it "an approach to the relationship between theory and research in which the latter is conducted regarding hypotheses and ideas inferred from the former." In this instance, researchers examine or validate theories by reviewing research questions or hypotheses developed from them.

An abductive research approach is the fusion of both inductive and deductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2019). The utilization of mixed methods research has significantly increased

in popularity within the field of social research during the past two to two and a half decades. The appeal is readily apparent. Quantitative research provides a comprehensive overview by analyzing a significant sample size and utilizing numerical data that can be statistically modified. It enables us to accurately describe past events. Qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of narratives, subtleties, and personal experiences from a smaller number of people, enabling us to elucidate the causes and mechanisms behind events. By integrating both approaches, when they are applicable based on our research inquiries, we can benefit from the advantages of both methods. The abductive approach aligns with an interpretivist philosophy (Olsen, 2004) and serves as a bridge between inductive and deductive strategies (Polsa, 2013). Schwandt (1998) defines interpretivist research as the pursuit of comprehending the intricate realm of lived experience through the perspective of individuals who directly encounter it. For this study, the interpretivism paradigm concentrated on comprehending diplomats' experiences and perceptions within a particular digital space. The study acknowledges that both qualitative and quantitative data were subjective interpretations of reality. As argued by Dubois and Gadd (2002), abductive methods allow for creativity that tends towards exploration and discovery of new facts. This study will adopt a mixed-method approach to maximize the strengths of both approaches. The study relies on induction as the preliminary phase in which data is collected and examined using specialized queries, without depending on a general principle or theory as a starting point. After recognizing certain patterns in the data, the researcher will employ deductive reasoning. This thesis will utilize the findings from the questionnaires and interviews to inductively formulate several general statements. Utilizing the deductive method, this analysis will involve a thorough examination of these statements by seeking confirmatory evidence from a range of Facebook and Twitter posts.

1.3.4. Techniques and Procedures for Data Collection

To generate data for this study, the researcher relied on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are interviews and the administration of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section collected demographic data on fifty (50) participants, comprising diplomats, academics, and journalists. Participants were drawn from U.S. embassies in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates. Through

purposive sampling, participants were selected from Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. Other countries from which participants were drawn include Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Jordan.

Participants were also drawn from diverse professional backgrounds. Twenty-three were identified as diplomats and seven indicated as retired diplomats. There were 12 academics, and five journalists, while three skipped the question on profession.

Participants' citizenship also reflected the diverse countries, with some US citizens participating. Questionnaires were administered through the Google online platform. It was sent to their email addresses after obtaining their consent.

Specifically, through some colleagues and persons I know within the diplomatic, academic, and media circles, I collected the email addresses of 83 persons. There were 45 females and 38 males. Nineteen indicated their citizenship as being from the US, 7 from the UK, and the rest came from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates; Iran, Iraq, and Yemen; Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Sudan; and Jordan.¹ Thereafter, a general email was sent to them with the questionnaires soliciting participation in research. Initially, 49 participants responded, but I reminded another colleague to fill up so I could achieve 50 participants, thus bringing the percentage of participants who responded to 60.24%.

Purposive sampling enables the deliberate selection of participants who are highly pertinent to the study subject. This precise methodology guarantees that the gathered data is comprehensive and directly relevant to the study's goals, resulting in more significant and concentrated discoveries. By frequently involving the selection of people with certain experiences or knowledge, this strategy enables the collection of comprehensive information. Researchers can thoroughly investigate intricate subjects by engaging with people who provide comprehensive perspectives, enabling the exploration of subtle and nuanced aspects that may be overlooked when using a more generalized methodology.

The participants' selection process went through two stages. The first stage involves a general list of diplomats who have worked in the communication sector in foreign missions and many journalists and academics in universities. The second stage involved screening the list to

¹ Some participants who have served in foreign missions in the Middle East but currently serve in non-Middle Eastern countries such as Nigeria and Sudan were recruited to participate in the survey.

identify those who were reachable and still active in the social media space or doing private practice. This is because some of the names were indicated as retired personnel, and some did not include any emails or addresses. Thus, it was necessary to cross-check if they could be reached through other means, such as social media, personal websites, or any other sources. At this stage, it was assumed that some of the prospective participants worked independently and were no longer in any embassy.

Another method of gathering primary data was through in-depth interviews. Three employees of the U.S. foreign affairs ministry were interviewed. Initially, five persons were contacted for in-depth interviews. All five were US citizens who had worked in the Middle East while in service. Three participants responded to the interview guide via email, with two responding to all the questions. Their names came up during an initial search of possible persons who have occupied strategic positions in US foreign missions in the Middle East. However, the small number of interviewees makes it difficult to be adopted as a key data collection method for this study. Consequently, their views were integrated into a content analysis of messages from the US social media platforms and the analysis of this researcher. It was used only as supplementary information in this study. Social media handles; Facebook and Twitter accounts of the U.S. State Department. These two social media handles were studied from 2009 until 2023. The Obama administration is noted to have been critical of the US adoption of Twitter for diplomatic activities. Other secondary sources are existing literature on digital diplomacy from referenced journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science and books published by reputable publishers. This provided valuable sources for validating the results of the original data and linking the study to existing knowledge.

1.3.5. Method of Data Analysis

One of the data analysis approaches used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis is interpreting text material, (transcribed texts from the interviews) through a systematic categorization process of categorizing and finding themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Information from social media handles and semi-structured interviews was submitted to content analysis to extract meaning from and clarify the research purpose and objectives.

Furthermore, the study used quantitative data analysis approaches such as basic descriptive analysis as well as charts to analyze data acquired through structured questionnaires. To do this, questionnaire results were coded on nominal and ordinal measurement scales and analyzed quantitatively using spreadsheet tools such as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. As a result, by combining content analysis with quantitative analysis, we will be able to test the research assumptions.

The researcher's focus is on analyzing U.S. digital diplomacy related to terrorism in the Middle East from 2009 to 2023. The individuals who were questioned or interviewed, as well as the Facebook and Twitter posts that were analyzed, serve as the units of observation.

The analysis will also give attention to the following possible turning points by asking whether a major change in the way U.S. digital diplomacy was pursued happened around that time: 2009 (start of the Obama presidency), 2011 (Arab Spring), 2014 (Crimean crisis and Russian disinformation campaign), 2017 (start of the Trump presidency), and 2021 (start of the Biden presidency). The researcher will analyze the contents, context, and aim of messages. Other areas that will guide analysis include coverage, communication pattern, target, and audience.

1.3.6. Ethical Consideration

The question of ethical consideration has attracted the attention of most scholars, such as Doyle et al. (2016), Bryman and Bell (2011), and Baker and Foy (2012). Ethical considerations are vital to the success of the research process and essential in academia, particularly in terms of research integrity. Interviews and questionnaires are two study methodologies that might generate ethical concerns for researchers. During the interview process, the researcher may receive information that requires the authorities to be notified but may hurt the study process or future researchers who may pick the same target group. The challenge is how to control the process's integrity while still upholding the confidentiality agreement struck between the researcher and responders. This study did not face ethical concerns during data collection, but if any development had occurred, the integrity of the research process, as pledged by respondents, would undoubtedly have been maintained.

The consent of all participants is duly obtained with clear information on how to withdraw from the program at any given time without any consequences. The anonymity of the participants is also guaranteed.

Finally, for software accessibility issues, the researcher did not face any software accessibility issues. The Monkey Survey is available to the public with an appropriate subscription, which the researcher provided throughout the data-gathering stage of the study.



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a critical review of relevant studies to the objectives of the research as outlined above.

The essay "The Impact on Country Image of the North Africa and Middle East Uprisings," authored by James Pamment in 2011, provides a thorough examination of how the Arab Spring upheavals transformed the international perception of nations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The research published in the journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* examines the following critical components:

Commencing in late 2010, the Arab Spring incited political and social turmoil across the Middle East and North Africa. These events attracted significant global attention, influencing the international perception of the countries in the region.

Pamment's (2011) research examines how these revolutions influenced governmental and external actors' efforts in public diplomacy and national branding. The key focus of this study was the argument that the upheavals disrupted conventional narratives regarding the region's stability and governance. Countries were portrayed either positively, as exemplars of democratic aspirations, or negatively, as regions of instability and violence.

Pamment (2011) highlights the strategic employment of public diplomacy by domestic governments and international organizations to influence perceptions during and during the uprisings. Social media, particularly platforms like Twitter and Facebook, played a vital role in distributing both true narratives and propaganda.

Pamment's (2011) study aims to examine the discrepancies between the internal perceptions of MENA countries and the external perceptions of these nations. Countries like Tunisia and Egypt received international recognition for their democratic movements, although facing significant challenges domestically.

According to Pamment (2011), the uprisings influenced international relations, prompting global countries to reassess their political and economic ties with the region. Western nations were compelled to balance their backing for democratic movements with their geopolitical interests in the region.

Pamment (2011) asserts that the Arab Spring revealed the malleability of national identities and the increasing importance of strategic communication in shaping global opinions. To effectively navigate the challenges posed by such upheavals, he recommends more efficacious public diplomacy strategies. This study is significant as it aids in understanding the intersection of politics, communication, and international relations, especially in unstable regions like the Middle East.

Philip Seib's *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era* (2012) is a seminal work that examines the transformative impact of social media on diplomacy and power structures in international relations. Seib (2012) contends that social media transforms diplomatic practices by facilitating immediate communication among governments, non-state actors, and citizens, altering the conventional power dynamics, as governments are no longer the exclusive authorities in international dialogue, and enabling marginalized groups to circumvent traditional gatekeepers, such as state-controlled media, to disseminate their narratives worldwide.

Seib (2011) uses the phrase "real-time diplomacy" to illustrate how the immediacy of social media expedites the tempo of international diplomacy. Diplomats, often measured and prudent, are now compelled to respond swiftly to crises, protests, or viral occurrences, frequently without the time for strategic preparation.

Seib (2012) examines the Arab Spring as a pivotal illustration of social media's impact, highlighting how citizens utilized platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to organize rallies, disseminate information, and confront authoritarian governments. Seib asserts that social media has amplified local struggles on a global scale, eliciting reactions from foreign governments and international organizations, while governments grappled with the rapid developments instigated by social media, frequently responding in manners that exposed their unpreparedness for the digital era.

Seib (2012) emphasizes that states are progressively utilizing social media for public diplomacy, seeking to engage directly with international audiences, cultivate favorable narratives regarding their policies and cultures, and fight antagonistic narratives or falsehoods.

Seib (2012), further delineates various obstacles confronting contemporary diplomats, including the erosion of control as governments contend with a multitude of voices on social media, such as activists, journalists, and adversarial entities; the rapid dissemination of misinformation exacerbated by social media accelerates the proliferation of false narratives, complicating diplomatic endeavours to uphold credible accounts, alongside the dichotomy of transparency versus confidentiality, wherein diplomats encounter pressure to enhance online transparency, occasionally conflicting with the necessity for discretion in sensitive negotiations.

Social media has democratized knowledge dissemination, enabling previously marginalized voices to engage in global discourse (Seib, 2012). For Seib (2012), this presents both advantageous and detrimental consequences: it fosters inclusivity, yet simultaneously permits malicious individuals to disseminate propaganda or provoke violence.

Seib (2012) provides pragmatic recommendations for diplomats and policymakers, emphasizing the necessity for diplomats to receive training in digital tools and strategies for effective engagement with global audiences. He advocates for foreign ministries to integrate social media into their overarching strategic frameworks instead of regarding it as a supplementary tool. Additionally, collaboration with non-state actors, such as NGOs, tech companies, and civil society, can bolster digital diplomacy initiatives. Furthermore, he contends that governments should cultivate the ability to monitor real-time social media trends and respond proactively to emerging crises.

Seib (2012) continues by contemplating the enduring ramifications of social media on diplomacy. He asserts that diplomacy will persist in its evolution alongside advancements in digital technology, with artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and emerging platforms expected to assume an increasingly significant role. Seib contends that the equilibrium between traditional and digital diplomacy will determine the efficacy of governments in maneuvering through the intricacies of the 21st-century global landscape.

Seib's (2012) work is crucial for comprehending the convergence of technology, politics, and diplomacy, the evolving power dynamics among states, non-state actors, and individuals, as well as the problems and opportunities presented by real-time communication in international relations. His approach is especially pertinent for areas such as the Middle East, where social media has exerted significant socio-political effects.

Pamment (2013) examines the media strategy employed by the United States military during the Iraq War in another article titled "American Strategic Communication in Iraq: The 'Rapid Reaction Media Team'," which was published in the Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies. The article focuses on the formation of the Rapid Reaction Media Team (RRMT) and the objectives it sought to accomplish. The RRMT was established in March of 2003 to construct and manage the media system that was headed by the United States in Iraq. Its goal was to establish a public service television network in Iraq that would be "balanced and fair" and provide the Iraqi people with news that was impartial, similar to the BBC or the Public Broadcasting Service.

Even though its declared objective was to operate fairly, the RRMT's budget of \$100 million was taken from the \$87.5 billion budget for the military (Pamment, 2013). The Department of Defence was responsible for ensuring that it was carried out. The network's objective was to deliver objective news, but its connections to military financing and oversight fundamentally conflicted with its position in supporting the objectives of the United States military.

In his explanation, Pamment (2013) notes that the RRMT strategy demonstrates how the media may be utilized as an extension of military operations. According to him, the United States of America employed the infrastructure and content of the media to engage in symbolic violence. This is analogous to the United States employing military power in the realm of ideas to exert control over how people felt about the conflict.

To demonstrate how difficult it is to employ media projects to achieve political and military objectives, the article draws attention to the inherent difficulties and assumptions that are a part of the RRMT strategy. Even though it is intimately related to the military, Pamment (2013) believes that this demonstrates how difficult it is to establish a media system that is made up of impartial individuals.

The investigation that Pamment (2013) conducted examines, from a critical vantage point, how the media, military policy, and public opinion all interacted with one another throughout the Iraq War. The investigation highlights the challenges and paradoxes that are associated with undertaking such activities.

In another study, "The 'Logics' of Public Diplomacy: In Search of What Unites a Multidisciplinary Research Field," Pamment (2014) offers a theoretical framework that can

be utilized to comprehend the numerous practices and motivations that serve as the foundation of public diplomacy (PD). According to Pamment (2014), the motivation behind PD may be attributed to many different foreign policy objectives. These objectives include the necessity of establishing strategic partnerships, securitization, and trade progress.

The fact that various people have varied reasons for practicing PD makes it difficult to build a cohesive theoretical framework for the profession, which is something that he emphasizes a great deal. The article proposes "PD logics," a theoretical framework that may be used to understand and classify the numerous different practices that are associated with public diplomacy.

When it comes to evaluating and comprehending the fundamental strategies and reasoning behind PD projects, these logics can serve as evaluation lenses. Within the scope of the study, Pamment (2014) investigates how the utilization of digital and social media platforms by foreign ministries has influenced public diplomacy methods. He observes that the logics that govern social and digital media have become more internalized into diplomatic practice and that these logics have an impact on modern public diplomacy.

To close the gap that exists between public diplomacy studies and other fields of study, the purpose of Pamment's (2014) essay is to advocate for the creation of a unified theoretical framework for public diplomacy studies. Pamment (2014) advises that academics and practitioners make use of "PD logic" as a means of gaining a better understanding of the complexities and variances that are associated with PD in various settings.

Pamment's (2014) work contributes to the ongoing discussion in the academic community by putting out a theory that not only unifies the subject but also takes into account the variety of public diplomacy. The phrase "PD logics" refers to a framework that provides a methodical approach to investigate and evaluate the numerous practices and aims that are associated with the profession, particularly in light of the ever-changing digital context.

In yet another study, "Countering Disinformation: The Public Diplomacy Problem of Our Time," Pamment (2018) investigates the growing problem of disinformation in the digital era and the implications that it has for public diplomacy (PD). Pamment (2018) emphasizes the pervasive nature of disinformation, which is exacerbated by digital platforms and contributes to the erosion of public confidence in democratic institutions and information sources.

Because conventional tactics of influence are undercut by the rapid distribution of inaccurate information, the paper emphasizes the importance of PD practitioners adapting to the challenges that are provided by disinformation. Pamment (2014) highlights the need for public diplomacy professionals to have the ability to comprehend and combat the purposeful distortion of information, which has become an essential tool for organizations that want to influence public opinion and undermine democratic regimes.

Pamment (2014) notes that the promotion of media literacy involves encouraging critical thinking and media literacy among the demographics that are being targeted to enable them to differentiate between legitimate information and falsehoods. The process of developing resilient communication methods involves the creation of adaptable communication methods that are capable of effectively addressing and mitigating the consequences, such as disinformation campaigns. To build a unified response to the proliferation of disinformation, it is important to encourage cooperation between governments, civic society, and the business sector.

According to Pamment (2014), the dissemination of false information is a huge obstacle to public diplomacy, necessitating a reevaluation of the methods that can be utilized to maintain confidence and effectively interact with audiences on a global scale. Practitioners of public discourse can more effectively manage the complexities of the information landscape and preserve the integrity of democratic conversation when they put proactive measures into action.

Corneliu Bjola's 2015 publication, *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, co-edited with Marcus Holmes, provides an in-depth examination of the impact of digital technology on diplomatic activities. The book characterizes digital diplomacy as a mechanism for change management in international politics, highlighting its transformative effect on conventional diplomatic practices.

Bjola and Holmes (2015) contend that the incorporation of digital tools into diplomacy signifies a substantial transformation, requiring nations to alter their management of international relations. They assert that digital diplomacy is not simply an enhancement of old approaches but a revolutionary force necessitating a reassessment of diplomatic strategies.

The book integrates theoretical frameworks with empirical research to examine the intricacies of digital diplomacy. It analyses the impact of digital platforms on information management, public diplomacy, strategic planning, international negotiations, and crisis management. The volume is organized to examine both policy ramifications and institutional modifications. It examines the integration of digital tools by foreign ministries, the hurdles encountered, and the tactics implemented to surmount these difficulties. The book presents a comparative analysis of digital diplomatic strategy through numerous case studies from different countries and areas. This method emphasizes the varied applications and results of digital diplomacy globally.

Bjola and Holmes (2015) end by reflecting on the future direction of digital diplomacy, examining possible advancements and the continuous transformation of diplomatic procedures in the digital era. The study is crucial for comprehending the convergence of technology and diplomacy. It offers scholars and practitioners a fundamental framework to understand the complexities introduced by digital tools in international relations. Bjola and Holmes (2015) conceptualize digital diplomacy as change management, providing a perspective on the evolving nature of diplomatic operations in the 21st century.

Ilan Manor's book, "The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy" (2019), contains extensive passages on digital diplomacy by the U.S. about Iran and the Muslim world, the UK about the Syrian Civil War, as well as by Israel and the Palestinians. Taking his cue from some of the above-mentioned writers—Pamment (2013), Melissen (2005), Seib (2012), and Bjola (2015)—Manor (2019) provides a comprehensive synthesis of contemporary scholarship on digital diplomacy.

Manor (2019) is critical of the term 'digital diplomacy' as it seems to him to suggest that the latter is only one among several subsets of diplomacy. He prefers 'digitalization of public diplomacy', as this term better captures the long-term character of the process of digital technologies being adopted by diplomats. In line with previous scholarship, Manor highlights three aspects of this phenomenon. First, it was kicked off by the USA's aim to reach out to the Muslim world in response to the 9/11 attacks. Second, it is embedded in a new media landscape provided by the spread of new ICTs, leading to both the emergence of new and competing public diplomacy actors (NGOs, bloggers, etc.) and the fragmentation of the media audience. Third, it replaces (or, rather, is supposed to replace) one-way communication

with a two-way one, in which the audience responds to the diplomatic authors. In line with Pamment, and despite acknowledging the role of non-state diplomatic actors, the book focuses on the digital activities of MFAs and embassies.

Following the hint by Melissen (2005), Manor (2019) emphasizes the embeddedness of diplomats within a digital society, in which gadgets like social media and smartphones enable people to interact over vast geographical differences. This digital society is characterized by networking (as opposed to hierarchies), the importance of information (algorithms and big data), sharing (of one's personal life), and surveillance, i.e., social media users watching each other.

The digitalization of public diplomacy took speed from the late 2000s onwards when experiments like virtual embassies and Q&A sessions on social media brought home the volatility and sometimes aggressiveness of digital audiences. Manor (2019) identifies a major watershed in the practice of digitalizing public diplomacy in 2014, which was partly a response to the Russian digital disinformation campaign during the Crimean Crisis. The core element of this watershed was the shift from targeting (of a large audience, say, all citizens of a country) to tailoring (of a specific subset of this audience, say, and the antisemitically inclined section of a country's people). What enabled digital diplomats to reach a very specific audience was the use of algorithms to identify them; thus, the watershed can also be conceptualized as a shift from linear to algorithmic communication. Other elements identified by Manor (2019) are the shifts from digital tactics (issue-based) to digital strategies (campaign-based), from networks of influencers to networked gatekeepers (i.e., social media users at the intersection of two digital networks, say, anti-Semites and football fans), and from a single-issue argument to an all-encompassing narrative.

Manor (2019) then addresses the widespread charge that social media are harmful to democracy because algorithms bring together 'filter bubbles' of like-minded individuals whose digital interaction leads to the mutual strengthening of their opinions and prejudices ('echo chambers'). While Manor (2019) finds this charge exaggerated, he discusses how digital public diplomats are trying to counteract disinformation and echo chambers. Drawing upon the methodology of Bjola and Jiang (2015), Manor (2019) analyzes some cases of public diplomacy done by MFAs (in this case, from Africa and Lithuania) concerning its contents, its ability to set an agenda, and its dialogic character. Concerning the latter, there

are still large deficits as communication is largely one-way. While digitalized diplomacy goes a long way in overcoming the limitations of traditional diplomacy, according to Manor (2019), it cannot completely escape the constraints of space and time. As for space, he shows that digital diplomats who are geographically close to their intended audience (in this case, the Palestinian Authority addressing the Israeli public) find it easier to relate to this audience than those who are far away. Furthermore, and in line with Seib's insights on 'real-time diplomacy,' Manor (2019) stresses that digital diplomats need to respond without time lag to events to bring their message effectively across.

The book ends with discussions on how diplomats at the MFAs and embassies create a specific 'i-brand' for their country or, respectively, themselves. The former is dubbed by Manor (2019) as 'selfie diplomacy.' Just as an individual presents himself or herself on social media, the same is done by countries. Moreover, just like with individuals, the online narrative focuses on successes and righteousness and is ultimately an expression of conformity—the country claims to act in line with universally accepted norms. Nevertheless, the contents of such a national selfie can change over time, as in the changing self-presentation of the USA as multilateral, multicultural, and pro-environmental under Obama to that as the world's prime dealmaker under Trump. Likewise, ambassadors compensate for the loss of decision-making authority, which has been brought about by better communication technologies and thus tighter control by the MFAs over embassies, with the cultivation of their (i-brands). As in the case of the French ambassador in Washington harshly criticizing the USA, such i-brands sometimes have a polemical character and thereby may boost an ambassador's online popularity at the expense of his or her country's larger diplomatic goals.

Given the broadness of the topics discussed by Manor (2019) as well as his extensive engagement with Middle Eastern subjects, his book will guide the research agenda of this thesis. Consequently, some novel areas about the US State Department's response to the Arab Spring, its aftermath, and democracy in the Arab world have thrown themselves up for examination. Bearing in mind the historical hostility and divergent perceptions of international issues, the interrogation of the nature of the U.S. i-brand about the Arab Spring and democratic development in the Middle East will thus contribute to the ongoing debate on the nature of diplomacy conducted on social media. Second, available literature has focused

on how developed countries, particularly those found in the Western hemisphere, have exploited technology for diplomatic purposes. Yet, little is known about the specifics of these countries' digital diplomatic activities concerning critical areas highlighted by Manor (2019). For instance, certain gaps in the literature on the Middle East exist. This includes the need to interrogate whether US social media messages are tailored or targeted, the nature of the narrative presented about US policies on Middle East democratization, what these messages are aimed at, how U.S. digital diplomats deal with anti-American echo chambers, and whether U.S. digital diplomacy is merely a monologue or is it dialogic. This study will also attempt to fill this gap.



CHAPTER THREE: DIPLOMACY. A GENERAL OUTLINE

This chapter begins by introducing background issues and conceptualizing key concepts in the thesis. The subthemes covered include the meaning of diplomacy, types of diplomacy (old and modern diplomacy), and club diplomacy. Others are network diplomacy, the meaning of digitalization, and the start of digital diplomacy.

3.1. The Meaning of Diplomacy

The term "diplomacy" is believed to have originated from the ancient Greek word "diploun," which conveys the meaning of "twofold" or "double" (Kurizaki 2011). This term was associated with "diplomas," which were special documents carried by religious envoys to guarantee a secure passage during their journeys (Kurizaki 2011). The term "diplomatic" began to be used in the 16th century to denote the discipline concerned with the systematic analysis of handwriting, specifically to verify the authenticity of diplomas granted by religious institutions (Leira, 2016). Following the replacement of negotiation with diplomacy by British lawmaker Edward Burke in the late 18th century, the subsequent interpretation of diplomacy underwent substantial divergence from its initial connotation. Since then, several attempts have been made to define diplomacy. The Encyclopaedia Britannica refers to diplomacy as "the art of conducting the intercourse of nations with each other." While this definition appears very simple, it nonetheless captures the traditional and popular view about diplomacy. Similarly, the Oxford English Dictionary sees diplomacy as "the management of international relations by negotiation; the methods by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys."

The fundamental prerequisite for the establishment of diplomatic ties on a global scale appears to be the presence of autonomous nation-states capable of cultivating intergovernmental interactions. However, it is important to note that the origins of diplomacy may be traced back to a time much before the establishment of the modern sovereign nation-state. Therefore, it is imperative to provide a brief analysis of the historical context in which a series of public and private communication practices between various political entities, which have existed since ancient times, underwent significant transformations leading to their conventional association with the sovereign nation-state. According to Der Derian (1987), the

origins of diplomacy may be traced back to ancient times, when efforts were made to address the alienation between individuals and societal groupings. These early attempts at mediation laid the foundation for the development of contemporary diplomatic practices. The historical analysis of diplomacy unveils the evolving circumstances of this state of estrangement, alongside the varying degrees of disputed endeavors to reconcile it through the advancement of diverse methodologies, organizations, and discourses under distinct frameworks of ideology, authority, and jurisprudence. Undoubtedly, it is the communication aspect that confers diplomacy its enduring and cross-cultural significance, as well as its efficacy in serving as a means of representation, mutual acknowledgment, and negotiated interaction among organized social entities.

Diplomacy is not regarded as a major component of international relations by any of the prominent theoretical frameworks in the field, including realism, liberalism, and Marxism. The field of International Relations (IR) has traditionally prioritized the examination of conflict and cooperation at the systemic level, emphasizing macro-level dynamics (Siniver & Hart 2021). In contrast, the micro-level analysis of diplomats' social practices has received relatively less attention. The conventional statist method is widely regarded as the dominant framework in the field of diplomacy studies, exerting a significant influence on its academic discourse for an extended period of time (Melissen, 1999; Murray, 2012). The statement supports the perspective that the state is the primary and influential participant in diplomatic affairs (Sharp 2003). Consequently, it highlights the state's pivotal role in pursuing its objectives, carrying out its responsibilities, and selecting the means by which it engages.

State-centric definitions of diplomacy conceptualize it as the practical aspect of international relations, tasked with carrying out the foreign policies of states. Morgenthau (1963), as an example, approaches the subject of diplomacy in a systematic manner. However, he does not incorporate diplomacy as one of the six principles of realism. Instead, he perceives diplomacy as a tool used to manage the repercussions arising from the pursuit of power by state actors, serving as an alternative to conflict.

In a similar vein, some who identify as liberals perceive diplomacy as a means to shape the dynamics between nations and the international system, rather than considering it a fundamental aspect of international relations that defines the nature and interests of the individual participants within the system. According to Jonsson and Hall (2005), Marxist

variations often do not attribute significant importance to diplomacy within a political context that is primarily characterized by the accumulation and reproduction of capital.

In contrast to the systemic perspectives of international relations that do not assign a fundamental role to diplomacy, the English School offers a more integrated understanding of diplomacy within the social and political realm. This perspective goes beyond the rationalist and power-centric conceptualizations of diplomacy, acknowledging the existence of an international society that operates independently of state actors and their material interactions. This diplomatic institution consists of a well-defined set of norms and practices, encompassing roles, agreed-upon aims, rules, and conventions, which regulate the interactions among the individuals and organizations participating in it. Scholars such as Hedley Bull and Martin Wight have discussed the significance of diplomacy within the framework of international society. Bull (2019), for instance, identified diplomacy as one of the five fundamental institutions, which also include war, the great powers, the balance of power, and international law. Similarly, Wight (2002) regarded diplomacy as the preeminent institution in the field of international relations. In a similar vein, Der Derian (1987) observed that diplomacy is intricately intertwined with the broader social context and thus loses its essence when detached from this framework. Likewise, Neuman (2003) acknowledged that the English School's research on diplomacy serves as the most comprehensive foundation for further exploration in this field.

The individuals who have contributed to the field of diplomacy within the English School have been characterized as "conceptual jailbreakers" and "epistemic torchbearers" (Jonsson & Hall, 2005, p. 19; Wiseman, 2011, p. 711). Nevertheless, according to Murray (2013, p. 23), diplomatic study generally exhibits a lack of progress in terms of theoretical advancement, resulting in a discipline that is characterized by complexity, diversity, and ongoing debates regarding its fundamental subject matter.

Siniver and Hart (2021) have responded to Murray's apprehension regarding the recent integration of diplomatic studies, the English School, and various forms of constructivism. They acknowledge that this collaboration, albeit well-received, has resulted in a perceived state of conceptual chaos and confusion. According to Murray (2011), it can be challenging to provide a precise definition for the concept of modern diplomacy. The authors propose that the aforementioned challenge highlights a broader issue within the field that lacks sufficient

theoretical development (Siniver & Hart 2021). Although effective communication and clarity of expression are recognized as fundamental elements of diplomatic practice, efforts to establish a theoretical framework for diplomacy have led to a convergence of definitions and classifications that incorporate varying epistemologies and methodologies (Reus-Smith 2002; Hoffman 2003).

To substantiate his argument, Murray (2013, p. 23) provides the subsequent illustration: "Let us contemplate the three prevailing definitions that follow..." According to Berridge (2010), the concepts of diplomacy and diplomatic studies are inherently linked to the State and its diplomats, thus supporting the gatekeeper monopoly, where the State reserves exclusive or disproportionate control over diplomatic activities. Interrogating Berridge's position through an earlier study by Ramsey shows the limitations of the gatekeeper monopoly. As Ramsey noted, contemporary diplomacy has moved beyond gatekeeping. Ramsay (2006) suggests that the notion of a gatekeeper monopoly is flawed, as he contends that in the present era, every individual possesses the ability to act as a diplomat, despite the potential discomfort this may cause for professional diplomats. According to Sharp (2003, p.16), the concept of diplomacy should not be limited to the individual or state level but should be examined from a sociological perspective as a form of interaction among groups.

In defining diplomacy, it should be noted that diplomacy encompasses both practical and analytical aspects, as noted by Pouliot and Cornut (2015). This implies that modern interpretations of diplomacy are diverse and vary based on epistemological and methodological perspectives. Der Derian (1987) argues that attempting to establish a singular, comprehensive definition of diplomacy is futile in light of the complex nature of international relations. He writes thus:

If I were to pretend that a single definition could capture the essence of diplomacy, then there would be no purpose for an inquiry. It would negate an inquiry, for its very rationale is to question the existence of a defining essence. Moreover, the high level of ambiguity inherent in international relations can render the attempt for exactitude in definition a specious activity (1987 p. 10).

By the observations made by Sir Harold Nicolson, a prominent British historian and diplomat, it is evident that the term "diplomacy" is often used poorly, encompassing various

distinct meanings. This lack of precision in its usage leads to confusion of thought and significant misunderstandings (Nicolson, 1988, p. 3). Similarly, De Magalhaes (1988, p. 49) contends that the existing definitions of diplomacy are imprecise, incomplete, and incorrect, resulting in a regrettable state of conceptual confusion. In a similar vein, Marshall (1999, p. 8) highlights the frequent misinterpretation of the phrase, as it encompasses multiple dimensions such as "content, conduct, character, method, manner, and art." Additionally, Sharp (2003) concludes that the term is inherently complex and elusive, lacking a definitive resolution.

The issue of conceptual confusion has been examined and resolved through the utilization of different typologies in scholarly writing. According to Magalhaes (1998), diplomacy may be understood and conceptualized via four distinct perspectives: as an expression of a nation's foreign policy, as a tool or means to achieve foreign policy objectives, as the process of international talks, and as the professional practice and engagement of diplomats. According to Sharp (2003), the concept of diplomacy encompasses various aspects such as statecraft, foreign policy, international relations, and the formulation of foreign policy by those involved in its practice. In Pigman's (2013) work, a fundamental differentiation is made between a positivist state-centric approach and a post-positivist approach that places greater emphasis on the fundamental functions of diplomacy. Conversely, Murray (2008) presents a more intricate classification of three distinct schools of diplomatic thought: traditional state-oriented approaches, emerging approaches that center on the involvement of non-state actors, and innovative approaches that underscore the coexistence and potential collaboration between conventional and contemporary forms of diplomacy. Interpreting through the lens of Berridge's (2003) earlier study, the concept of diplomacy encompasses Pigman's post-positivist approach and Murray's classical school of thinking. This definition posits that the primary function of diplomacy is to facilitate the achievement of nations' foreign policy objectives.

The aforementioned method has frequently faced criticism due to its perceived static and statist nature, particularly in light of the rise of non-state actors in the post-Cold War era (Siniver & Hart 2021). These non-state actors encompass various entities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and multinational companies (MNCs). Furthermore, alongside the prevailing focus on

conventional matters of war and peace, the diplomatic sphere is confronted with contemporary challenges including terrorism, migration, global warming, and pandemics. These challenges not only transcend national borders but also necessitate collaborative diplomatic efforts involving both state and non-state entities (Craig, 1983; Puchala, 1995; Hocking, 2004).

Given the current circumstances, it can be argued that conventional diplomatic methods appear to be obsolete. The inflexible emphasis on formal diplomatic structures has not only hindered attempts to develop theoretical frameworks in this field, but it has also been responsible for a certain inability to achieve desired policy outcomes in a complex global landscape. This can be attributed to the imposition of an independent and exclusive approach to international affairs, which excludes certain relevant actors. As opined by Modalski (1979), traditional diplomacy is not only ineffectual and outdated, but it should also be strongly criticized for the negative impact it has on global society.

Pigman's postmodern perspective and Murray's emergent and imaginative schools of thought demonstrate a notable alignment with the English School's notion of international society. According to Dunne (2001), the involvement of diverse non-state players in the norms and institutions of international society is a crucial aspect of our globally interconnected world. Diplomacy is commonly understood as a strategic instrument utilized to develop and maintain networks and alliances among many stakeholders, encompassing both traditional and new actors, to achieve mutually interdependent goals (Diamond & MacDonald, 1996). According to Der Derian (2009), diplomacy can be defined as the process of facilitating communication and negotiation between individuals, groups, or entities that are experiencing a condition of alienation or estrangement.

Nevertheless, as Murray (2012) contends, it is important to exercise prudence when considering the new school's complete dismissal of traditional diplomacy. Murray (2012) raises a valid question by asking why these established structures persist if they are truly outdated, in a state of crisis, or no longer relevant. To reject traditionalism or state-centrism is to reject a fundamental aspect of the contemporary diplomatic landscape: the pervasive influence of traditional diplomacy (Murray 2012).

Murray's groundbreaking school of diplomatic thought contends that the dichotomy between state-centric and emerging diplomatic approaches is not only false but also perpetuates an

unfruitful and stagnant discourse on diplomacy, impeding advancements in theoretical innovation. Melissen (1999) highlights the significance of the mechanisms of representation, communication, and negotiation in the conduct of business by states and other international actors. This emphasis is characteristic of this approach. Similarly, Smith (2000) proposes that diplomacy encompasses not only the promotion of national interests and the use of persuasion but also the handling of global issues. Plischke (1984) provides a highly extensive explanation of this particular style of diplomacy. It refers to the political mechanism by which political actors, typically nations, engage in official interactions with one another within a global context. The expansion of international affairs beyond traditional diplomatic methods, coupled with the involvement of non-state political institutions such as international organizations and emerging political entities, has led to a redefinition of diplomacy. It is no longer limited to the management of foreign relations exclusively within established nation-states.

The several typologies of diplomacy mentioned, along with others, do not necessarily exist in isolation but instead highlight the adaptable nature of diplomatic practices and the persistent theoretical framework that has shaped scholarly discourse in this field over a considerable period. According to Meerts (2015), there are significant divisions among practitioners, researchers, and trainers in the sector, resulting in a sense of disconnection that poses a challenging problem to resolve. Although the typologies proposed by Pigman and Murray are valuable contributions to scholarly discourse, there remains potential for further enhancement.

The aforementioned typologies exhibit a dual limitation in terms of their generality and specificity. They lack a methodical orientation towards the establishment of "universal laws" that adopt a top-down approach, wherein all definitions of diplomacy are only derived from the presence or absence of the state. Simultaneously, the existing academic literature on the field exhibits a limited scope by predominantly emphasizing the role of the state (whether in its current, partial, or absent form) while neglecting to adequately explore the perspectives of diplomatic practitioners regarding their profession and the contextual factors that shape their work. This is a gap that has now been filled by Siniver and Hart (2021).

In contrast to the Waltzian perspective that emphasizes the role of the state in international relations as the primary driver of diplomatic change, Siniver and Hart's (2021) approach

adopts an interpretive stance to which this thesis subscribes by holding the view that realities have multiple meanings that are subject to different interpretations for deeper meanings. This does not mean that a single study must contain multiple interpretations. Instead, the interpretivist argues that the nature of conducting any investigation should allow for different perspectives because social phenomena cannot be reduced to core scientific studies with a single formula that yields the same result. Different authors could interpret the same or similar subject of investigation using different perspectives, and yet all those perspectives are valid because reality itself is subject to multiple meanings.

This perspective considers diplomatic actors as entities whose identities and beliefs are constructed by the ideas and norms prevalent in their social context (Wendt 1987; Hopf 1998; Zehfuss 2002). In line with Wendt's perspective, Siniver and Hart (2021) propose that the nature and effectiveness of diplomacy are contingent upon the actions and decisions undertaken by diplomats. They suggest the following five parameters as a guide to understanding the concept of diplomacy: (1) the identity of the actors; (2) their goals; (3) their mechanisms of interaction; (4) the profession; and (5) the skill sets of diplomacy.

They argue that the utilization of Wendt's framework for addressing the structure-agency dilemma in the field of international relations proves to be highly suitable when examining diplomacy as a negotiation process and diplomats as individuals engaged in negotiation activities. According to Glenn and Susskind (2010), negotiation is not solely a form of communication but rather a substantial means of interaction that influences the perspectives of diplomats towards both their counterparts and their position within the global framework. Similarly, Kelman (1996) and Fisher and Brown (1989) both discuss negotiation as a form of participatory problem-solving and a reciprocal process of persuasion, respectively. Meerts (2015) employs the phrases international negotiation and international diplomacy interchangeably, as he observes that the term "international negotiation" is commonly utilized by individuals engaged in diplomatic negotiation procedures.

Diplomacy, as a fundamental process in the functioning of the nation-state system, plays a crucial role in facilitating interstate negotiation. However, the landscape of diplomacy has undergone significant changes due to various factors such as the increasing presence of non-state actors engaged in diplomatic activities, advancements in technology (particularly social

media), and the heightened public awareness and concern regarding global-local issues like climate change, pandemics, and migration.

In the conceptualization of diplomacy and the function of diplomats as agents of diplomacy, Siniver and Hart (2021) contend that it is crucial to consider the conceptualization of diplomatic activity's agency. The existing body of literature predominantly emphasizes diplomacy as a form of negotiation between states, sometimes overlooking the role of diplomats as active agents in the negotiation process. In their analysis, they examined how diplomats perceive their own identity as a composite of their profession, role, status, and skill set, and how this perception is inevitably influenced by the projected identity of the state they represent. However, it is important to note that this reciprocal influence between the two identities is hardly observed. According to Faizullaev (2014), diplomats must integrate themselves, either totally or partially, with the state's self to effectively serve. However, it should be noted that diplomatic agents do not always align with their state's policy decisions. Simultaneously, it is crucial to acknowledge that in a similar manner to how governments establish formal structures for their representatives, diplomats personalize the state they represent by their distinct skill sets, prior experiences, and cognitive attributes (Adler-Nissen, 2014).

Siniver and Hart's (2021) research reveals that the interpretations assigned by diplomats to their profession exhibit a greater range of diversity and subtlety than what the current body of literature on diplomacy has previously suggested. Furthermore, these interpretations are notably more intricate than the three-tier classification proposed by Murray. They argue that the conventional definitions of diplomacy provided by scholars fail to fully encompass the diverse array of experiences encountered by contemporary diplomats. Additionally, their study indicates that the interpretation that practitioners attribute to the term "diplomacy" plays a crucial role in shaping their comprehension of the professional domain in which they function. This statement pertains to the perception individuals hold regarding the actors they interact with, the objectives they strive to achieve, the frameworks they opt to operate within, the methodologies they are inclined to employ, the skills they consider indispensable for their work, and their professional reputation. It can be inferred that the definition of diplomacy as perceived by diplomats holds great importance in their daily professional activities. This significance is particularly notable given the global and intercultural nature of diplomacy, as

it serves as a reflection of the diplomatic culture within the framework of international society.

3.2. Types of Diplomacy

This section examines old diplomacy and new diplomacy as the two major types or classifications of diplomacy.

3.2.1. Old Diplomacy

The concept of diplomacy may be traced back to the earliest human societies, while the study of diplomatic history dates back to the inception of the first treaties, agreements, and alliances (Leira 2018). These entities were present in ancient societies and are well-known to individuals who have studied Thucydides' works (Leira, 2018). However, the concept of diplomacy, as often understood today, emerged around the fifteenth century as a result of the convergence of many influences from Byzantine, Germanic, and other sources that shaped the political landscape of Italian city-states (Cecil, 1976/2015). The emergence of the initial modern diplomats brought about the establishment of protocols on permanent envoys, diplomatic immunity, the legal standing of treaties, and related matters.

During the sixteenth century, the aforementioned fundamental establishments were introduced to France. Over time, diplomatic practices evolved to resemble those of a formal profession, complete with institutional structures such as an academy, secretariat, archives, and manuals (Nicolsen, 1961; Cecil, 1976/2015). This development led to the widespread adoption of these practices across Europe. Consequently, during the height of the Old or "Orthodox" diplomatic era, which spanned roughly from the mid-seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, international relations were predominantly conducted in the French language (Constantinou, 1996; Leira, 2018). This linguistic preference facilitated communication within a relatively exclusive and tightly-knit community of professionals who shared a common understanding of diplomatic protocols. However, it is important to note that the majority of diplomatic personnel throughout this period were very limited in size, and the

bureaucratic systems in place were considered rudimentary when compared to the more advanced standards of the twentieth century.

According to the recollection of Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen (1886–1971), a British diplomat, upon his entry into the Foreign Office in 1908, it had been a very brief period since his colleagues primarily occupied themselves with mundane administrative tasks (Leira, 2018). The implementation of competitive examinations in the majority of European foreign services occurred mostly during the 1860s. As of 1914, France possessed a mere ten fully established embassies. Britain possessed a paltry total of nine embassies, of which merely two were located beyond the confines of Europe, specifically in Washington and Tokyo (Godsey, 1999).

Regarding the United States, it is worth mentioning that it lacked a formalized professional foreign service until the 1930s (Anderson, 1993). The rank of ambassador was not established until 1893 (Anderson, 1993). Except for a few numbers, the majority of its ministers were individuals lacking professional expertise or experience. The consuls were ranked slightly higher. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned system was of European origin, and Anderson (1993) asserts that despite its imperfections, it held significant value as one of Europe's notable contributions to the global community.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Old Diplomacy underwent expansion throughout the Americas and many regions of Asia, facilitated by the establishment of commercial networks and subsequent imperial endeavors (Weisbrode, 2014). Satow's (1917) guidebook provides a comprehensive portrayal of the world in a state of transition from aristocratic to democratic societies, encompassing its past, potential, and desirable future. The manual has a formal and careful approach, allocating significant attention to topics such as etiquette, titles, qualifications, and related themes. Therefore, the Old Diplomacy is commonly perceived as characterized by ceremonial practices and inflexible approaches. However, it is important to note that several of his apparent fixations, like his preoccupation with precedence, were grounded in valid justifications. The writers, Berridge (1995) and his colleagues articulate the need to establish order in both significant and minor affairs. They argue that this order serves to mitigate and ameliorate interactions among nations. In summary, the assertion posits that diplomacy serves as both a means of fostering civilization and as a manifestation of civilized behavior (Berridge 1995).

The pinnacle of the Old Diplomacy era occurred concurrently with the rise in prominence of Clausewitz rather than Satow. Periodic wars were waged with specific political objectives. The practice of diplomacy, which occasionally involved military conflict, was historically more closely associated with the art of governance than it is in contemporary times (Weisbrode, 2014). The occurrence of armed conflict not only represents a breakdown in diplomatic efforts, as it continues to do so but also presents an additional objective for diplomacy, referred to as politics by Clausewitz (1832/2003). War and diplomacy, in essence, were intricately connected. The preservation of peace as a means to prevent conflict was viewed by Mattingly (1955) as having a more temporal nature, functioning as a tool for the preservation and expansion of the state.

Different types of diplomatic conduct were prevalent in American, Asian, and African civilizations during the Middle Ages. However, the establishment of resident ambassadors, which is considered the most prominent aspect of modern diplomacy, did not materialize until the fifteenth century (Cornago, 2008; Anderson, 1993). The reason for this phenomenon can be attributed to the heightened level of diplomatic engagement in Europe, as well as the growing recognition among established monarchies that maintaining permanent diplomatic missions under centralized political authority was a more pragmatic and effective approach to conducting international affairs.

Nevertheless, except for notable precedents observed in the Italian city-states, it can be posited that the Renaissance era witnessed the emergence of certain fundamental elements of modern diplomacy within the sixteenth-century French diplomatic system. These elements, as enunciated by Cornago (2008) included the establishment of enduring diplomatic missions and the formulation of diplomatic protocols and procedures; the recognition of the utmost significance of confidentiality in negotiations, alongside the personal prudence and discretion exercised by diplomats; the expansion of significant privileges and immunities granted to ambassadors; and the professionalization and centralized administration of diplomatic services. Undoubtedly, the establishment of a network of foreign affairs ministers, which is considered one of the fundamental institutions of modern diplomacy, only materialized in the latter part of the eighteenth century (Anderson, 1993). This development coincided with the gradual strengthening and consolidation of the modern nation-state. The Enlightenment era witnessed the profound engagement of prominent intellectuals with the rational possibilities

of achieving harmonious international relations utilizing diplomatic reform (Hamilton & Langhorne 1995). However, throughout this extended duration, the realm of diplomacy remained significantly detached from philosophical discourse. It might be argued that the emergence of old diplomacy in 1815 was a result of the Congress of Vienna's efforts to revise and regulate existing diplomatic institutions and practices, which were influenced by the social and political repercussions of the French Revolution (Bjola & Kornprobst 2018). Subsequently, in the period known as the classic era of European imperialism, the contemporary practice of diplomacy underwent global expansion without significant alterations, notwithstanding its escalating intricacy (Bjola & Kornprobst 2018).

It is crucial to consider the multifaceted nature of diplomacy since it eventually evolved to primarily emphasize its position as a means to prevent war. Before that time, war was considered its brotherly counterpart. Consequently, there were instances wherein it was advantageous for a state to refrain from attaining resolutions, thereby extending a period of strategic maneuvering or negotiation. Jefferson Caffery (1886–1974), an American diplomat, was once prompted to articulate the concept of "old-style diplomacy." In response, he succinctly stated that it entailed the effective accomplishment of objectives (Wood 1961). It is not necessarily the case. Nicolson (1977) has identified two distinct diplomatic traditions, namely the heroic and the mercantile. The author juxtaposed these two entities with contrasting objectives: the primary objective being the eventual defeat of a competitor, while the secondary objective typically involved the pursuit of a mutually acceptable arrangement.

In subsequent periods, the concept of diplomacy evolved to encompass the strategic pursuit of national interests through the promotion of international harmony and the consolidation of power for one's own sovereign or nation (Weisbrode, 2014; Leira, 2018). The aforementioned arrangement might be characterized as a distribution of power, supported by the diplomatic concert or condominium. Initially originating in Europe, this phenomenon gradually expanded its influence and assimilated other regions across the globe (Weisbrode, 2014). The Americas, even after the conflicts of independence, remained integrated into this structure, particularly through trade and investment, similar to the European empires in Africa and Asia (Weisbrode, 2014).

Nicolson (1954) has identified three primary components, in addition to its hierarchical and Eurocentric nature, that contribute to its overall structure: collective responsibility,

professionalism, and secrecy. The practice of cabinet diplomacy was characterized by a significant degree of formality, with limited institutional frameworks for its management, primarily centered on foreign ministries. However, it is important to note that it may also possess a certain degree of flexibility and unpredictability.

The aforementioned aspect served as both a source of fortitude and vulnerability. International administration, also known as enforcement, was an inherent aspect of diplomatic practice. Diplomats were required to possess knowledge of the norms governing international relations, although there were no established international mechanisms for disciplinary actions. Consequently, diplomats relied on their own devised instruments, such as treaties, compacts, and arrangements, to maintain order and accountability. Engaging in transgressions or exceeding established boundaries resulted in repercussions; however, the severity of these consequences varied based on the perceived significance attributed by the diplomatic community and their respective rulers. The concept of the "public" as it is understood in contemporary society appeared to have minimal relevance or influence in the situation. The significance of public opinion was indeed considerable in the context of the Old Diplomacy, and many methods employed to shape it, such as press campaigns, rumor mills, and petitions, may be traced back to the seventeenth century or earlier. However, there was neither codification nor segregation observed.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Old Diplomacy, it is essential to comprehend its inherent characteristics of being formal and exclusive, as well as its ability to evolve and adjust. The practice was a reflection of the societies that engaged in it. In historical contexts characterized by revolutionary regimes, such as those observed in France and America, ambassadors were typically individuals of notable stature who showed adeptness in adapting to prevailing conditions (Weisbrode, 2013). Moreover, it was uncommon for these diplomats to engage in supplementary income-generating activities alongside their official duties. This phenomenon remains applicable to ambassadors representing the United States and a select number of other nations, albeit to a lesser extent in other occupational domains such as the military, law, or medicine.

The concept of diplomatic society did not align perfectly with that of international society, although they had some similarities. The relationship between the two entities can be characterized as codependent and commingled, with the former being both reflective of and

formative of the latter. Since international society provides the common laws, customs, and institutions that enable diplomacy, diplomatic society depends on it for support. International society encourages collaboration on global issues, mediates conflicts, and gives legitimacy to states' diplomatic exchanges. The order, legitimacy, and efficacy of diplomatic activities would be compromised in the absence of the framework of international society. Diplomats primarily acquire their talents and attain their rank through experiential learning and by engaging in mentorship and patronage networks. Historically, the criteria they adhered to, while not necessarily tracing back to their beginnings, exhibited characteristics associated with the privileged and aristocracy. Nonetheless, several ambassadors during the Renaissance era exhibited qualities of humility (Nowotny, 2011).

Despite the enduring presence of inflexible structures of hierarchy and authority, the nature of Old Diplomacy can be likened more to a disorganized yet improvable garden rather than a methodical game. The phenomenon under consideration tends to disseminate and contract in response to prevailing circumstances, as well as the prevailing personalities that exert influence over it at a given point in time. The term "to cultivate" is appropriate. In this regard, there has been minimal alteration since the seventeenth century, or potentially even preceding that period. The primary objectives of the entity in question remain centered on safeguarding, exerting influence, and disseminating information. Diplomats exhibit noticeable variations in their appearance, mannerisms, and behavior compared to previous eras, however, they continue to uphold fundamental qualities such as expertise, sagacity, adaptability, and a high level of acceptance towards nearly all aspects of their occupation, including inherent contradictions.

3.2.2. New Diplomacy

The global conflict known as World War I, spanning the years 1914 to 1918 had a profound impact on the field of international diplomacy. The prestige of the 'old diplomacy' was significantly damaged due to its purported contribution to the extensive devastation caused by the war. According to Bjola and Murray (2016), critics argued that the underlying cause of the issue could be attributed to the commercial and imperial competitions that occurred in the recent past. These competitions were accompanied by arms races and the implementation of balance-of-power strategies. Additionally, the secret treaties and conventions that supported

the alliances and ententes before the war were also identified as contributing factors. In summary, the collective guilt for the inability to prevent the progression towards war was placed on the overall diplomatic profession, leading to widespread demand for substantial reforms in diplomatic practices and institutions (Hamilton & Langhorne, 2010).

The move from Old diplomacy to the concept of 'New diplomacy' was facilitated by three additional elements. To begin with, it is important to note that there was a pervasive inclination towards colonial expansion among the major powers, with Germany being particularly influential in shaping foreign policy (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2018). Despite the presence of the theory of the balance of power, there was a widespread acknowledgment that excessive acquisition of power would be unwise and detrimental to diplomatic relations among major nations, territorial expansion, and colonial conflicts, thereby exerting considerable pressure on diplomatic ties from two distinct perspectives. These simultaneously heightened competition between major countries for colonial conquests and bolstered the aspirations of colonies to assert their right to self-determination. In articulating the appropriate responses to such competitions and new states, countries strengthened their diplomatic communications and adopted urgent changes in their interstate relations. In addition, new states emerged, and this led to further expansion of the diplomatic space and deepening of diplomatic practice itself.

Furthermore, the significant effect of the accelerated pace of communication has had a profound effect on traditional approaches to diplomatic engagement and negotiation (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2018). Before the advent of novel communication technologies such as the telegraph and telephone, the transmission, reception, and response to communications entailed a protracted period spanning several months. Consequently, it was customary for ambassadors to be furnished with comprehensive directives for their diplomatic undertakings. Frequently, diplomats experienced a recurring pattern of failing to seize advantageous circumstances due to their preoccupation with composing insightful reports on rapidly evolving events, rendering their dispatches obsolete upon arrival (Nicolson, 1988, p. 82). The increasing quantity, urgency, and complexity of matters requiring discussion among governments have necessitated more regular and direct communication between foreign secretaries. As a result, bilateral or multilateral conferences have emerged as a novel means of conducting diplomatic relations, gaining significant importance.

In addition, the increasing prominence of the United States in international affairs necessitated a corresponding adaptation of diplomatic protocols, particularly due to the prevailing skepticism among Americans toward European diplomatic practices (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2018). The historical significance of the notion of 'new diplomacy' emerged with its introduction by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson during the last stages of World War I. Fundamentally, the foundational principle of U.S. diplomacy was rooted in the notion that it was feasible to employ the principles and methodologies that had long been considered fundamental to liberal democracy in the realm of external affairs (Nicolson, 1988, p. 84).

In the context of the First World War, these many elements converged to foster a reevaluation of the objectives and approaches employed in diplomatic engagement. Advocates of the "new diplomacy" contended that foreign policy should not be predicated solely upon the principles of secrecy and the maintenance of a delicate equilibrium of power. Instead, they put out three novel guiding principles of diplomatic action that have continued to have relevance up to the present era: The concept of public accountability has been discussed by Wilson (1918) as a means of ensuring that foreign policy remains grounded in popular consent, particularly in the context of democratic states. Self-determination, as articulated by the League of Nations (1924: Art. 22), Olaniyan (1996), and Sulkunen (2015), can be seen as an extension of the liberal principle of individual rights at the state level. Additionally, collective security has been proposed as a mechanism to prevent the arbitrary use of force, with contributions from Wilson (1918), Kissinger (1994), McDougal and Feliciano (1994), and Hamilton and Langhorne (1995).

The Second World War witnessed the emergence of nuclear weapons and their profound impacts. The post-war period witnessed a significant apprehension regarding this matter. Following the culmination of the Second World War, a period of geopolitical tension known as the Cold War emerged between the United States and the Soviet Union. This historical era was characterized by alternating periods of *détente*, which referred to a state of easing of tensions. During the eras of *détente*, diplomacy was employed widely as a means to effectively reduce tensions and sustain the achieved de-escalation. The concept of nuclear diplomacy was prevalent from 1945 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The primary catalysts of the Cold War era were characterized by a reciprocal sense of distrust and mistrust. Consequently, the two blocs engaged in a continuous process of monitoring each

other's actions and striving to maintain a competitive advantage over one another. The international community experienced a pervasive sense of apprehension regarding the possibility of a nuclear conflict. There was a persistent anticipation that the existing tensions may potentially rise to a critical juncture where both factions would deem it necessary to employ their nuclear arsenals (Hamilton & Langhorne, 2010). Crisis diplomacy emerged as a distinct style of diplomacy during times of war. One notable illustration of such diplomatic efforts can be observed in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The sequential progression of events can be attributed to a combination of inadequate communication, accompanied by underlying factors of suspicion and mistrust (Weaver, 2014). According to Weaver (2014), the de-escalation process necessitated the establishment of a dedicated hotline, which facilitated communication between the leaders of both blocs. This platform allowed them to address and clarify any misunderstandings about each other's actions and strategies. During this period, summit diplomacy also emerged as a distinct form (Kaufmann, 1996). This form of diplomacy entails the head of state of one nation engaging in a diplomatic visit to the head of state of another nation, necessitating travel to the latter's country. Subsequently, a sequence of meetings would ensue to deliberate upon the matters outlined in the agenda.

The post-World War II era was characterized by a notable shift in the realm of diplomacy that may be attributed to several key factors. The impact of the Cold War is evident in the significance of new international security organizations within a world divided by ideological differences. Additionally, the Soviet Union and China played prominent diplomatic roles during this period. The increasing importance of modern intelligence and espionage, as well as the diplomatic handling of conflicts in the context of nuclear weapons, further exemplify the consequences of the Cold War. The extension and rearrangement of the diplomatic agenda have been prompted by the growing interconnection in economic and technical domains. There also exists a pervasive recognition of the imperative to cultivate global collaboration utilizing establishing international organizations. The birth of the United Nations Security Council as a collective security architecture and the United Nations General Assembly would mark a new dimension in modern diplomacy.

The importance of the decolonization process and the following refusal by recently liberated African and Asian nations to adhere to the Western-centric framework of current diplomacy and international law has garnered considerable attention in the global sphere (Siracusa,

2021; Melissen, 1996). Certainly, the aforementioned phenomena have seen substantial changes in recent decades, therefore requiring a reevaluation of the crucial significance of diplomacy within the framework of contemporary global affairs. The aforementioned facts suggest that there is a need for diplomacy to reevaluate its techniques and role within the context of global governance, notwithstanding the difficulties involved in imagining its potential obsolescence.

Throughout the course of human history, the establishment of bilateral ties has always emerged as the fundamental and vital mode of conducting diplomatic affairs. Nevertheless, apart from a limited number of noteworthy yet unfinished instances, such as the Havana Convention of 1928 of Latin America, the comprehensive systematization of established norms and conventions in the realm of international diplomacy did not materialize until the endorsement of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations in 1961 (Denza, 2008). A considerable proportion of these persons required more clarification, while others required adaptation to the prevailing conditions of global diplomacy. Moreover, it was widely believed among Western powers that adherence to international legal principles of diplomacy required the official recognition of the newly developing sovereign states in Africa and Asia. The aforementioned measure was considered essential to mitigate the risk of conflicts and political disagreements in their diplomatic engagements. The dialogue transpired amid the political context of the Cold War, marked by the intentional omission of China and other communist nations. Ultimately, the Convention attained a significant level of accomplishment.

The Vienna Convention encompasses several key aspects of bilateral diplomatic relations. These include:

(1) the procedures for establishing permanent diplomatic relations between states based on mutual consent, as well as the conditions necessary for unilaterally terminating or severing such relations; (2) the recognition of official representation and the promotion of friendly relations and international cooperation as the fundamental roles of permanent missions; (3) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of the sending state and its nationals; and (4) the protection of diplomatic missions' premises, assets, and communications, as well as the personal inviolability and jurisdictional immunity of diplomatic agents, which are essential privileges granted to diplomatic missions, (Denza, 2008).

Furthermore, the Convention expressly delineated the responsibilities that diplomatic missions must adhere to concerning the host state, serving as a potent manifestation of apprehension against external interference in internal matters.

In recent decades, the primary domain of transformation and innovation in contemporary diplomacy has shifted away from the traditional institution and practice of bilateralism. Instead, it has been driven by advancements resulting from the expansion of multilateral and conference diplomacy (Muldoon & Aviel, 2020). While multilateral diplomacy is not a recent phenomenon, its significant expansion in recent decades warrants more examination (Mahbubani 2022). The developing institutionalization of international collaboration can be attributed to the growing global recognition of contemporary circumstances of interdependence. Multilateralism appears to be a particularly suitable approach for addressing contemporary economic, technical, and ecological challenges by creating several multinational regimes. The increasing significance of international institutions and organizations, as well as the concept of parliamentary diplomacy, which has substantial ramifications for diplomacy and international law, exemplifies the ongoing institutionalization of the global community. Moreover, it may be argued that the existing multilateral system effectively addresses the functional and legitimizing requirements of the global political economy. This is achieved via the establishment of novel mechanisms for international governance that effectively regulate economic and technical complexities while also providing avenues for managing potential social disputes.

3.3. Types of Contemporary Diplomacy

3.3.1. Club Diplomacy

Club diplomacy involves a close diplomatic system where a very limited number of players conduct diplomatic activities. Such activities are generally characterized by written communication, hierarchical structure, and secrecy (Heine, 2008). Club diplomacy encapsulates a traditional model of practicing diplomatic activity, where diplomatic interactions are restricted to exclusive club members. Such club members were drawn from diplomatic circles, government officials, and sometimes the business community. In some circumstances, diplomats deliver occasional speeches to members of the host community

(Heine, 2013; Gilboa, 2001). As a close community, the model represents only the interests of its respective groups.

The club diplomacy has been criticized on several grounds. First, it is argued that the model is anachronistic because of the apparent disconnection between diplomats in many parts of the world and the realities that confront them (Berridge, 1995). It is further argued that club diplomacy does not take into account the other important actors and interest groups in diplomatic affairs. As noted by Heine (2013), club diplomacy is also criticized for failing to adequately identify with groups that are ultimately affected by the decisions that are made in a world where there is an increase in the democratization of information and communication.

Furthermore, club diplomacy runs in opposition to transparency and accountability by agents of government and the state. The increased penetration of the internet has led to more demand by citizens to be carried along in the foreign policy decisions of their country. This demand is against the backdrop of the internet bringing contemporary issues to the very doorsteps of people.

The club model is also limited in its capacity to link various actors with different levels of engagement and interests, largely due to its secrecy. The argument is that secrecy has undermined the credibility of foreign missions, thereby making the general populace feel not well represented by club diplomats. This is echoed by McDowell (2008), who contends that the emergence of globalization of information has rendered the professional boundaries porous and out-club diplomats at a loss. Notwithstanding, Zidar (2003) argues that secrecy is a core element of diplomacy and has accounted for many successes in the field. The case for transitioning from traditional diplomacy to a more current system focused on multilateralism rather than bilateralism has garnered more favor. Club diplomats, who are considered experts in specific fields, have ceased to participate in diplomatic activities. Numerous nations partake in direct conversations with presidents to address their mutual interests. Nevertheless, there exists a potential danger that the academic and political spheres may overlook the key factors that contributed to the effectiveness of traditional club diplomacy while eagerly adopting the new paradigm of "modern" diplomacy. These factors include entrusting negotiations to individuals who possess not only a high level of education and knowledge but also specialized training in the field. Dean Acheson once articulated the notion that a chief of the state becomes vulnerable to criticism and potential consequences when they make

significant errors or misjudgments. The painstakingly organized summits are considered the most successful, as they demand a high level of professionalism and expertise for optimal performance (Valusek, 2019).

Club diplomacy seeks to promote a hierarchical approach wherein choices are formulated by the most authoritative individuals in private settings and subsequently disseminated to the broader populace. However, the issue at hand is bureaucracy, which may be traced back to the colonial system, particularly in emerging nations. The conventional system prioritizes the preservation of the decision-making framework, which subsequently influences its diplomatic protocols. The concept of old diplomacy, while not intrinsically malevolent, emerged as a response to a flawed system and has lost its efficacy due to its primary objective of preserving the status quo rather than facilitating transformative change. Such a flawed system was characterized by ceaseless conflict, erratic communication, spontaneous discussions, erratic coalitions, and old diplomacy. To lower the number of wars and increase the predictability of international relations, it aimed to establish stable discourse, formalize negotiations, and develop procedures for peaceful conflict resolution.

This line of thought is reasonable; nonetheless, it is important to note that the mainframe structure of diplomacy pertains to the influence exerted on the global system, encompassing a scope that extends far beyond local grassroots efforts. In the contemporary era, it would be imprudent to endorse the utilization of conventional diplomatic approaches in interstate relations, given the escalating presence of diverse stakeholders who contribute to the formulation of a nation's strategic objectives. The dissemination of this process is highly likely to permeate the broader population.

3.3.2. Network Diplomacy

This section discusses the concept of “network diplomacy” by drawing from and commenting on how scholars and authors have defined the concept and its impact overall nature of contemporary diplomacy.

The comprehension of the concept of network diplomacy relies on the theoretical and methodological framework adopted by the writers. Scholars operating within the prevailing theoretical framework of the liberal paradigm in the discipline of contemporary international

relations history explicate the notion of network diplomacy by highlighting the proactive involvement of non-governmental actors in cross-border initiatives. The researchers emphasize the development of flexible methods of communication between these entities and their equivalents in various nations or locations. Authors who subscribe to the realism paradigm mostly concentrate on the relations between nation-states within various multilateral venues. The notion of network diplomacy can be seen as a product of the diverse attributes that currently shape the political environment of contemporary global society. Nevertheless, the establishment of a clear and unified methodology for the examination of network diplomacy remains unresolved.

According to Lebedeva, Morozov, and Shebalina (2019), there is a widely accepted viewpoint among researchers that the development of network mechanisms in diplomacy is closely connected to the processes of globalization and integration. The aforementioned correlation emerges because of the present-day difficulties faced by the global community, hence requiring a reassessment of the significance of diplomacy as a principal means of international involvement. Hence, it is possible to identify common attributes that are elucidated by researchers while analyzing various approaches to network diplomacy. The major goal is to foster a multilateral dialogue among a range of entities, including government officials, experts, and public figures from different fields, to tackle specific difficulties and promote national interests.

Concurrently, there has been a growing acceptance within the Western scientific community of a more comprehensive interpretation of network diplomacy, which entails the building of extensive relationships, particularly with foreign stakeholders, in order to proficiently pursue a nation's foreign policy goals (Lebedeva, Morozov & Shebalina, 2019). As a result, network diplomacy has grown closely interconnected with public diplomacy. In contrast to club diplomacy, network diplomacy encompasses a larger cohort of persons and is distinguished by a horizontally structured organization, as opposed to a vertically structured one. This particular approach to diplomacy demonstrates a greater level of transparency in contrast to confidentiality, as it largely depends on increased bilateral encounters rather than formalized signing ceremonies for communication.

According to Metzl (2001), the advent of globalization and the digital revolution has granted decentralized networks greater power and influence, hence presenting a significant challenge

to the existing state-centered hierarchies. According to Metzl (2001), these networks can be roughly classified as collectives of interconnected persons who share similar positions within institutional or social frameworks. These networks play a crucial role in fostering the development of novel community connections that not only enrich but also democratize and amplify existing social structures. Networks have an intrinsic capacity to adapt and reorganize themselves in the face of developing challenges, demonstrating a much quicker pace of advancement when compared to traditional hierarchical systems.

Despite the significant role that nations assume in the global sphere, the impact of networks contributes to weakening the hierarchical predominance of states. In the present setting, the significance of conventional hierarchies in the realm of problem-solving may seem lessened, given that networks have the capacity to establish connections among larger populations and effectively address impediments. Metzl (2001) asserts that public diplomacy, denoting the reciprocal dissemination of ideas and information between governmental entities and foreign societies, is congruent with a network-centric framework. Metzl (2001) further opines that public diplomacy, once facilitated by the now-defunct U.S. Information Agency (USIA), endeavors to clarify the acts of the U.S. government to global audiences. In addition, it carries out polls and media evaluations to provide U.S. policymakers with insights into foreign perspectives and feelings. Metzl (2001) contends that this type of involvement plays a crucial role in promoting intercultural understanding, which is a fundamental aspect of interconnected networks. The phenomenon of network diplomacy has resulted in heightened importance for governments in their endeavors to effectively interact with global audiences. Governments are now required to go beyond the basic act of establishing ties with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The prioritization of facilitating communication among different groups has been a focal point for governmental entities.

Metzl's (2001) research findings indicate that network diplomacy exhibits a broader range of activities and influence when compared to traditional forms of diplomacy. Diplomats bear the responsibility of organizing and facilitating events, both on a national and international scale, intending to distribute information. It is advisable for individuals engaged in such incidents to develop affiliations within international electronic discourse communities to enhance the exchange of information and facilitate the coordination of future measures. This is anticipated to augment the degree of transparency in the processes associated with policy formulation.

Considering the network model, it is recommended that government institutional culture undergo a shift from a culture characterized by secrecy to one characterized by openness, as suggested by Metzl (2001). Constantinou et al. (2016) undertake a critical examination of the concept of network diplomacy. The concept of network diplomacy is exemplified through an analysis of Russian diplomacy, as presented by the authors. This diplomatic approach involves flexible cooperation among different coalitions of nations to align with overarching objectives. Therefore, this particular approach to diplomacy must motivate the political institutions of all countries to adjust their national objectives in accordance with those of their counterparts and the varied interests of the international community (Constantinou et al. 2016). The authors argue that network diplomacy can be seen as the deliberate establishment of temporary coalitions between nations, with the goal of achieving their individual foreign policy objectives. The US Bush Jr.'s Coalition of the Willing against Iraq in 2003 is a typical example. Coalitions of this sort can be conceptualized as networks, in which each participant inside the coalition assumes the function of a node. Network diplomacy is based on the concept of cooperation among various institutions, including government authorities, domestic private sector companies, global corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and regional and international organizations.

Zaharna (2013) focused on analyzing the network paradigm. Zaharna (2013) posits that networking has become the dominant form of persuasion in the modern era of global communication. Within this particular framework, the efficacy of public diplomacy lies in its capacity to forge connections and cultivate relationships with international audiences. In the realm of international discourse, governments must adopt a facilitative role rather than a purely communicative one in order to effectively develop networks through their public diplomacy endeavors. Within the context of network diplomacy, nation-states must foster a heightened level of flexibility and resourcefulness (Zaharna, 2005). The author also argues that in today's era of global communication, the political landscape requires the use of networking as a new approach for developing and executing public policy to get maximum flexibility. The researcher provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the rise of network diplomacy and the phenomena of globalization and regional integration. This phenomenon is defined by an increased level of collaboration between states, which has been further strengthened in response to current global issues, threats, and crises.

Burganova's (2016) study provides additional evidence supporting the relationship between network diplomacy and the foreign policy of governments. The author argues that this particular paradigm is based on the assumption that a nation-state is actively engaged in multilateral organizations, that there exists a flexible framework for collaboration, and that there is a significant representation of countries from across the world. Conferences, international gatherings, and negotiations are commonly acknowledged as the principal expressions of the network model of diplomacy. As stated by Burganova (2016), this particular approach to diplomacy does not enforce any commitments on individuals within the global community. The development of flexibility is crucial within the framework of augmenting interstate contacts and decision-making processes. The network strategy prioritizes the utilization of soft power as the principal instrument. However, according to Burganova (2016), the participation of several stakeholders in decision-making processes related to common issues might lead to bureaucratization, which may be seen as a disadvantage of network diplomacy. Such bureaucratization will refer to the long processes inherent in the system that each stakeholder represents.

In his seminal work, Sharp (2009) offers an extensive examination of network diplomacy, exploring the profound transformation witnessed in the field of international relations. Presently, there is an increasing acknowledgement that the augmentation of personal autonomy is being helped by sensible and defensible connections that transcend conventional boundaries (Lebedeva, Morozov & Shebalina, 2019). The nature of these connections is defined by the participation of evolving and vibrant sources of authority inside interconnected networks. Numerous coalitions, encompassing both intragroup and intergroup dynamics, strive to exert influence on each other on a wide range of issues. The alteration of political representation and diplomatic processes has been effectively done by active participation in popular and democratic discussions, enabling direct interaction (Sharp, 2009). According to Sharp (2009), there is a growing argument that the conventional notion of states is being surpassed by an interconnected network of transnational connections. Alternatively, one may argue that within this theoretical framework, the existing institutions of governmental power continue to exist but have experienced a decrease in importance, as has historically been the case.

In essence, the notion of diplomacy comprises the various procedures of representation, communication, and negotiation utilized by states and other international entities to effectively handle their affairs and find resolutions to problems. The approaches utilized for the implementation of these duties have been subject to considerable examination since the latter half of the 1980s. The concept of network diplomacy has been proposed by several scholars and authors as a potential strategy for rejuvenating the conventional understanding of diplomacy. It is contended by scholars that in the present day, public diplomacy has experienced substantial transformations, rendering it more amenable to a network-oriented framework. In the contemporary global landscape, the progression of technology and sociological changes has led to the fragmentation and decentralization of conventional diplomacy. The observed phenomenon can be ascribed to a multitude of variables, including the broad dissemination of information, the gradual disintegration of traditional norms and ideologies, and the pervasive empowerment of individuals on a significant societal level. Certainly, the field of diplomacy has undergone significant changes that now need active involvement with a growing and diversified range of individuals and groups. One feature that has been widely expected but has encountered difficulties in properly harnessing the new spaces and ambiguous elements of our global system, such as digital diplomacy, is especially noteworthy.

CHAPTER FOUR: DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

This section examines relevant studies on digital diplomacy using a thematic approach. It aims to discover essential themes, concepts, and ideas through a more subjective and interpretive approach. The adoption of this approach in this study is because scientific advancements in digital diplomacy are happening simultaneously rather than sequentially. In addition, the thematic approach promotes interpretation and study of the content because it necessitates analytical thought to find ideas. Finally, identifying and expanding on themes facilitates the production of a critical analysis of the content from a specific theoretical or methodological position, as well as a coherent description of a body of literature.

While it is not possible to review all identified themes within an academic discipline, this study has identified the below themes as central to the research questions and objectives, and they therefore constitute the basis for this chapter.

4.1. Digitalization

The term "digitalization" refers to the comprehensive interconnection of all sectors of the economy and society, together with the capacity to gather pertinent information and subsequently assess and convert that knowledge into actionable measures (Khalifa, Elghany, & Elghany, 2021). The aforementioned modifications yield various benefits and prospects, albeit concurrently introducing novel obstacles.

The digital exemplifies the progression of technology from analog and mechanical devices to the contemporary availability of digital technology (Sharma & Shanmugaboopathi, 2022). The digital revolution is occasionally referred to as the "Third Industrial Revolution" in scholarly discourse. The advancement of the digital revolution is fundamentally contingent upon the utilization of Internet technologies. The inception of the digital revolution may be traced back to 1947 when the introduction of the first transistor had a profound impact on the advancement of digital computing technology. The proliferation of computers in the 1980s had a significant impact on the global adoption of digitization. The emergence of the World Wide Web (WWW) has also played a pivotal role in fostering the advancement of the digital revolution. The advent of mainstream internet technology in 1991 brought about a significant

transformation in the process of industrialization. The increasing prevalence of internet users has played a significant role in driving the digital revolution and has had diverse impacts on the contemporary world. According to Statistica.com (2022), the global population of internet users experienced a notable increase from approximately 1.2 billion in 2005 to 4.9 billion in 2021.

The digitalization, or digital revolution, is widely regarded as the transition from analog technology to digital electronic technology. The process of digitalization serves as the primary catalyst for business transformation and the subsequent alteration of the everyday lives of individuals everywhere. The digital revolution is often referred to as the "Third Industrial Revolution" because of its significant impact on current industry. The advent of remote work and online learning has enabled individuals to engage in professional activities and educational pursuits from the comfort of their own residences or other convenient locations. The acquisition of knowledge and skills can be facilitated for individuals of all age groups, leading to enhanced productivity and a more skilled workforce, benefiting businesses. The advent of the digital revolution has facilitated the accessibility of banking services through online portals. Numerous firms across the globe have adopted the practice of digitally managing their stock, hence enhancing the overall efficiency of their operations. The utilization of advanced GPS technology has significantly facilitated company operations, particularly in the realm of logistics. As a result, various logistic firms have adopted the use of drones to efficiently deliver their consignments (Dobrovnik, Herold, Fürst, & Kummer, 2018). This enhancement of the company's supply chain contributes to its operational efficiency and facilitates its overall business performance. The digital revolution has a significant impact on a country's economic development through transforming the corporate landscape. Digitization serves as a means of connecting persons and groups, fostering improved international communication, and therefore influencing the advancement of corporate enterprises. Moreover, the advent of the digital revolution presents a unique opportunity for emerging startup enterprises. Currently, because of technological progress, individuals have the ability to effectively oversee a business operation from the comfort of their own bedroom, utilizing only a single laptop.

The advent of the digital revolution has had a profound impact on several facets of human existence. The advent of technology has significantly influenced the domains of education

and healthcare. In contemporary times, individuals possess the capacity to engage in communication with diverse collectives throughout the globe, thereby facilitating the seamless interchange of ideas and fostering enhanced connectivity with fellow global citizens. Enhancing talents and capacities contributes to individuals' holistic growth. According to Rodrigues et al. (2019), the integration of digital technology has a positive impact on the education system and enhances the entire learning experience for individuals. Currently, individuals have the opportunity to acquire knowledge in their preferred fields of study from the convenience of their chosen locations. The widespread availability of broadband and the emergence of new 5G technology have facilitated the acquisition of diverse information, hence enhancing individuals' understanding. The global healthcare industry has experienced significant advancements as a result of the integration of digital technology. The utilization of cutting-edge diagnostic techniques and state-of-the-art technology has facilitated the simplification of diagnostic procedures, thereby contributing to the promotion of individuals' overall well-being. The advent of digital technology has significantly transformed traditional agricultural practices. Currently, farmers can utilize sophisticated digital devices to do soil testing and obtain information regarding soil properties. This confers a competitive edge to farmers in the agricultural process. According to Durkiewicz and Janowski (2018), digitalization plays a crucial role in enhancing governance and administration within the government. Governments across the globe currently employ various internet portals and mobile applications to offer essential services to the general population. The utilization of diverse digital technology enables the government to monitor several facets of administration. Law enforcement agencies, along with many other governmental departments, have increasingly adopted the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly referred to as drones, as well as various tracking devices, in order to effectively surveil and monitor illicit activity. This proactive approach serves to uphold societal norms and regulations, hence ensuring public safety and the prevention of criminal behavior. The significance of innovation in the digital revolution is of utmost importance. The Digital revolution has been identified as a significant catalyst for scientific progress on a global scale. The digital revolution commenced with the introduction of the transistor, which subsequently underwent transformative changes in response to technological advancements. The digital revolution can be mostly attributed to the advent of computers and the internet. The utilization of mobile technology enhances the velocity and regularity of

communication between organizations and individuals, hence contributing to the enhancement of the business model. Currently, the integration of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, and big data analysis has facilitated the development of novel technologies that aid in the digitization process for academics. According to Koumoulos et al. (2019), the utilization of new 3D printing technology has a significant impact on the design of modern equipment, leading to increased efficiency in research and development processes.

4.2. The Evolution of Digital Diplomacy

The development of diplomacy has consistently been intertwined with societal transformations that it supports. The nature of diplomacy underwent significant changes after the establishment of the contemporary sovereign state, which marked the emergence of the permanent ambassador system. Similarly, the field of diplomacy has consistently been influenced by technological advancements, such as the radio, which had a significant role in the emergence of public diplomacy. According to Bjola (2013), the primary responsibility of a resident ambassador was to effectively navigate and oversee diplomatic relations, whether they were characterized by hostility or amicability, within foreign courts. Hence, diplomacy has encompassed a social dimension for several decades. According to Dizard (2001), the digitization of diplomacy may be traced back to the 19th century, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) employed telegraph clerks.

Upon the reception of the inaugural telegraph message during the 1860s, Lord Palmerston, an eminent figure serving as the British Foreign Secretary, was purported to have expressed a sentiment of great concern, exclaiming, "My God, this signifies the culmination of diplomacy" (Adesina, 2017, p. 10). Remarkably, the practice of diplomacy has endured the advent of the telegraph as well as following advancements in technology, including the radio, telephone, television, and facsimile machines. The advent of each significant technological item has elicited responses like those exhibited by Lord Palmerston. Harold Nicolson, a perceptive scholar of diplomatic protocol, expressed his concerns about the telephone's influence as a potentially hazardous tool for the dissemination of information and the transmission of instructions (Hocking & Melissen, 2015).

Ritto (2014) described the process of transitioning in technical innovation. According to the individual in question, the telephone, which emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century after the telegraph, had a pivotal role in enhancing international communication and facilitating diplomatic exchanges. Consequently, it contributed to the expeditiousness and accuracy of communication processes. Subsequently, the fax system gained prominence, particularly in the period after 1980. The term "fax," derived from "facsimile," is alternatively referred to as "telecopying" or "telefax." It involves the transfer of scanned printed materials, encompassing both textual content and images, typically to a printer attached to a designated telephone number. The fax machine that receives the transmission decodes the tones and subsequently reproduces the initial image by printing it onto a physical sheet of paper. The author strongly emphasized the significance of the fax system by arguing that before the internet, the fax system was a revolution in its own right. The ability to transmit documents and photographs from one area of the world to another in minutes dramatically aided diplomatic communication. For example, a French ambassador in Tokyo might sign a treaty with Japanese authorities and send a copy to the French foreign minister in Paris via telefax in less than 10 minutes! Diplomatic missions began using fax to circulate original documents such as briefs, minutes of meetings, legislation, speeches, official notes, treaties, protocols, verbal notes, press releases, cabinet memos, letters, and reports. Foreign ministries in capitals used fax to ensure that embassies in all five corners of the world received regular (daily, in many cases) updates on the ministries' activity and major government decisions. Indeed, the fax enabled ambassadors to be swiftly informed on any topic relevant to their work, as well as to understand their governments' positions on all subjects relevant to their countries. Consular services use fax to get copies of key papers from capitals, including birth and marriage certificates, passports, and visas. This allows diplomatic missions to provide faster and more dependable service to citizens overseas (Ritto, 2014, n. p).

The Internet has undergone a significant change. According to Friedman (2005), the Internet has been instrumental in promoting global equality by providing universal access to knowledge and facilitating direct connectivity and business transactions between individuals regardless of their geographical location. This facilitates a progressively more effective global allocation of tasks, considering the relative strengths and advantages of diverse markets. This phenomenon, as described by the author, leads to a growing sense of global interconnectedness and diminished barriers between nations and cultures. Abbasov (2007)

states that there has been a gradual transition in communication methods, moving from telegrams to mobile phones, and more recently, to platforms such as Skype. Similarly, traditional postal letters have been replaced by electronic mail, and short messages (SMS) have given way to Twitter posts. Additionally, the use of hard-copy invitations has been substituted by Facebook events, and YouTube channels have replaced TV announcements. Expensive in-person meetings have been substituted by web conferences, and even physical embassies have been transformed into net-based virtual missions. The Internet is gradually displacing traditional forms of media such as newspapers, television, radio, and conventional telephones, becoming as the dominant medium for communication. The present-day applications, with a focus on file sharing, social networking, interactivity, and the availability of downloadable audio and visual "podcasts," are expected to expedite this trend significantly, as opposed to merely straightforwardly presenting information. Furthermore, as stated by Grant (2004, p. 6).

The Internet has its effects on foreign policy as it changed the layout to make it clear that this is a quotation. Is it in every other area of government policy? The technology now controls how information flows around the globe. This has enabled the "news", which is the base material of foreign policy and the way governments interact with each other, to become faster, more readily available, and able to reach almost every part of the world. The interactions of governments, which are the purpose of diplomacy, are being affected by these developments in significant ways. The prospect for even faster, and potentially more far-reaching, changes in the future will require foreign ministries to be nimble and informed in their responses.

Consequently, the field of diplomacy has consistently demonstrated the need to adjust and evolve in response to the specific modes of communication prevalent in its surroundings. In an era characterized by heightened global interconnectedness, the capacity to amass and disseminate information to vast audiences at an unprecedented pace has engendered novel prospects for policymakers and governmental entities to communicate messages and establish political priorities through channels that extend beyond conventional means. Although traditional methods of diplomacy continue to play a significant role in shaping domestic and

foreign policies, an escalating number of countries are adopting technology as a novel means for communication, data collection, and the dissemination of values within their own borders and on the international stage (Bradshaw, 2015). Digital diplomacy is specifically crafted to expeditiously furnish appropriate information, counter erroneous information, and verify information originating from authoritative sources.

It is important to acknowledge that in the pursuit of identifying more contemporary occurrences that have had a role in the development of digital diplomacy; a majority of researchers highlights three specific events. One significant event to consider is the Arab Spring. According to Barakat and Fakihi (2021), the majority of nations did not adequately foresee the occurrence of these democratic uprisings due to their failure to actively engage in and heed the significant online debates taking place among Egyptians and Tunisians. Governments promptly saw the necessity of establishing an online presence in response to the public's shift towards online platforms for gathering and communication.

The emergence of the citizen journalist, facilitated by the advent of social media platforms like Facebook, was the second significant occurrence. Equipped with mobile devices, demonstrators involved in Ukraine's Orange Revolution and Iran's Green Revolution effectively communicated and shared information about the events unfolding in their respective nations with a worldwide audience. The rapid accessibility of material online necessitated prompt responses from governments. Consequently, governments were required to engage in the monitoring of material accessible on social media platforms.

The utilization of the internet by terrorist organizations to disseminate their ideas and narratives emerged as a significant phenomenon after the events of 9/11. In response to this prevailing discourse, governments were also compelled to establish an online presence. According to Andreas (2015), some scholars contend that the emergence of digital diplomacy can be traced back to the United States' endeavors in addressing Al-Qaeda's online recruitment strategies and narratives. To decrease recruiting figures and challenge Al-Qaeda's narrative of a sacred Jihad against Western imperialism, the U.S. State Department transitioned its operations to the digital realm and initiated dialogues with Muslim online magazines (Archetti, 2012).

The advances in ICT were behind the shift from old/20th-century to new/21st-century public diplomacy. Several writers have focused on the impact of these new digital instruments,

namely the internet and social media, on diplomacy in general. The use of Internet tools has witnessed a growing endorsement in the realm of diplomatic actions. According to Grant (2004), the Internet has the same impact on foreign policy as it has on all other areas of government policy. Technology today controls the flow of information around the world. This has allowed "news," which is the foundation of foreign policy and how nations communicate with one another, to become faster, more widely available, and capable of reaching practically every area of the globe. These advances have a considerable impact on relations between governments, which is the goal of diplomacy. The prospect of increasingly faster, and perhaps more far-reaching, developments in the future will necessitate nimble and knowledgeable responses from foreign ministries. The growth of advanced ICTs has influenced communication between MFAs and other players in international relations (Grant, 2004).

Other scholars have also underscored the strong nexus between the current revolution in ICT and the concept and practice of diplomacy. According to Saddiki (2006), among the earliest ICTs adopted into MFAs as tools of diplomatic communication were the telegraph, print press, telephone, and radio. Later, satellites, televisions, and early computers were combined. Grech (2006) discusses how the WWW and digital computers have influenced modern diplomatic communication, resulting in the use of electronic mail, social media, and other online counterparts available to modern diplomats.

Within the context of this discussion, Seib (2012) has introduced a catchy term: 'real-time diplomacy.' As major upheavals like the Orange Revolution and the Arab Spring occurred within a brief timeframe, diplomats needed to report, analyze, and even forecast such events just as they were happening. This real-time diplomacy demands a thorough reshuffling of the diplomatic apparatus in terms of organization, working habits, and technology.

Ipu (2013) examines the third wave of technological revolution from a political standpoint, stating that many governments recognize the potential of digital technologies and have begun to incorporate them into governmental activities. As a result, there has been an upsurge in global research focusing on the relationship between political communication and ICT integration. In the words of Huxley (2014), the evolution of ICT is constantly changing communication modalities between individuals, organizations, and governments through MFAs.

4.3. The Meaning of Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy has been subject to varying interpretations, definitions, and understandings among both researchers and practitioners (Sotiriu, 2015). Consequently, a universally acknowledged definition or framework that encompasses the concept is lacking. It is reasonable to claim that contemporary research has merely initiated the exploration of the concept and mechanisms behind digital diplomacy. The lack of a dependable conceptual framework for evaluating the efficacy of social media in the context of public diplomacy is a notable gap in the existing body of literature (Bjola & Jiang, 2015).

Manor and Segev (2015) assert that digital diplomacy primarily pertains to the increasing utilization of social media platforms by a nation to effectively pursue its foreign policy objectives and actively oversee its public perception and standing. The authors observed that digital diplomacy operates on two distinct levels, namely the foreign ministry and the network of embassies situated across various global locations. By engaging in strategic communication at both the domestic and international levels, countries can customize their foreign policy and nation-branding narratives to suit the specific attributes of local audiences in terms of historical context, cultural nuances, values, and traditions. This approach ultimately enhances the likelihood of garnering support for their foreign policy objectives and cultivating a favorable image that aligns with their desired perception.

According to Lewis (2014), digital diplomacy encompasses the utilization of digital communication technologies, such as social media platforms, by diplomats to engage in communication both between themselves and with the wider public. According to Potter (2002), the concept of digital diplomacy primarily encompasses the diplomatic strategies and activities conducted using digital and networked technologies, such as the Internet, mobile devices, and social media platforms. According to Hanson (2012), the term "digital diplomacy" encompasses the utilization of the Internet and emerging Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) to facilitate the achievement of diplomatic goals. The author delineates a set of eight policy objectives for the realm of digital diplomacy.

(1) The concept of knowledge management involves the effective utilization of departmental and government-wide knowledge to ensure its preservation, dissemination, and optimal utilization in the pursuit of national interests on an international scale.

- (2) Public diplomacy is the strategic effort to establish and sustain connections with various audiences as they transition to online platforms. This entails utilizing modern communication tools to actively listen to and engage with significant target audiences, to effectively convey critical messages, and to exert influence on prominent online influencers.
- (3) The field of information management aims to address the challenge of managing large volumes of information effectively. This is crucial for enhancing policy-making processes and for proactive responses to developing social and political movements.
- (4) Consular communications and response: The objective is to provide efficient and personalized channels of communication between consular authorities and people who are abroad, particularly during times of crisis, to effectively manage communication flow.
- (5) Responding to disaster: The objective is to effectively utilize connective technologies in disaster response scenarios.
- (6) Freedom of the Internet: The advancement of technologies aimed towards preserving the freedom and openness of the Internet. The aforementioned goals encompass the promotion of both freedoms of expression and democratic principles while also seeking to weaken authoritarian regimes.
- (7) Utilizing external resources: Developing digital systems to access and utilize external expertise to promote the achievement of national objectives.
- (8) Policy planning is necessary to ensure efficient oversight, coordination, and planning of international policy within the government to address the increasing internationalization of the bureaucracy.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the United Kingdom on its official website expounds upon the definition of digital diplomacy:

What is digital diplomacy? Digital diplomacy is solving foreign policy problems using the internet. It is conventional diplomacy through a different medium. Through the web, we can listen, publish, engage, and evaluate in new and interesting ways. Crucially, we can also widen our reach and communicate directly with civil society as well as governments and influential individuals ... Why are we doing it? Because we have to... Those whose ideals

and objectives we oppose are active and highly effective at using the web. If we do not take up the digital debate, we lose our argument by default. Many of our partners, particularly those outside the government, have an established digital presence, engaged audiences, and expertise in achieving goals online. If we do not work with them, we are missing a huge opportunity. Our shift from one-way web publishing into active digital diplomacy reflects the changing way we all use the web-as a multi-way social medium as well as a source of information. We lose credibility and cannot claim to be an open organization if we do not take part (cited in Adesina 2017).

According to Holmes (2015, p. 15), the concept of digital diplomacy may be defined as a strategic approach to navigating change by using digital technologies and virtual collaborations. It is important to note that this definition underscores the collaborative character of diplomacy, which remains unchanged regardless of the digital realm. One of the prominent responsibilities of diplomacy involves the collection and dissemination of information, using legal methods, regarding the state of affairs and progress within the receiving nation, intending to foster amicable relations between the two governments. Data can be collected from various sources, and the use of expertise and experiential knowledge is crucial in the identification, analysis, and interpretation of emerging significant matters and their consequences for the promotion of peace, advancement, security, and other advantages for the state that initiates such actions. Foreign ministries have historically utilized several resources and strategies to effectively furnish their governments with both valuable information and policy recommendations. These include leveraging the knowledge and proficiency of their personnel, utilizing their extensive network of diplomatic missions, ensuring the confidentiality of diplomatic communication, and capitalizing on their ability to engage with foreign decision-makers. Governments have increasingly relied on their foreign ministries to serve as a means of perceiving global events from a national perspective and to effectively pursue foreign policy objectives that align with their national interests (Grant, 2004).

Digital diplomacy has emerged as an extension of public diplomacy, a diplomatic practice that involves the use of various strategies to comprehend cultures, attitudes, and behaviors, establish and maintain interactions, and exert influence over thoughts and actions to promote

the interests and values of states (Melissen, 2013, p. 436). According to Sotiriu (2015, p. 36), the inclusion of the public in diplomatic processes has led to an expansion in the range of stakeholders involved in international diplomacy. This expansion encompasses not only state-to-state interactions but also the participation of international organizations and non-governmental organizations on an international scale. In recent times, diplomats have increasingly sought the perspectives of ordinary individuals to supplement or challenge their viewpoints on various matters. The management, analysis, and dissemination of information relevant to foreign ministries have a significant impact on many connections between the government and other societal entities. The relationships can be classified into the following categories:

(1) The interaction between citizens and the media is an important aspect to consider in the study of governance and communication. 2) The relationship between citizens and the government holds significant implications for understanding the dynamics of governance. 3) The interaction between the Government and the media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy outcomes. 4) The government's engagement with non-state actors is a key factor in understanding the complexities of governance and decision-making processes. 5) The relationship between the civil service adviser and the minister is a critical component of effective governance and policy implementation. 6) The formal channels of intergovernmental diplomacy, known as the Government-to-Government relationship, are essential in facilitating effective communication and cooperation between nations (Grants, 2004, p. 15).

The phrase "digital diplomacy" has been employed synonymously with other concepts such as "e-diplomacy," "cyber-diplomacy," "diplomacy 2.0," or "diplomacy" in several scholarly works (Bjola, 2015; Hocking, Melissen, Riordan, & Sharp, 2012; Barston, 2014; Harris, 2013; Sandre, 2012). The 21st Century Statecraft is the term used by the State Department of the United States, Digital Diplomacy is the term employed by the UK Foreign Office, and Open Policy is the term utilized by the Canadians. In his analysis, Ben Scott, an innovation advisor to former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, delineates three fundamental constituents of digital diplomacy. Public diplomacy, which encompasses the utilization of digital channels, developing proficiency in technological policy, and comprehending the influence of the internet on global affairs, including political movements, and the influence of

ICTs on development policy and exploring strategies for enhancing its effectiveness in fostering global economic growth (Funnell, 2014). This thesis employs the definition of digital diplomacy proposed by Hanson (2012), which refers to the utilization of the Internet and emerging Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) to facilitate the achievement of diplomatic objectives and associated aims. Digital diplomacy is widely recognized as a crucial instrument for advancing a nation's foreign policy objectives, as it facilitates direct dialogue and active involvement with foreign populations.

According to Ross (2011), the expansion of communications and information technology not only brings about changes in the methods of social protest but also indicates the emergence of a revolution in diplomacy. He noted thus:

Traditionally, diplomatic engagement consisted largely of government-to-government interactions. In some instances, it was from government to people, such as with international broadcasting in the twentieth century. With the advent of social media and the rapid increase in mobile [technology] penetration, however, this engagement now increasingly takes place from people to government and from people to people. This direct link from citizens to government allows diplomats to convene and connect with nontraditional audiences, and in turn, allows citizens to influence their governments in ways that were not possible ten years ago. (Ross 2011, p. 2).

World leaders and diplomats employ social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on Twitter, as a means to communicate and actively interact with the target audience they aim to sway. Moreover, the use of Internet tools has witnessed a growing endorsement in the realm of diplomatic actions. According to Christodoulides (2005), the Internet possesses the potential to serve as a distinctive diplomatic tool for governments. Through its effective use, governments can not only communicate their stances on various matters but also disseminate their ideas on a global scale. When appropriately utilized, such a function can assist the embassy, and consequently, the state it represents, in cultivating a favorable perception within the host state. Diplomats heavily depend on the Internet as a tool for information retrieval, communication with colleagues through email, and the facilitation of negotiations by electronic draft texts. Additionally, diplomats are progressively embracing emerging

social networking platforms, such as blogs and Facebook, to enhance their professional engagements. The advent of social media has introduced a significant real-time component to the field of diplomacy, facilitating rapid communication that, due to its nature, may sometimes lack precision.

4.4. New Public Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy has emerged as an extension of public diplomacy, a diplomatic practice that involves the use of various strategies to comprehend cultures, attitudes, and behaviors, establish and maintain interactions, and exert influence over thoughts and actions to promote the interests and values of states (Melissen, 2013, p. 436). In recent times, diplomats have increasingly sought the perspectives of ordinary individuals to supplement or challenge their viewpoints on various matters. The management, analysis, and dissemination of information relevant to foreign ministries have a significant impact on many connections between the government and other societal entities.

Melissen (2005), who claims that public diplomacy underwent a major change, coined the term ‘New Public Diplomacy’ around the beginning of the millennium. The aim to influence the larger public of other states remained, but the methods have changed from monologue to dialogue, connected with engagement and the cultivation of long-term relationships with the foreign public. To pursue a meaningful dialogue with this public, public diplomacy needs to understand its norms and values. Nevertheless, it is not only about the values of the other states. Melissen stresses that diplomats themselves are embedded in the values of their society and are consequently affected by societal change.

Pamment (2013) has drawn a similar distinction between old and new public diplomacy. During the 20th century, foreign ministries, embassies, and certain radio and TV stations did public diplomacy. It primarily targeted the elites of other states in the expectation that these elites would in turn influence the policies of their countries. Furthermore, it had a monologist character. In contrast, 21st-century public diplomacy is directed beyond the elites at a broad section of the population, geared towards dialogue and no longer the exclusive sphere of professional diplomats. Instead, actors like NGOs, individual bloggers, and terrorist organizations have entered the playing field of public diplomacy.

Sotiriu (2015) has also emphasized the emergence of new actors in public diplomacy. According to him, the inclusion of the public in diplomatic processes has led to an expansion in the range of stakeholders involved in international diplomacy. This expansion encompasses not only state-to-state interactions but also the participation of international organizations and non-governmental organizations on an international scale.

4.5. Digital Diplomacy: Impact

It is important to note that the collaborative character of diplomacy remains unchanged regardless of the digital realm. One of the prominent responsibilities of diplomacy involves the collection and dissemination of information, using legal methods, regarding the state of affairs and progress within the receiving nation to foster amicable relations between the two governments. Data can be collected from various sources, and the use of expertise and experiential knowledge is crucial in the identification, analysis, and interpretation of emerging significant matters and their consequences for the promotion of peace, advancement, security, and other advantages for the state that initiates such actions. Foreign ministries have historically utilized several resources and strategies to effectively furnish their governments with valuable information and policy recommendations. These include leveraging the knowledge and proficiency of their personnel, utilizing their extensive network of diplomatic missions, ensuring the confidentiality of diplomatic communication, and capitalizing on their ability to engage with foreign decision-makers. Governments have increasingly relied on their foreign ministries to serve as a means of perceiving global events from a national perspective and to effectively pursue foreign policy objectives that align with their national interests (Grant, 2004).

Nevertheless, the rapid development of digital projects in foreign ministries, defined by Bjola (2015) as nothing less than a revolution in the practice of diplomacy, fills a void in diplomatic theory. In some ways, this revolution is overdue, as digital technology has already altered how corporations manage their businesses (Weber, 2011), individuals conduct social relations (Couldry, 2012), and states govern themselves (Mergel, 2013). Governments and international organizations are beginning to recognize that social media has the potential to revolutionize the way international interactions are conducted. The adoption of digital diplomacy, in particular, has the potential to change how diplomats engage in information

management, public diplomacy, strategy planning, international negotiations, and even crisis management (Bjola, 2015).

Using quantitative methods, an article by Bjola and Jiang (2015) discusses how much digital diplomacy is capable of establishing a relationship between diplomats and the public of another country, and especially how successful diplomats are in setting an agenda. Contrary to the claims concerning a shift from monologue to dialogue, the authors find little evidence of two-way communication between diplomats and the public.

4.6. Digital Diplomacy: Drivers

After reviewing the current literature, four events that reverberate across the study corpus as contributing to the emergence of digital diplomacy can be identified. Al-Qaeda's use of the internet and social media to spread its grand narrative, which stated that Osama bin Laden and his followers were agents of Islamic history who would reverse the Muslim world's decline and defeat Western imperialism, was one of the main drivers of digital diplomacy (Hallams, 2010). Al-Qaeda spread its narrative among an online community that grew while its bases were bombarded offline via websites, blogs, and video lectures. Al-Qaeda was thus able to position itself as an almighty terror organization capable of withstanding the force of the world's most powerful nations (Hallams, 2010).

A 2008 estimate stated that the internet is responsible for 80% of youth recruitment for jihadi groups (Hallams, 2010), emphasizing the necessity of opposing this narrative. Recognizing the necessity for a digital transition, Karen Hughes, President George W. Bush's Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, created Public Diplomacy 2.0, an effort aimed at winning the war of ideas through digital diplomacy. To that purpose, the State Department established a Facebook page, a blog, and a Digital Outreach Team tasked with challenging al-Qaeda's narrative on Arab language websites and forums (Hallams, 2010).

The democratic uprisings, known as the Arab Spring, that swept through the Middle East in 2011 pushed governments to embrace social media even more (Stein, 2011; Seib, 2012; Causey & Howard, 2013). According to Seib (2012), the Arab Spring caught international governments off guard because foreign policymakers were not monitoring the information

ecosystem in which these revolts were taking shape—that of social media. While social media did not spark these uprisings, they did let citizens express their dissatisfaction with authoritarian regimes in front of like-minded audiences (Seib, 2012) and mobilize protestors on the ground (Stein, 2011; Sotiriu, 2015). Governments failed to regulate social media and most depended on state-owned media channels that depicted a different reality than what was happening in Tahrir Square (Seib, 2012). Following the events of 2011, governments realized that diplomats to better understand and anticipate events (Seib, 2012; Causey & Howard, 2013) might use social media.

Studies have also identified an increase in citizen journalism as a key driver of digital diplomacy. The global development of ICTs, such as cell phones with cameras, has enabled anyone to become a one-person news source capable of disseminating information to a global audience (Seib, 2012). According to Causey and Howard (2013), citizen journalists can provide real-time, on-the-ground information from conflict zones, which prompted the Voice of America, the United States federal government's broadcast institution, to incorporate user-generated content into its coverage of Iran's 2009 Green Revolution (Xiguang & Jing, 2010).

Similarly, Al Jazeera enhanced its coverage of the Arab Spring with user-generated content (Seib, 2012). During these protests, citizen journalists supplied a narrative of the Arab upheavals that contradicted the state, influencing how events were framed (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013). The capacity of citizen journalists to deliver real-time information from war zones, as well as their impact on global event coverage, prompted MFAs to shift to social media.

The emergence of new media ecology has also been identified as one of the factors driving digital diplomacy. For instance, Hayden (2012) believes that the new technological landscape created by ICTs and social media technologies has also fueled digital diplomacy. MFAs, according to Hayden, require a "new" public diplomacy to compete with a global media ecology characterized by audience fragmentation into networks of selective exposure (Hayden, 2012; Williamson & Kelley, 2012). By combining social media with public diplomacy practice, it is possible to overcome the fragmentation of diplomacy's audiences. However, Hayden (2012) believes that the qualities of social media will eventually affect diplomatic culture. Social media are virtual venues for debating and defining topics (Park & Reber, 2008; Smith, 2010). The dialogic and interactive aspects of social media entail a shift

in diplomacy culture as the purpose of public diplomacy shifts from information transmission to relationship building and leveraging with foreign publics (Hayden, 2012).

4.7. Digital Diplomacy: Challenges

President of the US Institute of Peace and former Foreign Service officer Richard Solomon (2000) notes: Government officials and the media used to take hours or days to disseminate information about breaking international crises, but also today, not only are they using radio and television. The Internet allows them to do so in real-time. However, authorities are finding that quick information sharing about events that are happening close and far away can be both a benefit and a liability. The "culture of anonymity" on the internet, where anybody can attack or take on any name or address, presents another challenge for digital diplomacy (Yakovenko, 2012). When considered collectively, these advancements have significantly changed the role of the professional diplomat. The function of a "coordinator-manager" and "facilitator" in intricate operations spanning national and international borders is becoming more and more prevalent. They also bring up issues with the customary conduct codes associated with diplomacy. For instance, in certain policy milieus, the norms imposed by the need to deal with a range of "nondiplomatic" actors are challenging the conventional emphasis on secrecy and confidentiality. The latter, operating under their ethics and norms of conduct, occasionally disregard the customs surrounding diplomatic behavior; in fact, one of the main obstacles facing contemporary diplomacy is fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.

The challenges associated with migrating online have attracted the attention of some researchers. Scholarly research conducted recently tends to view diplomacy as an island unto itself, concentrating only on MFAs' online migration. However, a more comprehensive approach that views MFAs as merely one arm of government attempting to make an online presence can be beneficial to research on digital diplomacy. As a result, the difficulties MFAs encounter apply to all government departments that have moved to the Internet as part of what is known as "E-gov initiatives" (Belanger & Carter, 2005). New issues arose from the government's move to cyberspace, including protecting people's personal information and fortifying vital infrastructure against cyberattacks (Quigley, Burns, & Stallard, 2013). Similarly, governments face difficulties when utilizing web 2.0 tools (such as blogs,

webpages, and social networking sites) because they are unable to easily transfer their offline work routines to online participatory environments (McNutt, 2014). The phrase "government 2.0" is used by McNutt to describe both a technology feature and the adoption of a web 2.0 culture characterized by openness, transparency, co-production, and participatory opportunities. Governments must interact with the public and value their opinions and suggestions as part of this ethos (Macnamara, Sakinofsky, & Beattie, 2012; Macnamara, 2012).

It is evident from McNutt's (2014) Web 2.0 ethos that government branches are not the only ones shifting from monologist to dialogic forms of communication. McNutt (2014) lists three obstacles preventing government ministries from embracing a Web 2.0 culture. First, given that ministries must actively seek out citizen interaction while disseminating current information, resources may prove to be a hurdle. Second, since employees are using social media in new settings, best practices for their use must be developed. Because of the risk-averse ethos of government, the third obstacle is normative. Governments may therefore be hesitant to adopt social media due to their concern about losing control over the communication process. Although the obstacles noted by McNutt apply to all government agencies, their applicability to MFAs has been discussed in several studies.

Some authors have raised the issue of the requirement for resources. MFAs had to adjust to a new operating environment after the end of the Cold War, one marked by increasing demands and decreasing resources. Interest in "virtual" diplomacy arose from the need for economic diplomacy (Hocking & Melissen, 2015). Many have claimed in recent years that social media-delivered digital diplomacy is, in fact, more affordable (Causey & Howard, 2013; Copeland, 2013; Pamment, 2015). Nevertheless, the cost-effectiveness of the current digital diplomacy approach may come under scrutiny. The US State Department was thought to be in charge of 288 Facebook profiles, 200 Twitter accounts, and 125 YouTube channels in 2012. These amounted to a social media empire, according to Fergus Hanson (Hayden, 2012). The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy's 2014 annual report states that the State Department's social media empire has expanded by 50% to 1,000 accounts. Since actively engaging in interaction with online audiences is the aim of "new" public diplomacy, the department needs to use each of these platforms to address concerns raised by followers, offer information, and address criticism. However, creating engaging social media material

takes time, energy, and a committed team (Archetti, 2012). Other MFAs oversee social media empires besides the US State Department. MFAs from Sweden, Germany, Japan, Kenya, and the UK Foreign Office are active on multiple platforms and run a global blogosphere.

When one considers the actions of other governmental organizations and agencies that frequently affect a country's reputation and may have an impact on international relations, the expenses of digital diplomacy keep going up. These include the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Central Intelligence Agency, and NASA, which runs 500 social media channels on its own (Stockton, 2015).

The "plurality of channels," or the online activity of several government ministries, agencies, and national leaders, presents additional difficulty to MFAs. MFAs find themselves functioning in disputed situations where they are no longer the exclusive authors of the national narrative since each of these actors distributes content that relates to a nation's foreign policy and may influence the national image. The European Commission, the European Parliament, the president of the European Council, the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, several European agencies (such as EU Climate Action), and the EU's embassies and ambassadors worldwide are just a few examples of the European Union's digital diplomacy apparatus.

The plurality of channels suggests that the digital age has rendered MFAs an incoherent narrator, to paraphrase Shenhav, Sheaffer, and Gabay (2010). Overcoming this challenge requires MFAs to coordinate their public diplomacy and nation-branding activities with the multitude of national actors now operating online. In 2006, Israel attempted to do just that by establishing a "national public diplomacy forum" meant to coordinate all content disseminated by national ministries (Molad, 2012).

An additional challenge brought on by MFAs' migration online is the need to develop digital skill sets among diplomats, many of whom are more accustomed to an analog world. Some studies have identified training and best practices guidelines for digital diplomacy as necessary to support diplomats using social media (Vance, 2012; McNutt, 2014). Such rules have been developed recently by several organizations, including the US Marine Corps, the US Department of Defense, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the governments of Canada and New Zealand. Training and the development of new skills are also necessary for digital diplomacy (Vance, 2012). Given that senior diplomats are at the vanguard of

digital diplomacy, their training may be especially important. For example, ambassadors are frequently featured in Twitter Q&A sessions since they are the official representatives of their country overseas who are authorized to talk on behalf of their country.

However, because ambassadors are unfamiliar with digital surroundings, educating them could prove to be a significant resource drain. Many senior diplomats are "digital immigrants or individuals who grew up in an analog world and are now trying to adjust to a digital one" (Presnky, 2011). As a result, they lack the innate capacity of "digital natives" to become proficient with social media technology. However, digital natives also need to receive training. Even if students pick up social media quickly, they still need to understand when and how to use these technologies to manage change in a global context (Williamson & Kelly, 2012). Finally, training in digital diplomatic literacy is necessary for both immigrants and digital natives. The range of technical, cognitive, and sociological abilities required to carry out tasks and find solutions in digital contexts is known as digital literacy (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004).

4.8. Digital Diplomacy by the USA

The United States Department of State has been characterized as a leading force in the realm of digital diplomacy, also known as 21st-century statecraft. This approach involves leveraging novel technologies to effectively interact with an expanding and evolving group of stakeholders worldwide. As per the U.S. State Department,

The twenty-first-century statecraft agenda addresses new forces propelling change in international relations that are pervasive, disruptive, and difficult to predict. The distinctive features of twenty-first-century statecraft point the way toward deeper changes that will gradually permeate all of foreign policy: expanding its scope, substituting new tools, and changing its values. We are adapting our statecraft by reshaping our development and diplomatic agendas to meet old challenges in new ways and by deploying one of America's great assets—innovation. This is twenty-first-century statecraft—complementing traditional foreign policy tools with newly

innovated and adapted instruments of statecraft that fully leverage the technologies of our interconnected world (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

The initial foreign ministry to establish a specialized diplomacy unit was the United States State Department, which established the Taskforce on e-Diplomacy in 2002. The task force has undergone a name change and is now referred to as the Office of e-Diplomacy. This office currently employs over 150 full-time social media personnel who operate in 25 distinct offices. Approximately half of these people are specifically assigned to tasks relating to e-diplomacy. The establishment of the Office of e-Diplomacy was to address the knowledge obstacles that were identified as contributing factors to the 11 September 2001 attacks. Additionally, its purpose was to enhance the State Department's capacity for effective communication and knowledge sharing. The Department of State also maintains an internal knowledge repository known as Diplopodia, comprising a comprehensive collection of over 14,000 entries. To foster internal networking, an online platform named Corridor, akin to Facebook, has been established, boasting a membership of more than 6,500 individuals. The Department of State also uses a variant of crowdsourcing as a means to generate solutions for various challenges. As an illustration, the organization utilized an online platform to solicit suggestions from its employees regarding potential measures to reduce costs. The ambassador stationed in China, harboring suspicions of electricity theft from the US embassy compound by neighboring residents through unauthorized wiretapping, suggested the installation of a meter to monitor and record its consumption. The findings not only revealed instances of electricity theft by neighbors but also indicated potential instances of overcharging by the energy company. According to Hanson (2012), the discovery resulted in significant cost savings of up to tens of thousands of dollars. Consequently, following the events of September 11, the foreign policy of the United States underwent a shift towards a more aggressive and penetrating approach, largely influenced by the implementation of a persistent digital diplomacy agenda.

With the rise of American digital diplomacy, several narratives have emerged. After the Cold War ended, the United States became a unipolar power, and the world confronted new difficulties following September 11. In the 1980s, USIA, a vibrant Cold War organization, oversaw US public diplomacy. Following the Cold War, USIA slipped into disorder, and in the 2000s, it found itself in the awkward position of being an initially overlooked subsidiary of the State Department. This is the institutional context for the expansion of US public

diplomacy. Similarly, the internet has evolved from its simple beginnings in the early 1990s, when the majority of users saw it as a means of display, to its current state of complexity, where user-generated content, social connections and interaction are the norm, and Singh (2013) claims that the medium plays a role in the formation of personal human identities.

The term "Web 2.0," coined in 1999, characterized the tremendous advancements in online technology. Despite being coined to discuss page design and the impending explosion of various web platforms, the term had become a convenient way to refer to the new wave of blogs, the crowd-sourced encyclopedia site Wikipedia (founded 2001), and social media sites like Facebook (launched 2004), Flickr (also launched 2004), and YouTube (launched 2005). As one might expect, public diplomacy and the rise of the Internet were closely linked. The communications revolution, which gave rise to the concept of modern public diplomacy, has increased public opinion's influence in foreign affairs. Scholars define public diplomacy differently in the modern era, but all agree that it emphasizes greater discussion, trade, and mutuality (Melissen 2006).

The phrase "Public Diplomacy 2.0," which describes the incorporation of new forms of internet media into public diplomacy, had supplanted the phrase "new public diplomacy" by 2008. Even though the name Public Diplomacy 2.0, like Web 2.0, has never been used very accurately, three main features emerge (Cull, 2013): The first is that the technology may easily help people build relationships through online communities and social networks. Second, user-generated content is an essential component of Public Diplomacy 2.0. This content can range from basic blog comments to more elaborate full-length movies or mash-ups. The third distinguishing feature is the prevalent perception that, in contrast to the vertically organized distribution networks of the 1.0 era, current technology is primarily concerned with horizontally organized exchange networks. The technology remains the same, but the structure has evolved. Although Public Diplomacy 2.0 is ruled by cutting-edge technology, the relational structure that underpins it has not changed.

Although the United States' 1965 embrace of short-term public diplomacy did not imply that the elements of diplomacy highlighted above were particularly compatible, it did represent a desire inside the Cold War US to make them so. These groups and their bureaucratic supporters are at odds with one another, as is typical of American public diplomacy. Despite the complexities of the relationship, the US approach has frequently placed advocacy over

culture and interaction (Ninkovich 1981; Arndt 2005). The listening function has been the most severely impacted, with frequent budget cuts and only infrequent instances of input being considered in high-level foreign policymaking.

Americans recognized early on that technology could help them convey their national power and image overseas. The first public ambassadors of the nascent republic, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, were both excellent scientists. The United States was quick to embrace electronic modes of communication, and its technological superiority was on display at international trade shows. In 1918, Woodrow Wilson transmitted his Fourteen Points by Morse code, and every US diplomatic station began receiving the Wireless File, a daily data transfer of the most important American speeches and newspaper articles. With the introduction of Voice of America's shortwave radio transmissions in 1942, public diplomacy became accustomed to a variety of "fast media" for reaching audiences around the world. Technology was a facet of the Cold War, as the US administration demonstrated its technological strength to boost its reputation and shared it with countries it wished to develop. The United States Information Agency was eager to lend its television programming to numerous allied countries that had recently purchased televisions (Cull, 2013). Given this precedence, it was inevitable that computer technology would be incorporated.

The early use of computers in American public diplomacy was essentially a prestige symbol. Early IBM machines appeared in World Fairs and Expositions in the late 1950s, among other well-known symbols of American technological dominance, such as the model kitchen presented in Moscow in 1959. Computers were programmed to respond to "frequently asked questions" about the United States from a predetermined menu, earning them the nickname "mechanical brains." These exhibits could potentially cater to visitors' preferences by asking them questions from a limited set of options, implying that computerization could aid in the listening aspect of public diplomacy.

Because listeners enjoyed such exchanges, they remained a feature of USIA programming until the end of the Cold War. Nonetheless, a technological development was required due to the widespread use of computers in the industry field. Leonard WICK, director of the USIA, served as President Lyndon Johnson's public diplomacy advisor, identified a remote link as significant. While the experiment with a distantly linked computer terminal to a databank in

Washington, DC, conducted in the 1970s by the United States Information Service station in Paris, yielded no practical results, the concept persisted.

During the Reagan administration, the US Information Agency undertook a huge investment program in technology under the visionary leadership of US Information Agency director Charles Z. Wick, a friend of President Reagan, and with ample funds (Cull, 2013). Wick founded WORLDNET, a satellite television initiative that offers locally tailored TV feeds to US embassies abroad for broadcast to local television networks; this was his most well-known project in this field. As part of the approach, local media were able to communicate with administration "newsmakers" in the United States via interactive events such as special press conferences conducted in embassies.

By 1988, it was clear that there was going to be a shift. Veteran diplomat Alan Hansen said that a new school of public diplomacy was emerging. He, like Marks, saw a chance to alter the focus of public diplomacy away from advocacy and toward mutual gain. "The communications revolution of the last half of the twentieth century has given U.S. public diplomats a historic opportunity to de-emphasize their role as propagandists and become truly modern pioneers in an endeavor that would serve US interests as well as the interests of all who seek political, economic, and social development" (Hansen 1989, p. 12). The Bush administration improved the White House's digital linkages to the US-INFONET field, but the public-facing connection. "Our end goal is not the new electronic network, but a human community of values and interests, linked through these new technologies and in other ways, that can help us strengthen peace, democracy, and prosperity," (Kemble 1993, p. 5), as advocated by Penn Kemble, the United States' deputy director. The Information Agency was established at the start of the Clinton administration. The network would first unite U.S. agency personnel both locally and internationally as an online community before inviting the agency's international interlocutors. It acknowledged the limitations of technology. In preparation for the future digital age, the USIA overhauled its internal content production procedures. The content developers were consolidated into a single "Information Bureau," or "I Bureau." The new bureau was well-received by USIA's political superiors due to the cost savings it offered, even though it failed to deliver expected outcomes in the field.

In January 1994, the radio program Voice of America on USIA started an online text service using the Gopher protocol, taking the first steps toward directly addressing a global audience.

In the summer of 1994, the audio files for fifteen distinct VOA languages were made available online. Not long after, VOA began touting 50,000 weekly downloads from 50 countries, including China. VOA began real-time radio broadcasting in 1996. The broadcasters' desire for uniqueness, however, was not without restrictions. Kevin Klose, the newly appointed director of the governing body of the US International Broadcasting Board, abandoned a plan in 1997 to begin an internet video broadcast stream for a paltry \$250,000 per year. Klose made the choice because he believes the internet is not a "proper" broadcast medium and that the US should continue to invest in shortwave radio. USIA quickly caught up. In 1994, the organization created its own Gopher service, which included an English teaching tool. The first web-based materials debuted on April 12, 1995, when USIA launched its initial website (McGregor 1995).

The USIA staff stationed in the exchange region was quick to recognize the internet's unique ability to sustain online communities, and they attempted to use digital connections to retain relationships established through face-to-face encounters. In 1995, the group began teaching Russian teacher exchange participants in the use of email and the Internet. After they returned to their respective institutions, they began distributing computers to those locations. According to Turner (1995), the program became so successful that the Internet Access and Training Project was completely deployed throughout the former Soviet Union the following year. After significant effort, USIA was able to successfully construct internet access points in fourteen cities throughout Russia.

One such scheme was "Technology for Peace," which allowed Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the divided island of Cyprus to interact digitally in the absence of direct phone lines. USIA established a dedicated mail server at the University of Maryland to facilitate email communication among Cypriots who met through the agency's bicomunal peer-to-peer groups. The networks were ultimately successful. The crew also created PD-NET, a revolutionary internet-based system that connects the field to headquarters. With a focus on bandwidth, it provided a realistic way for the agency's practitioners to immediately exchange digital documents.

After discovering the US was vulnerable to cyberattacks, American defense researchers began to "securitize" cyberspace by the late 1990s (Cavelty, 2013). They were anxious about a few things. In August 1997, the Chinese government began blocking access to Voice of

America and other websites that delivered Western news. Around the end of November 1997, VOA stopped recording calls made from within China. The International Broadcasting Bureau, which oversees the VOA, began looking into other options, albeit email remained the principal method of information distribution. With the increased risk of network disruptions, the Department of Defense established the Joint Task Force-Computer Network Defence (JTFCND), which began operations in late 1998.

During the Kosovo War, cyberwarfare erupted as Serbian hacking groups swamped Western countries with what became known as "Yugospam." The USIA did its part and sent six personnel to monitor internet chat rooms and interfere as necessary. Second, in order to keep refugees and their families in touch and even reunite, USIA relied on private sector assistance to construct a network of internet centers throughout Kosovo and in refugee camps. Additionally, it used the Internet to disseminate information on Serb atrocities in Russian and other languages. The Kosovo crisis underscored the importance of digital diplomacy and the USIA's role in US foreign policy, even if its demise was almost inevitable. On October 1, 1999, after being absorbed into the Department of State, USIA's research, advocacy, culture, and exchange components were granted official autonomy by a Broadcasting Board of Governors. The Voice of America and its overseas broadcasting components separated on the same day (Cull, 2012).

Initially, public diplomacy lacked traction. The division maintains traditions, organizational systems, and aims. It was more interested in immediate publicity and action than in listening and engaging in serious discussions on digital innovation. On Capitol Hill, where public diplomacy advocates were scarce, the department appeared overly risk-averse for fear of negative attention. Former US officials attempting to develop a digital or other creative public diplomacy approach found themselves in a challenging situation. One USIA new technology expert described the experience as "running into a buzzsaw" (Cull, 2013).

According to a senior USIA officer who spoke ten years after consolidation, "Once we got to State, all we did was go to meetings." They also stated that they had to secure fourteen approvals for everything before saying "no." After that, things began to deteriorate. According to Cull, any autonomous thought was harshly punished (2013, p. 34). The necessity to combine the State Department's limited OpenNet Plus system with USIA's PDNET, which was now managed by the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP),

was a difficult issue. Prior until 2004, PDNET and OpenNet Plus worked in tandem. However, PD practitioners were highly opposed to downgrading, arguing that they could not accomplish their work without the ability to transmit enormous amounts of data, including video, and store them for an extended period without security examination. While the State Department eventually recognized that its system needed to meet PD needs, a lot of energy that could have been better spent was squandered in the process.

The terrorist attacks on 9/11 jolted American diplomacy, particularly digital diplomacy. Colin Powell, the newly appointed secretary of state, wasted little time in modernizing the Department of State (Cull, 2013). He founded the Office of e-Diplomacy with the assistance of Foreign Service officers and technical experts. Rather than focusing on public diplomacy, the government focused on digitizing its internal operations. Each American diplomat received a Blackberry, and each embassy was given access to a website. "Pushing out" materials to augment news conferences and digitally to compensate for financial limits was the standard operational strategy when the internet was used outside of the country. The US government issued a report in the summer of 2003 outlining techniques for online public diplomacy and E-Diplomacy. Public Diplomacy Advisory Commission. The report discussed various techniques, one of which is the concept of "Virtual Consulates." These online pages aim to "use the power of the Internet to communicate with local publics and Americans in a locally branded product." This implies that the pages will be produced remotely but will be titled to emphasize a direct engagement with that specific location and will be available in local languages. It was believed that these internet tools might handle up to half of a consulate's obligations. The inaugural Virtual Consulate was established in Yekaterinburg, Russia. According to Weiser (2003) and the US Advisory Committee on Public Diplomacy, the committee made constructive recommendations for their development and was largely positive. The Council for American Muslim Understanding coordinated a unique interactive digital component, a website named www.opendialogue.org, as part of Undersecretary Charlotte Beers' "Shared Values" project to improve U.S.-Arab relations. Muslim visitors from all around the world were invited to provide personal tales of their interactions with Americans on this site. A thousand pieces were uploaded in no time, but they paled in comparison to the United States' vast public opinion effort in the Islamic world. The money went missing somewhere else. The Bush administration committed public diplomacy funds to

Al Hurra, a new Arabic-language satellite television channel, to directly battle Al Jazeera (Weiser, 2003).

The long-overdue shift in power dynamics between the Department of Defense and the State Department in the field of public diplomacy was aided greatly by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's cordial working relationship with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates during the first Obama administration. Gates went out of his way to advocate for money to be redistributed to State Department initiatives and for the Department of Defense to take a supportive role in overseas outreach. The State Department leads interagency strategic communication initiatives in the never-ending war on terror. To battle Islamic extremism digitally, the reformed counter-radicalization department known as the Centre for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) created creative digital activities (Cull, 2013).

At Ambassador Richard LeBaron's request, the CSCC carefully separated its operations from any attempt to promote the United States or its agents (Cull, 2013). One of its novelties was the collection and reposting of locally generated content that represented competitors adversely on other platforms, regardless of how unfriendly it was to the United States. Rather than targeting extremist websites where readers had already developed beliefs, it focused on broader websites that serve as "zones of recruitment" for extremists. The unit, which is staffed by a mix of permanent foreign nationals and independent contractors, operates exclusively in the languages spoken in the affected regions. There is also a specialized method to speed the clearance of outbound items for posting. Its goals are simple: participate in the discussion, confront the radicals' statements, and shift focus to Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab.

By the end of 2011, it appeared that the State Department had mastered social media. The usage of social media for outreach has now been officially recognized. To encourage its use, a social media portal was built, which included "how-to" guides for the major social media platforms, examples of best practices, and answers to commonly asked questions. In addition, the office established the "Ask the Experts" program, which connected posts with Silicon Valley specialists via a prearranged group video chat, and they organized the appearance of mobile device specialists at a special session at the Foreign Service Institute (Cull, 2013). The International Information Programs underwent an extensive overhaul at the end of 2011 to better suit the field's digital expectations. A notable effort was the launch of four Facebook

portals that include public diplomacy content on climate change, exchanges, e-journals, and democracy (Cull, 2013). The 9/11 terrorists' successes gave non-state actors confidence in gaining access to social media technology, which armed the internet and made the distant enemy even more vulnerable. Although many researchers have focused on the United States' reactions to these events in the Middle East, further investigation is necessary. In light of this, this thesis will aim to focus on the Middle East as a specific context in which the United States' digital diplomacy has emerged as part of the global war against terror.

4.9. Digital Diplomacy by Other States

Despite the recent nature of digital diplomacy, taking a bird's-eye view of diplomacy by countries outside the US and the Middle East helps the reader appreciate the global nature of contemporary diplomatic issues. Several other foreign ministries have also started to adopt e-Diplomacy. The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) maintains an Office of Digital Diplomacy, which actively engages in various e-diplomacy initiatives. Sweden has demonstrated a proactive stance in advancing digital diplomacy, particularly through the online communication tactics employed by its foreign minister, Carl Bildt, who swiftly gained recognition as the "most well-connected leader on Twitter." According to a study conducted by Lowy Interpreter in 2015, it was found that France acknowledged in 2008 that its soft power was contingent upon digital technology. Additionally, the foreign affairs departments of Poland and Japan were observed to utilize a wide range of social media networks as part of their diplomatic strategies. In addition, Germany utilized ICT platforms as a means to gather opinions and novel concepts from the public, which subsequently informed its foreign policy review in 2014. Israel has effectively combined its assertive conventional diplomacy with a highly proactive digital diplomacy division, which has diligently sought to exert influence over the outcomes of the United States-Iran nuclear negotiations.

The utilization of digital diplomacy is also evident in Russia. In 2011, Russia surpassed Germany as the largest internet market in Europe, boasting a monthly user base of over 54 million individuals and exhibiting significant growth trends (Adesina 2017). According to Yakovenko (2012), Russia stands out as a nation where domestic entities such as the local search engine Yandex and social network VK surpass global competitors in a competitive

environment that is unrestricted and devoid of obstacles. As per Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko, Russia's inclusion in the group of influential nations practicing "diplomacy" is a relatively recent development. In the London list of followers, the Russian Embassy has the third position, trailing behind the United States and Israel. It is noteworthy that both the US and Israel have made substantial investments in this particular tool of foreign policy for a more extended duration. The Russian Foreign Ministry coined the phrase "innovative diplomacy" to characterize novel phenomena. They define it as a strategic approach within Russian foreign policy that leverages ICT to shape public opinion (Chernenko, 2013). During a diplomatic gathering in June 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin identified digital diplomacy as one of the most impactful instruments for conducting foreign policy. The president emphasized the importance of diplomats utilizing modern technology on various platforms, including social media, to effectively communicate the state's stance (Permyakova, 2012).

In 2014, John Baird, the former Foreign Minister of Canada, made concerted efforts to enhance the digital presence of Canadian policy leaders and practitioners. During a speech delivered to the Global Commission on Internet Governance in November 2014, Baird highlighted the significant growth in Canada's digital presence on a global scale. Specifically, he mentioned that from January of that same year, there had been a notable increase of over 290 newly established social media accounts dedicated to missions abroad and departmental initiatives. As a result, Canada's digital footprint expanded to encompass more than 100 missions across various countries (Bradshaw, 2015).

Many embassies currently possess interactive websites and Facebook profiles, and an increasing number of ambassadors maintain an active presence on Twitter. However, it is worth noting that the performance of various social media accounts varies. Several embassies have conducted preliminary exercises. As an illustration, the High Commission of Australia in Papua New Guinea endeavored to conduct live interactive question-and-answer sessions on current issues. The generic @dfat Twitter account utilizes hashtags such as #NewColomboPlan and #innovationXchange to endorse initiatives and establish connections among stakeholders. A blog, maintained by the Ambassador of Australia in Germany, has recently been started in the German language. Building upon the achievements of the popular television series "The Embassy," online discussions were conducted on the official

Smartraveller Facebook page, which also offers a mobile application (Lowy Interpreter, 2015).

The findings of the Twiplomacy study, an annual survey conducted by the global public relations firm Burson-Marsteller, were released in April 2015. This study examined the Twitter presence and activity of heads of state and government, foreign ministers, and their respective institutions. A total of 669 government accounts from 166 countries were analyzed. The study revealed that 86% of the 193 United Nations (UN) governments maintain a presence on Twitter. However, it also identified that 27 countries, primarily located in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, do not have any official Twitter presence (Twiplomacy, 2018). The research highlights that social media continues to play a crucial role in governmental communication, as evidenced by the findings of Twiplomacy (2015). Moreover, it emphasizes that Twitter has emerged as the preferred platform for digital diplomacy. According to Alexandru (2015), real-world disparities are evident in the realm of Twitter, occasionally resulting in conflicts between embassies and foreign ministries, which are expressed through hashtag wars.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, represented by the official Twitter account @Number10gov, holds the highest number of followers among European Union leaders, surpassing three million followers. In comparison, the Twitter account of Italy's former Prime Minister, @MatteoRenzi, has approximately 1.7 million followers. Based on the extensive compilation of embassies and ambassadors on the Twitter platform, as documented by the @Twiplomacy account, the current count of active participants exceeds 4,100, with a continuous upward trend in numbers. Foreign diplomatic missions in London, New York, and Washington, DC are now compelled to acknowledge the significance of diplomatic engagement on the Twitter platform. The Chinese diplomatic missions to the European Union, Switzerland, and Japan have recently begun engaging in active tweeting. The United Kingdom's Foreign Office strongly promotes the active participation of its ambassadors on the social media platform Twitter. It has become exceedingly challenging to pursue a career as a diplomat within the Foreign Office without utilizing digital platforms. The United Kingdom's Foreign Office boasts a notably extensive "twiplomatic" network, which includes a publicly accessible Twitter list of an impressive 237 ambassadors, embassies, and posts. Canada ranks second with 184 diplomatic missions and heads of missions actively present on

the social media platform Twitter. Following Canada, the Russian Foreign Ministry holds the third position with 160 missions, succeeded by the Polish Foreign Ministry with 157 missions, and Israel with 146 missions. The State Department, as well as the Foreign Ministries of France, the European Union, Sweden, and Ukraine, individually maintain Twitter accounts that feature a substantial number of diplomats and missions, exceeding 100 in each case.

India is prominently positioned as a frontrunner in the digital landscape within the Asian region. Despite facing resource constraints, the India MFA persists in making substantial investments to expand its internet presence. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) with the publication of its inaugural tweet in 2010 marked the initiation of digital diplomacy in India (Duncombe, 2017). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) swiftly established itself as a prominent digital frontrunner within the Indian government under the guidance of Ambassador Navdeep Suri, who at the time served as the joint secretary and head of the recently formed public diplomacy section. Twitter was effectively utilized to facilitate the smooth evacuation of over 18,000 Indian citizens from Libya during the civil war in 2011 (Lewis, 2014). Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently urged his ambassadors to abandon outdated perspectives and strive to stay at the forefront of digital diplomacy. Despite limited resources within its foreign ministry and the presence of conflicting development goals, India is actively exploring various strategies to effectively connect and interact with both domestic and international audiences. These strategies include the use of mobile applications, live-streaming videos, and a highly responsive social media presence (Cave, 2015).

In the African context, although there is a notable adoption of new technology by a significant portion of the population, the concept of digital diplomacy has not yet gained widespread traction. Based on a report published by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) (2013), it has seen that Africa had the highest rate of expansion in the domain of mobile broadband. This growth was evidenced by the presence of 93 million subscriptions, a penetration rate of 11%, and a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 82% between the years 2010 and 2013. In contemporary times, an increasing number of African foreign ministries (MFAs) are adopting the Internet and social media as strategic instruments to advance their foreign policy objectives. However, the proportion of African nations effectively harnessing the capabilities of digital diplomacy remains insignificant. A

significant number of African leaders do not possess accounts on popular social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. Based on the findings of the 2015 Twiplomacy study, it was determined that Paul Kagame, the President of Rwanda, possesses the highest number of followers among African presidents, with 842,260 followers. This places him ahead of Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of Kenya, who has accumulated 781,929 followers on his Twitter account. Additionally, the presidential administration of South Africa, represented by the Twitter handle @PresidencyZA, has garnered a following of 388,418 individuals.

The rapid adoption and adjustment to digital diplomacy by many MFAs and the need to explore the dynamics of its utilization among and between states have led to the need to study U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East with a focus on Islamic terrorism.



CHAPTER FIVE: CAUSES OF TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This discusses the causes of terrorism with a focus on the Middle East. Major causes identified include marginalization, state failure and poor administration, insecurity, and injustice. Others are blocking or excluding civil society groups, searching for personal or group identity, socialization, extreme ideology, limited education, and a single narrative.

5.1. Marginalization, Insecurity and Injustice

Political marginalization, or perceived marginalization of ethnic or religious groups, is thought to raise the probability of violent extremism. In Iraq, the failure to engage Sunni Arabs in the post-2003 political settlement is commonly blamed for the civil war and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) subsequent growth (Tripp, 2018; Weiss & Hassan, 2015). There have been reports of extremist groups exploiting political exclusion as an excuse for violence. Terrorist organizations can, however, originate and thrive in highly democratic countries (as with left-wing terrorism in Germany in the 1970s, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the UK, and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain). Some studies distinguish between international and domestic terrorism, as well as source and target countries.

In conflicts involving violent extremism (as opposed to terrorism directed against the West), discrimination and marginalization tend to explain why extremist groups might attract a substantial number of supporters. Iraq is becoming a textbook example of a conflict in which the ongoing marginalization of one population (the Sunni Arab minority) drives a huge number of people to violent extremism (Weiss & Hassan, 2015). Other cases with significant socioeconomic grievances include northern Nigeria (where the Hausa-speaking Muslim north has tended to experience political marginalization and economic deprivation), Somalia (where Al Shabaab has been especially successful in recruiting from minority clans), and, in previous decades, Sri Lanka (where the Tamil population has endured decades of marginalization). More broadly, issues such as political marginalization are frequently included in push-pull models of radicalization and violent extremism (Zeuthen & Khalil, 2014).

Deficits in security and justice, as well as the presence of predatory and coercive security sector organizations, not only exacerbate grievances but also delegitimize the state, allowing extreme groups to gain legitimacy. In Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban rose to power after the state fell and then joined Al Qaida (Verhoeven, 2009). Current terrorist threats in Kenya and Uganda have been blamed on a failure to modernize security services, a lack of investment in intelligence and policing skills, corruption in security forces, and poverty among the people (Muhammed 2014). Many countries have implemented security sector reforms to solve this dilemma.

However, non-state actors can fill the gap in security and justice functions. Verhoeven (2009), for example, investigates the formation of indigenous security and justice capacities in Somalia, including the Union of Islamic Courts, which resembled a national liberation movement founded on Shari'a justice, security, and welfare provisions. Denney (2012) emphasizes the role of non-state security and justice providers in Sierra Leone, such as chiefs, secret societies, religious leaders, gangs or militias, paralegals, community reconciliation groups, and trade associations.

Individuals' experiences with uneven legal systems can contribute to a sense of exclusion, and human rights violations by security personnel can help extremist groups recruit new members and gain sympathy from the general public. Briggs and Edwards (2006) describe the pervasive impact of powerlessness, isolation, trauma, and humiliation, which may often be traced to predatory and coercive security sector institutions. This is not to imply that extremism does not exist in democracies with working security and justice institutions. For example, PIRA in the United Kingdom, ETA in Spain, and the Baader-Meinhof organization in Germany formed despite well-functioning government and justice systems and persisted for decades (English, 2006; Alonso, 2003; Moloney, 2002). This demonstrates that extremist groups can operate in stable states even when there is an adequate security and judicial framework in place.

Most violent extremist groups are presumed opposed to the state unless the state is so weak that violent groups perform some of the state's functions (for example, organizing armed militias). This is seen, for example, in Iraq, where the Hashd Sha'abi—'Popular Mobilisation Forces'—are connected with and supported by the central government while also expressing a violent form of Shi'i Islam. Nevertheless, assuming that violent extremists are oppositionists,

to what extent does competition with the state influence their ability to recruit and radicalize? Historical and political science evaluations indicate that in weak or failing regimes, violent groups easily exploit religious or ethnic identity. Iraq is another compelling example: even an ultraviolent and socially restrictive outfit like ISIL can attract considerable popular support since it is viewed as defending Sunni Arab rights and even exists against a hostile state and its violent allies.

However, the form of the state and its authority may be more important in this context than the conflict between ethnic/religious groups and the state. According to quantitative studies, state instability is 'the most constant predictor of country-level terrorist acts' (Gelfand, LaFree, Fahey, et al., 2013; Piazza, 2007; LaFree et al., 2011). Other studies indicate that highly repressive as well as liberal, democratic states have fewer terrorist attacks than those in transition from autocracy to democracy. While these studies focus on terrorism rather than violent extremism in general, they highlight the necessity of considering the state's strength and character. In a larger sense, Tilly's (2003) famous research on civil war demonstrates that 'high-capacity democracies' and 'high-capacity non-democracies' are far less likely to encounter civil war (which may involve violent extremist groups) than 'low-capacity non-democracies'.

Others, though, disagree. Freeman (2008) discovers a more complex relationship between political participation and violence; Chenoweth (2010) discovers that terrorist activity is more prevalent in democracies; and Dalacoura's (2006) analysis of Islamist terrorist groups in the Middle East demonstrates that political exclusion and repression of Islamist movements contributed to the adoption of terrorist methods in some cases but not in others. Several studies have found that regimes that are partially free or in the process of transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy are especially vulnerable to violent extremism (Abadie, 2004). According to Newman (2007), weak or failed regimes may create an environment conducive to the operations of specific sorts of terrorist groups. This is not a complete answer because terrorist groups have originated and operated in nations with strong, stable regimes and a variety of political systems.

5.2. State Failure and Poor Administration

A government's failure to provide basic services may create a vacuum those extremist groups might fill to gain support and legitimacy that they would not have received otherwise due to their violent tactics. Examples of violent groups that have gained significant support in this manner include the LTTE, Hamas, Hezbollah, Jemaah Islamiya (Indonesia), Gamaa Islamiyya (Egypt), and ETA. In Karachi, demand for water, energy, transportation, health, and education services outstrips supply, the government's inability has created a hole that private Islamist schools, clinics, hospitals, and social agencies have filled (Richards 2002). Some suggest that this phenomenon is consistent with Islam, presumably because of generosity being one of the five pillars. However, these techniques are not limited to Islamist radicals; the Nepalese Maoists and Uruguayan Tupamaros are two notable examples (Flanagan, 2008; Grynkeiwich, 2008; Magouirk, 2008).

Grynkeiwich (2008) identifies three key advantages of this technique for extreme groups. First, the establishment of a social welfare infrastructure shows the state's failure to uphold its end of the social compact, undermining the state's credibility. Second, non-state social welfare agencies provide the populace with an alternative institution to which to pledge their support. Third, a party that gains the populace's devotion has a continual stream of resources with which to wage war against the regime. These advantages are evident in the case of Hezbollah, which functions on three levels: the civilian plane of da'wa (proselytization), social welfare, and religious education; the military-resistance plane of jihad, and the political plane. In its quest to dominate Shi'a society, Hezbollah defeated its main opponent, Amal, and now has a significant influence in Lebanon's political system and the Middle East (Azani 2013).

Poor administration has long been thought to be a cause of violent extremism. 'The underlying logic is that democratic institutions and procedures, by enabling peaceful grievance resolution and providing channels for participation in policymaking, can help to address the underlying conditions that have fueled the recent rise of Islamist extremism' (Windsor, 2003, p. 43). According to Schmid (2005), state weakness creates an opportunity for revolt, but excessive strength and misuse of official power generate opposition, allowing terrorist groups to thrive. He posits two explanations for this: when unpopular rulers cannot be voted out through democratic methods, proponents of political violence find a large

audience; when long-standing injustices in society are not remedied, desperate individuals are willing to die and kill for causes they—and often also others—perceive as just. Dowd and Lind (2015) argue that in Sub-Saharan Africa, contemporary violence stems from historical grievances about the state's failure to address deeply rooted marginalization and insecurity over time, while the use of repressive machinery to respond to insurgencies causes violence to reoccur.

5.3. Blocking or Exclusion of the Civil Society Groups

Civil society has been advocated as an effective counter-terrorism strategy because it demonstrates the multiplicity of perspectives inside what is frequently viewed as the monolithic 'West' or 'Islamic world' (Kaldor, 2007). However, there are numerous examples of nonviolent political or civil society groups resorting to violence in the face of political failure or repression, the most well-known example being the African National Congress, which turned to violence in 1961 after being banned as an 'unlawful organization' and forced underground (Cronin, 2009, p. 88).

A recent study (Piazza, 2015) shows that prohibiting nonviolent participation is one element that is highly associated with an elevated risk of terrorism. Civil society or faith-based organizations may be targeted for suspicion and repression. In extreme instances, the organization may resort to violence. Islamist parties in the MENA, which are firmly embedded in social movements and civil society organizations delivering services (similar to a'ministate'), have been characterized as 'especially sensitive to repression' (Hamid 2014, p.49). Other illustrations can be found elsewhere. In Nigeria, for example, Boko Haram, initially a nonviolent, faith-based group, grew increasingly violent in the face of disproportionate brutality on the part of the Nigerian state and later presented itself as the protector of victimized populations against oppressive authorities (Pantucci & Jespersen, 2015; Comolli, 2015).

5.4. Globalization, Extreme Ideology, and the Search for Identity

Societies are changing more and quicker than ever before, and we should expect increased bloodshed as extremists attempt to halt or influence that transition to their advantage. Sandbrook and Romano (2004) also blame instability caused by globalization forces, as well as economic reforms demanded by donors, for the rise of violent extremism, arguing that it is merely a historical coincidence that this phase of globalization coincided with the emergence of Islamism as the most common form of violent reaction. Their perspective is heavily influenced by Barber's (1995) prescient book, which proposes a struggle not between civilizations, but between a globalized, corporatist culture and conservative reactionary forces that may be nationalist, tribal, or theocratic.

Psychologists focus on the individual; therefore, they are more likely to uncover internal vulnerabilities. Political science, sociology, and history all look at external influences, and there is a large body of evidence to support the concept that social change is a driver of individual and small-group vulnerability. Kaldor's (2007) well-known work, 'New Wars and Old Wars' contends that globalization is altering the nature of conflict, including the creation of disenfranchised communities that profit little from globalization while being exposed to its stressors and strains. Neumann (2009) applies this idea directly to terrorism, arguing that terrorism is becoming a 'particularist' response to globalization's universalizing tendencies, such as mass communication and immigration.

The extent to which ideology motivates people to commit violence is debatable. Study after study has demonstrated the importance of social rather than ideological elements. However, there is compelling evidence that religion and ethnicity are among the most potent representations of personal and community identity. In the context of Islamist violent extremism, the concept of a transnational Muslim identity emerged in the 1980s, claiming to supersede specific ethnic, cultural, or geographical notions of identity. It was initially mobilized for defensive purposes but was later developed by Al Qaida and others into a doctrine of global terrorism and revolution (Hegghammer, 2011; Gleave, 2014; Maher, 2015).

This is not limited to Islamist violent extremism; other important identity markers, such as ethno/nationalist identity, can also be mobilized. According to anthropologist Juergensmeyer (2003, 2006), religion is frequently blamed for causing conflict and terrorism, but it is more

of a medium through which grievances—"the sense of alienation, marginalization, and social frustration" (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p. 141)—are articulated. Those who express their frustrations in this manner, typically leaders, can use religious identity to their advantage. Politically driven ethnic elites use shared identity, emotions, and irrational beliefs by instilling fear through highly selective and frequently inaccurate narratives and representations to achieve their goals through violence (e.g., Kaldor, 2007; Yadav, 2010; Stern, 2003).

While ethnic fractionalization is strongly associated with civil war, it is not associated with terrorism (Sambanis, 2008). There is some field evidence to support this notion. For example, Botha's (2014) research on Al Shabaab and the (mostly nonviolent) Kenyan secessionist party, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), discovered that the latter is religiously varied but ethnically confined, whilst the former is solely Muslim yet encompasses many different tribes. Faith was recognized, as the cause for 87% of Al Shabaab members joining the group, and 97% believed their faith was under attack, indicating that religious identity may be a major appeal and incentive. However, Botha's (2014) analysis of the MRC reveals that ethnicity can be as potent, depending on the situation and cause.

There is extensive evidence, particularly in psychology, demonstrating that individual identity—how a person views or portrays oneself or herself—is extremely important in attracting people to terrorism. Crenshaw (1983) proposed that many people join terrorist organizations in quest of significance in their lives, while mainstream psychology research provided an increasingly solid theoretical basis for the importance of identity. Baumeister (1991) defined four distinct requirements that drive people's search for meaning and identity: a sense of purpose, efficacy, value, and self-esteem. Where identity is still developing (particularly in adolescence) or complex (for example, among second-generation immigrants), it can become a substantial source of vulnerability. Causes that encourage activism in the pursuit of lofty goals, societal transformation, or the correction of terrible injustices have the potential to be effective remedies to these primordial wants.

Venhaus's (2010) study of almost 2,000 foreign combatants in Al Qaida-linked formations found that they all sought to understand their identity, purpose, and place in the world. They have an unfulfilled urge to define themselves, which al-Qaida seeks to supply. Given that the need for identity and personal significance is universal, the study asks why some people find

it in violent extremism. Psychologists such as Borum (2014) and Horgan (2014) suggest that terrorists are, in many respects, 'normal'—yet this very human desire for identity interacts with other basic needs and propensities in ways that enhance the probability of maladaptive behavior. Borum (2014) presents a comprehensive psychological model of the terrorist 'mindset' and 'worldview' that blends vulnerabilities, such as the need for identity, with propensities (our socially learned preferences or qualities). A young person in quest of identity who is predisposed to see grievance and external threats may pose a considerably greater risk than one whose identity has developed and lacks those propensities. Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler's (2006) rational-choice model, which focuses on spiritual incentives, demonstrates the distinct feature of radicalization available in international violent extremism (IVE) individuals or networks, which is based on the conviction in eternal redemption. 'On an individual level, the fundamental goal is neither the construction of an Islamic state nor the success of a rally. There are only methods to accomplish God's obligations, and that is the only way to achieve redemption. In personal calculations, 'the sheer act of participation provides the payout in the afterlife' (Wiktorowicz & Kaltenthaler, 2006 p. 295).

The organization can therefore supply that feeling of identity while also addressing other needs: as Borum puts it, 'In radical movements and extremist groups, many prospective terrorists find not only a sense of significance, but also a sense of belonging, connectedness, and affiliation' (Borum, 2014 p. 293). This is why 'radicalization' is frequently referred to be a 'social process' rather than an ideological one. The social movement theory approach to violent extremism places a strong emphasis on how individuals and organizations interact. The best example of this is Wiktorowicz's (2005) research into the (now-proscribed) British extremist group Al Muhajiroun, which was based on detailed empirical research and led to the development of a model in which the individual, seeking a cause, presents a 'cognitive opening,' while the group actively promotes itself as an answer to societal aspirations or problems. The two will come together if there is 'frame alignment'—a fit between the cognitive opening and the group's worldview. The appeal of Wiktorowicz's model and social movement theory in general, resides in its broad applicability: it offers a possible explanation for why people join countercultural or radical groups in general, rather than just terrorist or violent extremist groups.

5.5. Gender

The majority of those active in violent extremist groups are young men (GartensteinRoss, 2009; Groen, Kranenberg, & Naborn, 2011). This often leads to the assumption that masculinity and extremism are linked, with the gang-like aspect of some extremist groups cited as evidence (Burke, 2015). Furthermore, Robinson (2010) contends that through socialization, certain aggressive kinds of masculinity accept violence as an occasional or common response to problems. In other words, people who share a 'similar socialized vision' of masculinity may respond to grievances with an 'a masculinized-appropriate style of action'.

However, this line of reasoning is flawed because it misses other important predictors of terrorism (Robinson, 2009, p. 737). Aside from a lack of strong empirical evidence, Hofstede's widely known work on cultural factors, which explains masculinity-femininity as a distribution of emotional roles between the sexes, found no substantial link between terrorism and masculinity. However, the findings are 'not easy' and are muddled by partially validated expectations. More crucially, the observations revealed 'no single cultural profile' and instead encompassed numerous cultural elements (Kluch & Vaux, 2015).

Archer (2003), focusing on Muslims in the United Kingdom, suggests that status and honor are especially important in male Muslim society and that strong masculinity associated with Islam is what drives young men to identify strongly with their religion, often putting it ahead of their ethnic and national affiliations (Choudhry, 2007). This culture can be communicated and internalized through socialization, and it becomes more important when grievances arise. Aslam (2012) contends that 'emasculated masculinity' is the most evident form of masculinity among Muslim groups where men 'continue to struggle globally after their racial vilification.' It is a form of protest against their marginalization, which has matured into collective masculinity. Aslam (2012), however, warns against the notion that such masculinities are open to extremist influences because of a lack of evidence.

Although women are often portrayed as victims of violence or peacemakers, many women engage in violent extremism and terrorism across religious and political lines. Studies on female combatants in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland show that women have no vital relationship to peace and nonviolence (Alison, 2014). The direct involvement of women in violent extremist acts, particularly as suicide bombers in groups such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the PKK in Turkey, and the so-called 'Black Widows' in Chechnya, appears to support

this claim (Bloom, 2011). Notably, the PIRA and LTTE frequently stressed the importance of women in the movement and referred to them as 'freedom fighters.' According to O'Rourke (2009), women join violent extremist groups for the same complex reasons that males do. Female soldiers have traditionally viewed themselves as defenders of their country's political, cultural, economic, and military security, or 'societal security' (Alison, 2014). Despite this, terrorism and counter-terrorism narratives have mobilized and reinforced gender stereotypes, such as the notion of the naive, bored, non-political, out-of-touch woman who turns to terrorism.

Alison's (2014) analysis of loyalist paramilitary groups reveals that male family members initiated a considerable number of women into such organizations. Women defend their involvement by citing the need to safeguard their families and communities (Alison, 2014). Similarly, in Russian-occupied Afghanistan in the 1980s, one woman begged her brothers for a bomb so she could destroy a tank and become a 'martyr' (Dearing, 2010). Furthermore, a permissive security environment and cultural acceptance of insurgent behaviors (such as financing insurgent activity and male suicide bombers) encourage female participation 'since the resources are [already] in place' (Dearing, 2010, p. 1084). Women have been fingered in some violent organizations, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), where more than 30% were women, and Maoist guerrilla groups in Nepal, where women were estimated to make up 30-40% of members (Butalia & Sharoni, 2001).

Women may be highly valuable by providing a labor pool when men are scarce or in high-intensity operations such as suicide missions with low military value, as the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria in the 1960s used women to transport weapons without detection (Sixta, 2008; Davis, 2006). Furthermore, operational imperatives suggest that women can be highly effective in their businesses, prompting leaders to pursue 'actor innovation' to obtain a strategic advantage over their adversaries (Cunningham, 2007). In Iraq in the mid-2000s, Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi encouraged women to carry out suicide strikes to circumvent American security measures (Bloom, 2011).

The absence of women in some circumstances requires concern. For example, in Afghanistan, the lack of female suicide bombers could be attributed to combatants' relative ease of mobility and stringent cultural norms that limited female participation in helping men on the front lines (Dearing, 2010). Women in Palestine have historically played an important

role in violence, although their participation has altered due to the dynamic character of the conflict. Gentry (2009) believes that there cannot be a single explanation for how and why women engage in extremism (Gentry, 2009).

Women's capacity for terrorist support and involvement has traditionally been underestimated, but the research is beginning to recognize its significance (Mahan & Griset, 2013). Although groups like Al Qaida appear to oppress women, women who join or support them may have a new sense of power or independence (National Security Criminal Investigations, 2009). Ethnonationalist political movements geared against perceived foreign oppressors are thought to have a higher impact on women than other forms of violent extremism. According to Parachar (2009, p.239), such motivations are both "political" and "personal," leading people to become "perpetrators and patrons of violence."

Female terrorists are much less afraid to fight than men in male-dominated extremist outfits. Women, unlike men, are more likely to 'put their group's mission first. According to Sixta (2008), this is because women have more to lose due to the risk of rape and torture if they are found. Although such hazards exist for men as well, gendered violence puts women at risk. Furthermore, while women may become indispensable to the cause, their mobilization contributes little to their empowerment. Women's participation in warfare as soldiers, like in conventional wars, does not preclude their "postwar re-marginalization" or "return to traditional roles" (Alison, 2014, p. 458).

Fair and Shepherd (2006) observe that, based on a data analysis of people from 14 different African and Asian nations, women are statistically less likely to support terrorism than men are. They concluded, however, that variances in responses highlight the significance of numerous demographic characteristics within certain target audiences, not simply gender. The role of community, family, and partners is recognized in de-radicalization processes (Pressman, 2009), and women are already widely involved in counter-extremism and de-radicalization initiatives ranging from Northern Ireland to Indonesia to Yemen (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). OSCE (2014) stated that involving women as policy shapers, educators, community members, and activists is critical to preventing terrorism. However, there are conflicting messages about the value of employing stereotypes (such as highlighting women's maternal roles) in counter-terrorism narratives (Carter, 2013).

The direction and impact of such activities would have to be determined case by case. Consider the case of Asiya Andrabi, who started a women's organization in Kashmir in 1981. It began as a reform movement to teach Muslim women about 'Islam and their rights.' It soon turned to moral policing, advocating for jihad in Kashmir. By 2004, it had begun covertly supporting terrorists in Kashmir under the name 'Dukhtarane-Millat' (Daughters of Faith) (Parachar, 2009 p. 246). Sageman (2004) and Zahab (2008) also present more case study evidence to demonstrate that, in certain settings, wives and mothers can influence males to embrace extreme interpretations of Islam.

This is not to imply that women cannot be a force to counter extremism. Women Without Borders and Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) have observed that women's ability to detect and respond to extremism in their families varies with education, local awareness, and geographic remoteness. They find that moms, particularly those with less formal education, struggle to notice warning signs since they believe their children are simply growing more religious and often see the change as positive (SAVE, 2010). Such findings highlight women's critical role and the potential support they may provide in the fight against violent extremism through well-designed knowledge exchange and community-level support programs.

5.6. Socialization and Limited Education

One consistent result of terrorism research is that the processes we refer to as radicalization are typically social. There are exceptions—so-called 'lone actors,' though those who conduct violence without affiliation with an extremist organization appear to be relatively rare—but most persons who become violent extremists do so after a period of socialization, whether in a peer group or an organized group. Socialization entails well-documented psychological phenomena such as 'group shift' (when attitudes shift towards the group's center of gravity), the need for social approval (often referred to as 'peer pressure'), in-group/out-group thinking, and the influence of charismatic individuals (often but not always in a leadership role). However, the importance of socialization helps to explain why otherwise 'normal' people join extremist movements: 'recruitment' and 'radicalization' tend to follow existing social networks, so chance becomes a big element. According to research, those who have violent

extremists in their family or peer group are more likely to become violent extremists themselves (Sageman 2004; Bakker 2006).

Extremist ideologies are more likely to be accepted by 'peers and influential persons' than by schools and universities, most highly educated known terrorists were unlikely to have been radicalized through the education system (Davies, 2014, p. 451). Davydov (2014) blames the 'culture of violence' on the family, peers, and mass media, all of which create the world's image. If this is the case, it is necessary to investigate why such beliefs have become accepted. Haavelsrud emphasizes the importance of violent memories in some societies, which are honored through informal schooling within the family and immediate community. This socialization process may damage formal education systems and media (Haavelsrud, 2009, p. 119).

A fundamental flaw in most studies by Western writers is the absence of empirical validation beyond the terrorism dataset, which is heavily biased towards transnational terrorist groups attacking the West. Field research into more localized but more popular terrorist movements like Boko Haram and Al Shabaab are still in their early stages; therefore, we do not know how these ideas and models apply to other varieties of violent extremism. Hassan's (2012) empirical but narrowly focused analysis of Al Shabaab (based on only five interviews) implies that they might do so. The primary reasons these youth cite for joining Al Shabaab are not deeply held religious beliefs but rather factors centered on their sense of identity and perceptions of neglect stemming from their frustration with clan politics, a lack of opportunities to improve the quality of their lives, and other difficulties associated with war. The fact that most of them abandoned violent extremism when given the option of a better life, particularly when a trustworthy family presented such possibilities, demonstrates this.

The literature contains a wide range of arguments for and against the possibility of a causal relationship between education and extremism. Furthermore, there is no statistical link between levels of education and radicalism. As a result, much of the literature is speculative, with empirical studies being qualitative and case-specific. The following discussion outlines the important contributions, but the total literature is inconclusive.

Individuals with limited access to education and poor literacy levels may be unable to critically examine and question the ideological narratives and doctrines proclaimed by religious leaders (Nwafor & Nwogu, 2015). Furthermore, young individuals with minimal

education are less likely to have studied Quranic passages that challenge extreme groups' ideas. However, attempts to categorize extremism based on educational levels must take into account the fact that persons participating in extremist conduct vary greatly in age, social background, literacy levels, occupation, and previous criminal histories (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 805).

According to Nwafor and Nwogu (2015), the majority of Western recruits are from middle-class families with a secular upbringing and a high school education. Sageman's (2004) study of transnational terrorists found that "more than 60 percent had some higher or further-level education," and that "the central staff/leadership were well-educated" (88% had finished college). Education is typically supposed to 'instill a feeling of social responsibility' and moderate expressions (Panina, 2010: 10). Education can increase political involvement, but Krueger and Malečková suggest that educated individuals may be more likely to become opinion leaders within extremist organizations and align more closely with their political goals. Extremist organizations may prioritize applicants who can adapt to a foreign environment and provide additional benefits (Krueger & Malečková 2003).

However, some argue that the role of education in radicalization varies by situation. In contrast to the examples mentioned above, 'most young ones who enlisted in Boko Haram are either untrained or illiterate' (Onuoha, 2014). 2012, interview-based research of Al Shabaab revealed that very few members acknowledged education, although many did mention missing employment possibilities (Hassan, 2012, p. 19). According to a 2014 survey on student radicalization tendencies in Afghanistan's universities, the majority of students denounce extremist ideologies and violence, and they are more concerned about their employment prospects. According to the study, varied curricula and practices across campuses contributed to student attitudinal variations (Mohammadi & Zaman, 2014).

Vulnerability to extremism may potentially be due to a lack of training in 'conflict-free interaction' rather than a lack of education (Davydov, 2015, p.158). However, the path such individuals take may involve participating in civil unrest, as seen in Tunisia in 2011, or it may be more reminiscent of the 1980s in Palestine, where the expansion of universities and trade unions in the previous decade had broken down class barriers and replaced them with a national consciousness among the youth, who then adopted the tactic of suicide bombing (Gunning 2008).

Davydov (2015) identifies extremism in young people through an outward disregard for society's norms and values, which leads to them seeking those that are not generally acceptable. This, he argues, creates hostile groups that may then become 'extremist gangs' (Davydov, 2015, p. 152). Furthermore, a study of militant Islamism in Europe pointed out that the pull of violent Islamism is rooted in the lack of belief in young people's ability to address grievances and bring about change.

5.7. Single Narrative

The “single narrative” is a term coined by the British government around 2004 to describe Al Qaida's simplistic message that the West is at war with Islam and that the West's hostility is the source of repression or conflict in Muslim lands; the solution, therefore, is to take up arms against the West (the 'Far Enemy') to defend Islam and inflict such damage on the oppressor that it withdraws (Schmid, 2014). This worldview is particularly associated with the ideology developed by Usama bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and their circle in exile in Afghanistan in the late 1990s; it superseded al-Zawahiri's previous view that the problem lay with Muslims themselves and the regimes they allowed to govern them (Gerges, 2009). The Al Qaida narrative, however, does not stop with grievances, which are vital in demonstrating the West's enmity. It implies that the West's goal is to completely defeat and subjugate Islam and Muslims (see, for example, Usama bin Laden's 'Message to the American People' available at <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl/english/Letter%20to%20the%20American%20people.pdf>). This message of 'existential threat' serves as the foundation for Al Qaida's provocation tactic, which causes the 'prophecy' to come true.

A narrative has been increasingly important in efforts to combat violent extremism, with strong arguments made about the necessity to contradict the narrative of Al Qaida and related groups (Briggs and Fave, 2013; Schmid, 2014). Narrative can be defined as storytelling, or more accurately, vocal manifestations of a group's philosophy or worldview. Narrative in the latter meaning is thought to be critical to justifying aggression against others and giving group members a sense of self-importance (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, et al., 2009). Gupta (2005) contends that charismatic persons or ‘political entrepreneurs’ to be successful must articulate them. However, studies on how extreme narratives work are scarce, and we think this to be productive for further research. One significant study (Saucier et al., 2009) takes a

meta-analytical approach to the narratives outlined in a wide range of extremist communications (including from right-wing, apocalyptic and secular, nationalist-separatist groups) and highlights their strong similarities, with common elements including messages of in-group identity, the need to address grievances, existential threat, the urgency of response, and the transformative potential of violence. This study implies that extremist groups employ such simplified narratives to justify, recruit, and encourage their members, but it says nothing about how extremist narratives affect potential or recruited followers.

Are those who believe they are victims of prejudice and injustice more vulnerable to such narratives? Accounts of convicted or former terrorists indicate that revenge for perceived humiliation is frequently offered as an explanation for violent acts (Araj, 2008; Speckhard, 2006; Post et al., 2003), though retrospective justification does not always reveal motivation or vulnerability. Vicarious or 'proxy' humiliation occurs when group identity is strong enough to cause individuals to perceive grievances without actually experiencing them (Silke, 2008; Khosrokhavar, 2005). This phenomenon has been extensively investigated in (Sunni) Islamist extremism, some of which perceive the worldwide Muslim community (the Umma) to be under attack as a whole, with the same community bound by a communal need to respond (Jansen, 1997).

Magouirk (2008) created a mathematical model to show how terrorists and extremist groups use social service provision to attract support. It is built on a simple distinction between "resource" groups, whose major objective is to retain resources and power for themselves, and "social" groups, whose goal is to enhance people's lives. Berman (2011) classifies Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Taliban as "social" groups since they truly wish to assist their people. While the focus has primarily been on extremist groups' support and legitimacy, governments and existing state structures are losing credibility and support as extremist groups attack the social contract between the state and the population, increasing the risk of state failure (Magouirk 2008; Grynkeiwich 2008). These groups frequently give crucial support to people; thus, actively targeting them would exacerbate poverty and isolation while also risking greater radicalization (ICG 2061).

5.8. Geopolitical Perspective of Terrorism in the Middle East

The introduction of the term geopolitics prompted discussions regarding the importance of the link between power and territory-population, concluding that this binary plays a fundamental role in the acquisition of power. French General Pierre Gallois defines geopolitics as “the study of the link between the political orientation of a power, at the global level, and the geographic environment of its actions” (Ezzatti, 2010, p. 13).

The onset of the 21st century heralds a new epoch in international politics, wherein security and the inherent rivalry for the advancement and consolidation of emerging power centers assume a pivotal role in the governance of global developments and the formation of a new world order. No state can stay disinterested, uninterested, or unaffected by the rapid changes occurring in the international arena, given the several domains impacted by these developments. Concepts such as globalization, geo-strategy, defence, and threat have transitioned from idealism to practical realities that each state must acknowledge and address.

Following the conclusion of the Second World War, the global landscape was bifurcated into two distinct geopolitical spheres, each characterized by territories influenced by maritime commerce and the dominance of Eurasian continental power. Regionalism has allowed maritime regions like Europe, Japan, and China to emerge as significant powers (Iftode, 2013). The multipolar system of great powers empowers various regions globally, providing them with a more defined geopolitical structure. As the bipolar monopoly faltered in addressing the European economic landscape, there emerged significant competition with the United States in Latin America. The resurgence of nations such as Japan and the European Community offers countries in the Middle East newfound autonomy in their international alignments (Iftode, 2013). Every circumstance presents nations within a geopolitical area with various avenues to enhance their sway in the region.

It necessitates the advancement of strategic partnerships founded on solidarity, aimed at attaining mutual economic, social, political, and military advantages, as well as the examination of the hostile environment to comprehend the underlying causes of hazards and threats, thereby mitigating vulnerabilities within democratic societies and safeguarding human beings.

The occurrences of September 11, 2001, irrevocably altered the world. The onset of a new century heralded an age of widespread terrorism against civilians. (Maftai, 2009, p. 792). The perception of security in America—believing such events could never occur on its territory—has been irrevocably undermined. Other nations have swiftly recognized that their cities could also be susceptible to such tragedies. Since that time, terrorism has emerged as a significant concern to numerous individuals worldwide. The terror of that day has propelled the Middle East to the forefront of global news coverage. Suddenly, events occurring thousands of miles away influenced individuals regardless of their location. A region formerly deemed insignificant has suddenly emerged as a focal point, as governments globally recognize the Middle East's potential to influence us all. Given the current prominence of the Middle East in the news, it is difficult to fathom that at the dawn of the past century, the region was merely a peripheral concern for the Western world.

Presently, countries globally are influenced by events occurring in this unstable region. The world economy relies on oil, the majority of which is located beneath the dunes of the Middle Eastern deserts. Oil is the economic cornerstone and a source of wealth; a plentiful and inexpensive supply is crucial for sustained Western prosperity. This reliance on oil has radically altered the Western nations' relations with this region, making it a crucial strategic area of the world.

The evolution of the political-strategic landscape, marked by the dissolution of the "Iron Curtain," has significantly facilitated the diversity and escalation of risks, directly affecting their expression and configuration globally. The emergence of regional actors seeking to exit the realm of a secondary power centre, characterized by limited interests, includes Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, and Indonesia; certain European nations like Poland, Spain, and Ukraine; Latin American countries including Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela; and Asian states such as South Korea and Japan. This development complicates the dynamics involving the United States, China, and Russia.

Japan interferes with the international system structured around the confrontation between "rogue states vs. states of concern," as defined by certain nations (Libya, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea), global asymmetric organizations (substates), and non-European geopolitical factors lacking a pivotal power Centre. This includes the imposition of liberal Western democracies in non-Western contexts and the political and national "bloody borders"

of Islam, which perpetuate an inferior status within the global system. It is essential to acknowledge non-state actors and non-sovereign entities that exert economic, political, and social influences at both national and, in certain instances, international levels (Simileanu 2011, p. 31). No consensus exists concerning the members of the latter category. Some definitions encompass nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, international media, armed groups (such as rebel forces, militias, and warlords), terrorist organizations (e.g., Al Qaeda), organized crime (including drug cartels), religious groups, transnational diaspora communities, and influential individuals (Pitulescu, 1996, p. 54).

On the other hand, the advent of global terrorism and the antifundamentalist coalition—led by the U.S.A.—has produced a diplomatic rift between the West and Islamic space. The intellectual dimension of the space separating the West and the Islamic space created a syndrome of “related” states—according to the theory of H.D.S. Greenway—that have shared reactions commensurate with a given political-religious ideology and a common code of values. The setting of the existing power structures and centers hampers the operation of trinomial reconstruction (after violence), reconciliation (between the parties), and resolution (on the development of the conflict) (Simileanu, 2009, p. 38).

The divisions within the Islamic world arise from various inter-Islamic and inter-Arab conflicts, religious antagonisms, and the lack of a unified Islamic-Arab “Piedmont.” This situation is influenced by power struggles among Arab states and secular Islamic nations, as well as religious, linguistic, and ethnic differences, all of which emphasize a disconnect with the West and impact global international relations. The new internationalism brought about by globalization is not evident in certain geographic regions, including the Islamic space. In this context, Islamic countries serve as centers of influence within the Islamic realm, yet they face limitations in asserting themselves on the global stage due to internal restrictions, as well as prohibitions and exclusions imposed by other geopolitical regions that align with certain aspects of the international relations system.

The region of the Middle East constitutes one of the most volatile regions, presenting the largest potential of igniting a global conflagration. Over the past 60 years, numerous wars have occurred, predominantly of brief duration, with the longest being the conflict involving the USSR and Afghanistan lasting 9 years (1979-1988) and the Iraq-Iran war lasting 8 years (1980-1988). All had analogous consequences: detrimental impacts on state economies, mass

exodus, millions of fatalities, destruction of property, industrial violations, and even repercussions on the global economy, endangering it by escalating oil prices due to regional instability and inadequate transport security.

The War on Terror intensified already existing regional crises, including the Israel-Palestine conflict and the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The intensification of these conflicts has resulted in proxy wars and heightened instability throughout the region. Leaders are driven to avoid direct warfare because of the significant costs and risks associated with it (Downey, 2021). Meanwhile, global developments related to terrorism have intertwined with and influenced bilateral matters among Middle Eastern countries. The 9/11 attacks heightened global apprehension regarding extremism, which could influence diplomatic relations. The growing sectarian divides, especially the Sunni-Shia split, have assumed new dimensions during this tumultuous time. In summary, transnational threats and the responses they provoked both strengthened and altered the dynamics among Middle Eastern nations.

Since the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2014, which saw 80,000 deaths and was marked as the bloodiest year, there has been a significant reduction in both battle-related fatalities and the occurrence of wars in the country (Khan, 2024). There are currently ten active armed conflicts in the Middle East, which consist of one interstate conflict, five civil wars, and four internationalized internal wars. Nonetheless, this figure declined from 12 conflicts in 2018, marking the highest count observed in the region since 1946. Following 2011, the total number of non-state battles rose, reaching a peak of 37 in 2014, but has since experienced a decline. Nonetheless, non-state conflicts remain extremely deadly, with casualties peaking in 2017—primarily due to assaults carried out by ISIS (Norlén, 2022). In general, while violence has decreased from its highest levels, it continues to be prevalent, largely driven by the actions of non-state militant groups.

War and state instability are deeply connected and tend to strengthen each other. Fragile nations face a reduction in their ability to protect citizens, allowing terrorist organizations and violent radicals to take advantage of grievances and needs. Although ISIS and al-Qaeda have weakened, their affiliated groups continue to operate actively and maintain strongholds in regions with unstable security, particularly in Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. When weak states are unable to assert jurisdiction over their designated territories through legal means and enforcement, they inadvertently provide militant groups with the opportunity to function

without restraint. In countries affected by conflict, it is common to find porous borders and areas that are difficult to control. This situation offers militant organizations opportunities to recruit new members, train their forces, plan operations, and carry out attacks in regions that lie outside their direct reach. Therefore, there will be no alterations to the operation theatres until the underlying social and political instability is leveraged by terrorist propaganda. As a result, this hinders them from fully accessing the state's resources. Consequently, stability relies on the state's capability and resources for fortification.

Terrorism presents a varied economic impact in the nations that confront it. The rise of terrorism in the Middle East has led to significant structural changes and contractions in the region's economy through various channels. Ongoing violence creates a constant and enduring sense of anxiety that affects the economies facing it, both directly and indirectly. The immediate effects encompass not just the tragic loss of human lives but also the destruction of infrastructure, industries, and agriculture, and disruptions to commercial activities. Indirect repercussions encompass diminished FDI, capital outflow, sluggish growth rates, rising unemployment, and substantial costs associated with the rehabilitation of displaced individuals resulting from war and counterterrorism efforts. Restoring stability, growth, and livelihood opportunities poses a long-term challenge due to the deep-rooted political, security, and economic issues present in numerous terror-affected nations.

Terrorism has profoundly affected the vital oil sector in the Middle East, where energy constitutes the cornerstone of economic stability for numerous nations. Armed conflicts invariably influence both regional and global economies (Banna et al., 2023). Terrorism has specifically induced volatility in oil production by disrupting supply channels and targeting infrastructure. In Iraq, ISIS assaults diminished oil production by as much as 320,000 barrels per day at the height of their dominance. By 2014, ISIS controlled over 60% of Syrian oil output, generating over \$3 million daily from illegal sales. Notwithstanding recent setbacks, ISIS continues to exert influence over significant oil reserves in northern Iraq (Ward, 2018). Another issue influencing the oil trade is the rising frequency of attacks on oil tankers by various terrorist organizations. Terrorist assaults on vital energy infrastructure in the region, variations in Iraq following the US-led invasion, and conflicts and instability in certain oil-producing nations adversely affect the oil trade. The matter of terrorist attacks necessitates focused consideration due to the established links between energy and security. The

European and African markets have experienced diminished supply due to concerns over maritime delays resulting from terrorist attacks, prompting oil vessels to skip the Red Sea route. The Houthi rebels have assaulted vessels traversing the Red Sea, situated south of Yemen, employing drones and missiles. The Suez Canal, situated north of the Red Sea, is a crucial conduit for the transportation of oil and various commodities, rendering it one of the most vital routes globally.

Terrorist organizations derive a significant portion of their financing from oil, resources that could otherwise facilitate development projects aimed at alleviating poverty, addressing infrastructural deficiencies, and resolving health crises afflicting the region. As the foundation of numerous Middle Eastern economies, uncertainty in energy supplies imposes significant burdens and highlights the urgent necessity to re-establish consistent growth and safeguard vital assets threatened by terrorist groups.

Emerging financial markets demonstrate significant volatility during armed conflict and terrorism. Heightened political and economic uncertainty exacerbated by terrorism intensifies instability in markets such as equities and currencies (Kannadhasan & Das, 2020). Research indicates that the political volatility in the Middle East significantly affected early economic instability during the Iraq War (Fernandez, 2007). Research has discovered abrupt and substantial fluctuations in instability across five stock markets in Arab nations and has analyzed the impact of these fluctuations on the duration of volatility (Hammoudeh & Li, 2008). Arab stock markets exhibit heightened sensitivity to major global events in comparison to local and regional issues. This underscores how terrorism exacerbates insecurity, profoundly affecting investment prospects. Eradicating war and its concomitant hazards is essential for fostering a more conducive climate for commerce and various economic endeavours in fragile nations, so contributing to the stabilization of growth and the reduction of instability.

Prolonged conflicts have compelled regional nations to allocate disproportionate resources to security, neglecting vital humanitarian and financial goals. Engaging in battle necessitates substantial expenditure in defence, encompassing actions such as mobilizing military forces, deploying troops in unstable regions, and procuring weapons and supporting resources. Prolonged instability reallocates resources from lucrative civilian activities to fruitless defence efforts, so undermining future economic possibilities. This issue leads to heightened

fiscal deficits as tax revenues do not align with escalating expenditures. Moreover, the interplay of supply disruptions and substantial government spending during periods of conflict and sociopolitical turmoil has exacerbated inflation in the Middle East.

Demand increased due to the limited availability of products and services. The yellow line illustrates that Middle Eastern inflation exceeded the 10.1% barrier, which is known to adversely affect economic growth (Mohammad et al., 2023). Elevated inflation also results in heightened manufacturing expenses and diminished output, posing further obstacles to developmental advancement. Addressing these macroeconomic impacts requires prompt conflict settlement.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) inflows diminished in nations immediately affected by terrorism and those neighboring conflict zones, including Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. Foreign investors exhibited reluctance to participate with governments and adjacent regions affected by violence due to security apprehensions. This led to considerable economic difficulties for economies dependent on foreign direct investment. Geopolitical instability and terrorism concerns emerged as primary factors influencing investor decisions and causing stock market volatility. As risk-averse capital departed from unstable environments, development prospects declined, with recovery dependent on re-establishing stability, enhancing governance, and ensuring the rule of law. The economic repercussions of prolonged violence underscored the necessity for collaborative regional strategies to mitigate militant actions and instill confidence in the business sector for long-term sustainability and security.

Tourism is essential for promoting economic development and progress, as a rise in international visitors enhances national revenue. Before the recent turbulence, specific Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai had solidified their status as prominent worldwide tourism destinations, while others endeavored to enhance their reputation and draw new visitors. Tourism emerged as a significant catalyst for the restructuring of regional economies that were predominantly dependent on oil. The region experienced substantial annual influxes of millions of international tourists drawn to its numerous natural, cultural, historical, and holy sites. Nonetheless, the escalating threat of terrorism has considerably undermined the vital tourism sector by instilling a profound sense of dread that has deterred travel to the impacted nations. The repercussions affected

interconnected sectors such as travel agencies, restaurants, hotels, and tourist stores, inhibiting economic activity. Destinations heavily reliant on European tourism, such as Egypt, witnessed substantial drops in visitor numbers, adversely affecting overall service employment. Restoring security and confidence is essential for revitalizing important tourism sectors that many Middle Eastern countries rely on for revenue, development, and employment possibilities outside oil markets.

Geopolitical risk signifies the influence of unexpected geopolitical events. In the Middle East, various risks arise from multiple factors, such as ethnic and religious conflicts, dependence on oil for economic stability, political instability, and other challenges to state sovereignty and defence (Hu et al., 2022). Geopolitics can lead to military actions, armed threats, significant power interventions, terrorism, and defence challenges (Suder, 2006; Ferreira et al., 2022). Geopolitical risk encompasses the results of strategic interactions among geopolitical entities, shaped by factors like geographical location, resource availability, economic frameworks, military capabilities, and dynamics such as cooperation, rivalry, conflicts, and containment in a specific area. The interactions directly influence national security by affecting sovereignty and defence capabilities. The emergence of geopolitical tensions illustrates a multifaceted interaction between external influences and foundational domestic civil strife (Kiik, 2017). Creating a clear understanding of the current geopolitical risks facing Middle Eastern countries is a crucial step in reducing volatility and fostering greater predictability in this often-unstable region. Certain local actors believe that terrorism arises because of geopolitical dynamics related to oil. The escalating tensions between Israel and Iran have indeed become a central focus in the narrative surrounding the oil market, highlighting the significant influence of geopolitics. The Houthi have escalated their assaults on oil vessels. Similarly, when Saudi Arabia and the UAE intervened in the Yemen civil war, their oil ships, pipelines, refineries, and ports became targets for Houthi rebels. The outcome of the Syrian war with the collapse of the Assad regime, as well as the Israeli wars against non-state actors in Gaza, Yemen, Syria, and even Iran, all add to negative impacts on oil stability and risks.

Hu et al. (2022) indicate that the Middle East comprises numerous nations characterized by a considerable degree of geopolitical risk. The influence of terrorism and the War on Terror has significantly moulded the current geopolitical landscape and the associated security dynamics

(Sharp, 2011). They brought about significant shifts in geopolitics throughout the region. The security challenges presented by terrorism, both directly and indirectly, have significant geopolitical consequences. Militancy weakened stable governance and created porous borders that were taken advantage of by both terrorist and criminal networks. Regional instability deepened as neighboring countries supported opposing factions, resulting in the escalation of severe consequences. Interruptions in the inflow of energy resources have a considerable impact. The resulting power vacuums presented a risk of strengthening radical ideas that could surpass national borders. To effectively tackle the ongoing destabilization of the Middle East by terrorist organizations, it is essential to adopt coordinated regional strategies that focus on the political, economic, and sectarian divides that these groups often take advantage of. It will assist in addressing the interconnected geopolitical challenges in the region.

The rise of terrorism in the Middle East has now posed a threat that reaches far beyond its initial boundaries. Militancy currently represents an unparalleled global danger, with possible consequences that reach well beyond adjacent nations. The region is currently facing a delicate and challenging period. Regional players are increasingly focusing on their own geopolitical objectives, even in the presence of global powers like Moscow and Washington. Nevertheless, nations lack the sufficient capacity or willingness to persuade their regional partners to avoid escalating tensions. Asian and European players are recognizing a growing necessity for deeper understanding and engagement in crucial geopolitical discussions that are contributing to this unstable environment. It appears that a sustainable solution may not be attainable without a cooperative, multilateral framework that aligns initiatives at local, regional, and international tiers to amicably settle conflicts, reinstate stable governance, confront humanitarian emergencies, and collectively combat global terrorist networks.

The shifting U.S. alliances in the region have transformed power dynamics, positioning Iran and Turkey as key players. These transformations have significant implications for global security and diplomacy. The Middle East continues to be a focal point in international arms markets, largely due to its strategic role in the War on Terror, significant oil and gas reserves, and ongoing patterns of violence. Between 2015 and 2019, it accounted for 35% of global armament sales (Thomas et al., 2017). In 2019, US weapons exports experienced a significant increase of 42%, reaching a record high of \$69.7 billion. This growth was largely driven by a

remarkable 118% surge in the Middle East, which rose from \$11.8 billion in 2018 to over \$25.5 billion. 56% of US sales to the region were directed towards Gulf Cooperation Council states, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia (Dudley, 2019). Increased geopolitical risk is associated with a reduction in investment, job creation, and economic opportunities, while simultaneously raising the likelihood of disasters and adverse outcomes. The persistent instability almost guarantees a sustained demand for weapons from nations aiming to gain strategic advantages in the face of perceived threats. Addressing these cycles necessitates collaborative political approaches and regional confidence-building measures to mitigate the factors that drive militarization.

5.9. U.S. Anti-Terrorism Institutions

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Established in 2002, the DHS is responsible for protecting the United States from various threats, including terrorism, natural disasters, and cybersecurity. It oversees agencies such as Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): Founded in 1908, the FBI is a federal law enforcement agency that investigates and enforces laws related to national security threats, including terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime, public corruption, civil rights violations, and white-collar crime.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): Formed in 1947 as an independent intelligence agency under the National Security Act of that year. The CIA's primary function is to gather intelligence through human sources and analysis while also conducting covert operations to support U.S. foreign policy objectives.

National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC): Established in 2004 within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), NCTC serves as a primary organization for integrating and analyzing all intelligence possessed or acquired by the U.S. government about terrorism while working with other departments to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): Created in response to the September 11 attacks on airlines, it was established as part of DHS in November 2001, with its main responsibility being ensuring security at airports through screening processes for travelers' safety.

United States Secret Service: Established after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, it was created by Congress in 1865 under the Treasury Department before being transferred to the DHS post-9/11 attack; its primary functions include protection of high-level officials like presidents and vice presidents along with investigation into financial crimes such as counterfeiting fraud.

Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)/National Security Agency (NSA): Both were established during the Cold War era. DIA was formed under Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's guidance back then. At the same time, the NSA evolved from military signals intelligence operations during World War II, becoming a standalone agency post-Cold War era back then, dealing primarily with foreign electronic communications monitoring now also associated with cyber-security efforts worldwide, especially after Edward Snowden revelations regarding mass data collection programs such as PRISM leading ongoing debates regarding privacy vs. national security concerns today.

However, it was the creation of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), a division of the Department of State, founded in 2011 by Executive Order 13584, with the aim of "supporting agencies in government-wide public communications activities targeted against violent extremism and terrorist organizations" (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011, n.p.) that added significant vibrancy to the US counterterrorism through social media. Executive Order 13721, which took effect in 2016, renamed the CSCC the Global Engagement Center while essentially maintaining its counterterrorism objectives (Federal Bureau Strategy, 2019). After the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 was passed, GEC's mandate was extended to include the ability to deal with other foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation operations. As stated in GEC's mission statement, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 strengthened this goal and gave it a mandate (Federal Bureau Strategy, 2019). Thus, many of the social media posts that focus on countering foreign propaganda, including terrorist posts, are usually countered by the CSCC.

The existence of numerous institutions that deal with terrorism in the US demonstrates the importance that Washington, D.C., attaches to fighting terrorism. This importance is also reflected in the posts that were analyzed in the following chapter.

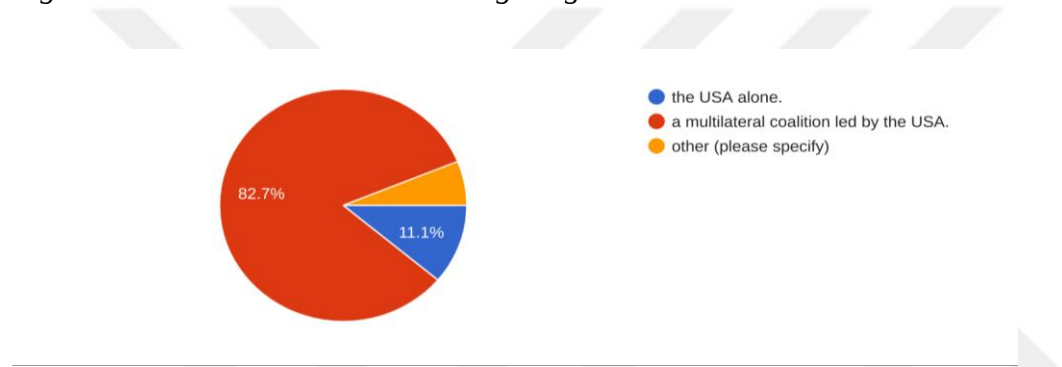


CHAPTER SIX: U.S. ANTI-TERRORISM POSTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This chapter presents the results and findings from the questionnaires and interviews on U.S. anti-terror posts in the Middle East. A discussion of the results is also undertaken with relevant anti-terror posts drawn from such U.S. agencies that are saddled with counterterrorism.

6.1. Contents of U.S. Digital Diplomacy on Anti-Terrorism in the Middle East

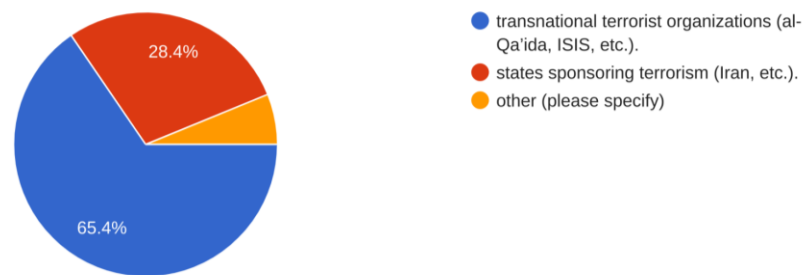
Fig. 6.1: How the U.S. Pursues the Fight Against Terrorism?



As seen in the figure above, according to the respondents, the posts show the U.S. fight against terrorism in the ME is pursued fundamentally via a multilateral coalition. This is supported by the responses from interviews. All three interviewees agree that the coalition is the US's primary approach. However, one of the interviewees added that the U.S. sometimes takes unilateral actions during actual operations. It should be noted that the U.S. conducts its anti-terror fight in the Middle East through a combination of military, intelligence, diplomatic, and economic measures. These measures are part of the broader strategy aimed at disrupting terror networks' abilities to operate effectively while also addressing underlying conditions that make certain populations susceptible to extremist ideologies across the Middle Eastern region today; it's an ongoing effort that involves coordination among different government agencies as well as international partners working towards shared goals regarding global security amidst changing geopolitical landscapes overall. The U.S. Twitter and Facebook pages have numerous examples of messages directly and indirectly stating the U.S. partnership with its allies to win the Global War on Terror (GWOT). For instance, on February 6, 2019, the Trump White House posted thus on its Facebook page.

"The United States military, our coalition partners, and the Syrian Democratic Forces have liberated virtually all of the territory previously held by ISIS in Syria and Iraq" (Trump, 2019). <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-ministers-global-coalition-defeat-isis/>). These findings agree with several existing studies (Clarke & Paul, 2015; Kibbe, 2010; 2009; Byman, 2006; Art, 2003; Hoffman, 2002) on counterterrorism in the Middle East.

Fig. 6.2: U.S. primary target of the fight against terrorism



The above shows that the majority of respondents think that the primary targets of the U.S. anti-terror posts are international terrorist organizations. However, 28 percent believe that these posts target states that are considered by the U.S. to sponsor or sympathize with terror organizations and should also be considered when arriving at the target of the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. This is also, what one of the interviewees, a former Chief of Mission in the Iraq Embassy in Washington, thinks about the primary targets of these posts. It can therefore be argued that evidence from this data supports the conclusion that the U.S. posts against terrorism in the Middle East target both terror organizations and states believed to be supporting terror organizations. This conclusion is further strengthened by an examination of some posts from the Twitter and Facebook of the U.S. agencies. On December 19, 2018, the Trump White House posted this:

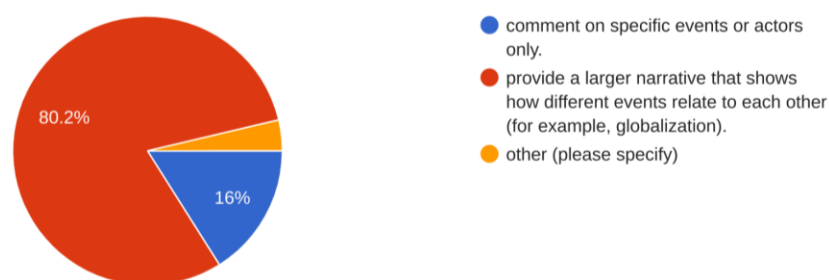
Five years ago, ISIS was a very powerful and dangerous force in the Middle East, and now the United States has defeated the territorial caliphate. These victories over ISIS in Syria do not signal the end of the Global Coalition or its campaign. We have started returning United States troops home as we transition to the next phase of this campaign. The United States and our allies stand ready to re-engage at all levels to defend American interests

whenever necessary, and we will continue to work together to deny radical Islamist terrorists territory, funding, support, and any means of infiltrating our borders (Trump White House, 2018).

The above post confirms the view of the majority of the respondents that US posts target transnational organizations. On October 12, 2023, the Department of State posted thus: "This is pure evil on Hamas' acts of terror against Israel" (Blinken, 2023). These and many other similar posts indeed target an international terror organization, despite having a general audience. Similar messages that target states in the Middle East are found within the U.S. social media space. For instance, on October 20, 2023, the Global Engagement Center posted President Biden's tweet, "We cannot and will not let terrorists like Hamas and tyrants like Putin win. I refuse to let that happen" (Biden, 2023).

Thus, one can argue that the posts target terror organizations like Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and their affiliates. Lone Wolves, or individuals who, while not necessarily members of any group, are motivated to carry out attacks on their own by radical ideology, are also sometimes referred to. Supporters and sympathizers (who could be states or individuals) are persons who, although not actively participating in terrorist acts, publicly endorse radical ideologies. The goal is to counteract their influence, propaganda, and recruitment attempts.

Fig. 6.3: Depiction of the U.S. anti-terror posts



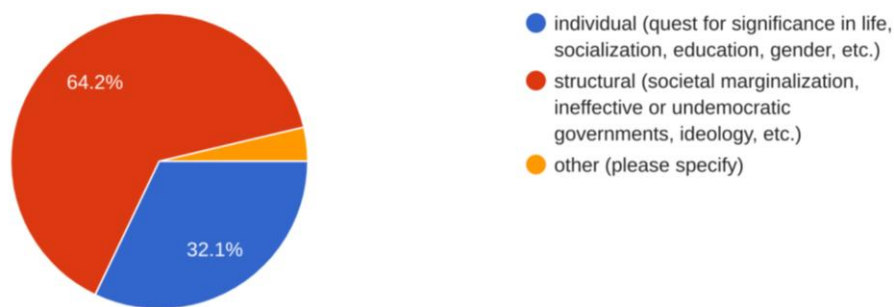
Participants in the interview also support the view shown above. They agree that even when comments are made based on events, they are made within a wider context of what the U.S. represents. For instance, the US Department of State made the following post on 23 December 2020:

The Islamic Republic of Iran, also known as Iran and previously known as Persia, is a paradox in the Middle East. It is home to a proud and ancient culture whose ideals of freedom and democracy under Cyrus the Great helped form some of the foundations of the U.S. Constitution, while Iran itself has struggled to reach democracy. The Iranian people have been fighting to reach freedom throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The Iranian people are largely pro-Western but are brutally subjugated by an anti-Western religious theocracy. Iran is an anomaly in the Middle East, as the Iranian people do not speak Arabic, but rather Persian or “Farsi.” While there is diversity in Iran, the majority of the Iranian people are culturally, ethnically, and religiously unique from their surrounding neighbors. (US Department of State, 2020).

Therefore, it is plausible to argue that some U.S. anti-terror campaigns on social media reference recent terrorist attacks or ongoing conflicts to address the immediate threats and narratives pushed by extremist groups. For example, after significant attacks the U.S. might use social media to condemn the violence, offer condolences, and counter the propaganda that might arise in the aftermath. These posts are designed to engage directly with the narratives being spread by terrorist organizations about those events, providing a counter-narrative that emphasizes peace, stability, and the futility of terrorism.

Beyond responding to specific incidents, U.S. anti-terror messaging often works to construct a broader, consistent narrative that challenges the ideological foundations of terrorism. This narrative includes promoting the values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law and often seeks to delegitimize the ideological justifications for violence used by extremist groups. The narrative aims to undermine the appeal of terrorism by offering alternative pathways and positive stories of resilience and recovery in affected communities.

Fig. 6.4: U.S. post depiction of reasons people become terrorists



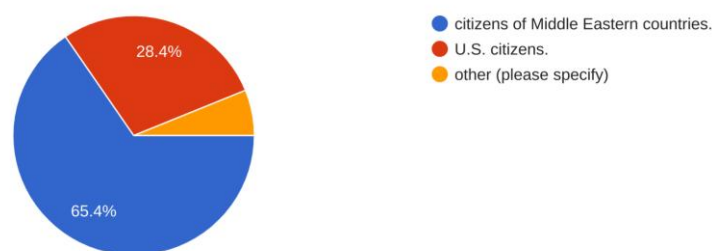
The findings from respondents to the questionnaires and participants in the interview agree that the U.S. posts tend to give primacy to structural causative factors of radicalization. A multiple causative factor, ranging from ideological, economic, social and psychological factors (Dawson, 2018; Hafez & Mullins, 2015; Schmid, 2013; Neumann, 2013; Borum, 2011; Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010; McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; Victoroff, 2005), of terrorism is well rooted in literature on radicalization.

Many terrorists are driven by a belief in an extremist ideology. This can be religious, political, or nationalist (Dawson 2018). They may believe they are fighting for a cause greater than they are. In some cases, people are influenced by their social environment, including family, friends, and community. If an individual is raised in a culture that glorifies martyrdom or has deep-seated grievances, they may be more likely to adopt extremist views (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Marginalization, poverty, lack of political representation, and perceived injustice can fuel a sense of resentment and drive individuals toward extremist groups that promise to address these issues (Schmid, 2013). Traumatic experiences, such as war, loss of family members, or personal humiliation, can radicalize individuals (Borum, 2011). The desire for revenge or justice can make them vulnerable to extremist recruitment. Some individuals may have personality traits or psychological conditions that make them more susceptible to radicalization (Borum, 2011). This can include a need for belonging, purpose, or identity. Being part of a group can strengthen extremist beliefs. Peer pressure, loyalty to the group, and a sense of solidarity can push individuals to commit acts of terrorism that they might not have considered on their own (Neumann, 2013). Extremist groups use sophisticated propaganda, often spread through social media, to recruit members.

This propaganda can exploit existing grievances, portray the group as heroic, and dehumanize the enemy. The spread of global ideologies and easy access to information and communication technologies have made it easier for extremist groups to reach and recruit individuals worldwide. Some people may experience an identity crisis or alienation, especially in multicultural societies, leading them to seek out groups that offer a strong sense of identity and purpose.

6.2. Addressees of U.S. Digital Diplomacy on Anti-Terrorism in the Middle East

Fig. 6.5: U.S. anti-terror posts addressees

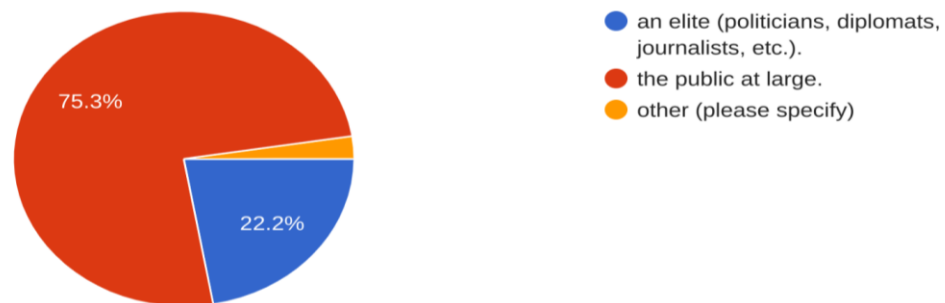


Again, participants in the interviews share similar opinions with respondents to the questionnaires. Participants agree that the U.S. anti-terror posts focus more on citizens of the countries in the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, on U.S. citizens too. The purpose is to raise awareness and vigilance in populations that may be targeted by extremist groups for recruitment. These posters frequently promote community collaboration with authorities and stress the need to reject violent beliefs.

These messages are also intended to refute extreme narratives and discourage anyone who might be thinking about joining terrorist groups. The material frequently emphasizes the drawbacks of joining these kinds of organizations and dispels the lies found in extremist propaganda. Posts may also be directed at people or organizations that financially or ideologically support terrorism. These communications frequently seek to discredit the validity of endorsing these causes and to alienate extremists from the larger community. Those who are more susceptible to radicalization, such as young people, are frequently the main emphasis. To fight the allure of extremist groups, campaigns may incorporate messaging that promotes alternative narratives, opportunities, and support networks.

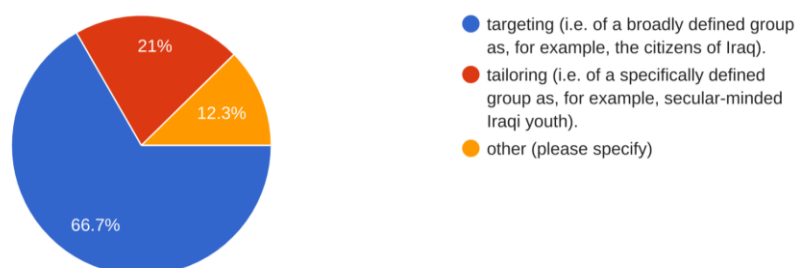
Occasionally, the content urges Middle Eastern governments, religious authorities, and influential people to strongly condemn terrorism and support the dissemination of alternative narratives.

Fig. 6.6 U.S. anti-terror posts class of addressees



The findings above show that U.S. anti-terrorism social media messages in the Middle East are primarily intended for the general populace, not elites such as diplomats. The goal is to reach a larger audience that may be vulnerable to extremist narratives or who may help combat terrorism in their communities. While the primary target audience is the general population, some messaging or content may indirectly reach or influence elites such as diplomats, government officials, or religious leaders. Instead of large-scale social media campaigns, these individuals may be reached through direct diplomatic channels, specialized communications, or collaborations.

Fig. 6.7 Method of Selecting U.S. anti-terror posts audience

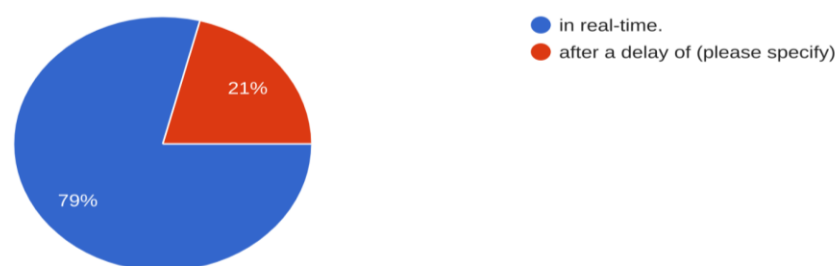


The findings above also conform to the opinions of participants in the interviews. While the majority favors targeting, other participants also notice tailoring in the posts. It is therefore to be argued that to reach certain groups, such as teenagers or those who have expressed an

interest in extremist content, campaigns or posts frequently employ demographic (age, gender, location) and psychographics (interests, behaviors) targeting approaches. Posts are sometimes directed at regions or communities believed to be vulnerable to radicalization or where terrorist groups operate. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter enable marketers (including governments) to target people based on their online behavior, such as the pages they like, the content they engage with, or their search history.

6.3. Communicational Patterns of U.S. Digital Diplomacy in the Middle East

Fig. 6.8 Sequences of US anti-terror posts

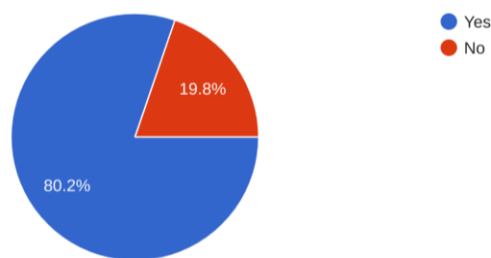


From the above responses, depending on the strategy and goals of the campaign, US anti-terrorism posts on Facebook and Twitter that target the Middle East happen both in real-time and in response to certain occurrences. “Certain campaigns are made to run continually, disseminating messages meant to refute extreme narratives, advance opposing viewpoints, or interact with people who are considered to be at risk. These posts may have little to do with any one incident but rather are part of a larger, proactive plan to keep up a consistent internet counter-narrative.

Engaging and connecting with users on social media platforms is another aspect of real-time messaging. This may entail reacting to extreme information, holding conversations, or instantly answering queries and worries from the viewership. Following a large incident, such as a terrorist attack, the capture or assassination of a terrorist leader, or a major geopolitical development, there may be an increase in targeted communications. These posts seek to capitalize on the event's increased exposure, either by condemning terrorist actions, highlighting counter-terrorism victories, or providing a narrative that opposes extremist propaganda around the event. In the early aftermath of an occurrence, particularly one

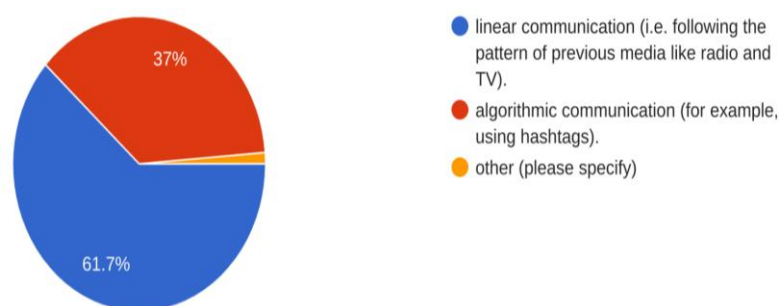
involving a large amount of public attention or misinformation, anti-terrorism posts focus on delivering factual information, refuting false claims, or addressing public anxiety and bewilderment. The posts show the U.S. strategy frequently combining event-driven communications with real-time engagement. Real-time posts, for example, might be amplified during a big event to swiftly address emergent narratives or misinformation, while larger ongoing efforts continue to support long-term strategic aims”.

Fig. 6.9 Response system to U.S. anti-terror posts



It is observed from the posts on Facebook and Twitter that only some Facebook pages allow for responses. This is the case with the White House Facebook account. However, the Twitter account of most U.S. security agencies does not allow for comments or responses.

Fig. 6.10 Communication pattern of the U.S. anti-terror posts

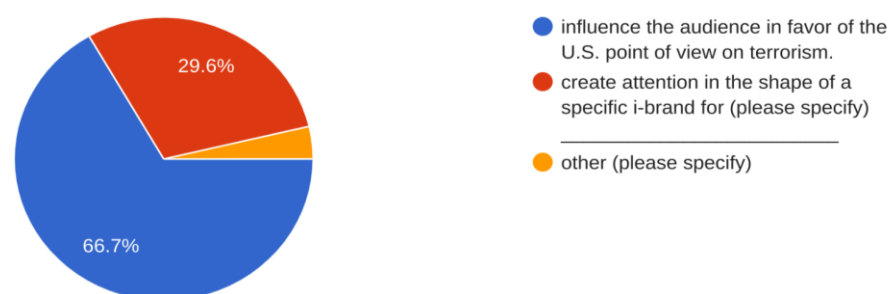


U.S. anti-terrorism social media posts targeting the Middle East are mostly sequential rather than algorithmic. Even though this reflects the opinion of the majority, as seen in the figure above, many of the posts are seen to also be algorithmic.

A more conventional, broadcast-style strategy would be used for linear posts, in which the content is dispersed evenly among a large audience with little personalization or targeting. This method ensures that users view the same content regardless of personal traits or online activity. Linear communication has fewer audience feedback loops and is more static. Because it does not adapt to the way the audience engages with the content, it may be less effective in quickly evolving contexts like social media. This is seen in most U.S. posts on Facebook.

Notwithstanding, social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram employ algorithms to select who sees certain information. These appeals to specialized U.S. counter-terror agencies such as the Global Centre for Engagement. Anti-terrorism efforts in the U.S. use similar algorithms to ensure that their posts reach specified audiences, such as people in specific geographic regions, age categories, or those who exhibit specific online behaviors that indicate vulnerability to radicalization. The algorithms adjust post visibility based on user involvement (likes, shares, comments) and other factors, so the content's reach and impact may fluctuate over time. This enables the messaging to be more sensitive and adaptable to audience reactions and the changing internet environment.

Fig. 6.11 Aim of the U.S. anti-terror posts



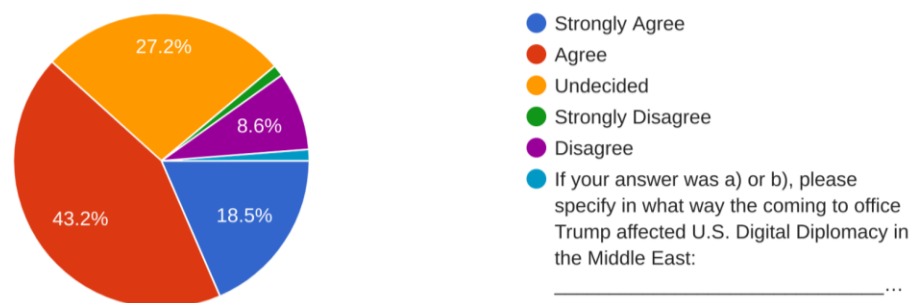
As seen in the findings above, the primary goal is to combat and discredit extremist propaganda spread by terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. The U.S. seeks to challenge the narratives that these groups use to recruit and radicalize individuals by promoting alternative viewpoints that highlight the dangers and consequences of extremism.

These posts also aim to offer peaceful, non-violent alternatives to extremism, emphasizing the benefits of stability, community, and economic development. By highlighting positive examples of resilience and prosperity, the U.S. hopes to reduce the appeal of terrorist ideologies. In addition, the U.S. social media campaigns often aim to build and strengthen relationships with local influencers, community leaders, and organizations that can amplify anti-extremist messages. These partnerships are crucial for increasing the reach and credibility of the content. The posts could also be said to target populations that are most vulnerable to radicalization, such as youth and disenfranchised groups. By engaging directly with these audiences, the U.S. tries to prevent radicalization before it begins. Such posts and interactions can also serve as a tool for gathering intelligence on extremist groups and their sympathizers. By monitoring online activity, the U.S. can gain insights into terrorist networks and potential threats. It could also be deduced that these digital campaigns also aim to promote U.S. policies and values, such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as alternatives to the chaos and violence associated with terrorism.

6.4. Factors That Shaped U.S. Digital Diplomacy in the Middle East

6.4.1. Transition from Obama to Trump Administration

Fig. 6.12: Do you agree that the transition from Obama to Trump transformed the aims of U.S. digital diplomacy?



The U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East saw a dramatic transformation with the Obama-Trump administration change, which was mirrored in larger adjustments to foreign policy and communication tactics.

Emphasis on Engagement and Soft Power: Using social media as a means of direct communication with Middle Eastern citizens, the Obama administration placed a strong emphasis on public diplomacy and soft power. The State Department started programs like the "Virtual Embassy Tehran" and the "Arab Spring" social media campaign to use digital platforms to promote human rights and democratic movements (US Department of State, 2011).

Under Obama, digital diplomacy tended to be measured and centered on communication, understanding, and cooperation. Social media campaigns frequently emphasize long-term collaborations, cultural exchanges, and shared values. In addition, the U.S. started employing social media to refute extreme narratives (Bull, 2012). The CSCC, which was established to destroy extremist propaganda online, was one example of such an endeavor.

The Trump administration's digital diplomacy mirrored its move to an "America First" strategy. The emphasis shifted to national interests, security, and economic gains in an increasingly forceful tone. This strategy frequently involved using direct, perhaps combative, communications on social media sites like Twitter.

Trump frequently communicated U.S. policy through social media, especially Twitter, in a direct, sometimes combative, and often personal way. He took strong positions against Iran, supported the Abraham Accords, and promoted the "America First" agenda as a major component of his digital diplomacy. Under Trump, digital diplomacy was primarily focused on preventing terrorist attacks, limiting Iran's sway, and advancing economic normalization between Israel and the Arab world (Babbit, 2019). Human rights and democracy received less attention; instead, transactional connections were highlighted.

As a key player in U.S. digital diplomacy, President Trump utilized Twitter as his main channel for announcing policy decisions, criticisms, and even threats. His straightforward and frequently unvarnished approach affected how the United States spoke with both friends and foes in the Middle East (Babbit, 2019).

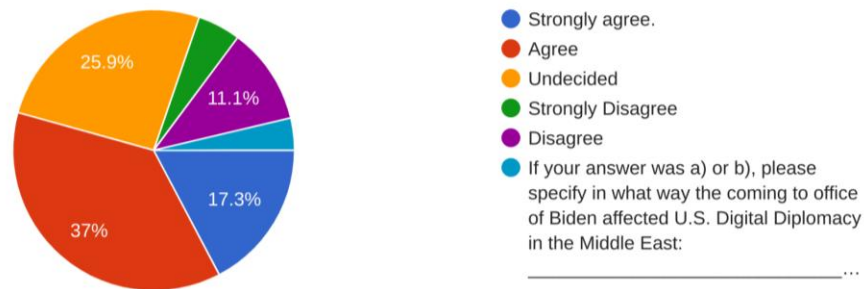
Reducing Iran's influence in the region and fighting terrorism were top priorities for the Trump administration. More attention was paid to these topics in digital ads, which frequently backed harsh positions against regimes like Iran and organizations like ISIS (Zohny, 2023). Promoting the Abraham Accords, which established diplomatic ties between Israel and some Arab nations, was another top priority for the administration.

In contrast to the Obama administration, the Trump administration gave less thought to using digital diplomacy to advance democracy and human rights in the Middle East (Zohny, 2023). Instead, security and economic concerns took the stage. Responses that are more divisive were seen in the Middle East as a result of Obama's shift in tone and content to that of Trump. While some countries and groups saw the Trump administration's candor as pushy or contemptuous of local issues, others valued it (Gutsche, 2018). The way that Trump used social media, especially Twitter, increased the transparency of US foreign policy decisions to a level never seen before. However, this also meant that policy declarations might shift quickly in response to the president's tweets, making digital diplomacy more unpredictable. The Middle East's perception of the United States was impacted by the election of Trump after Obama. The lack of emphasis on human rights and diplomatic engagement alienated some people, while others valued clarity and decisiveness.

In conclusion, the shift from Obama to Trump brought about a more assertive, security-oriented approach to digital diplomacy in the Middle East, with a reduced reliance on communication and soft power. This change was a reflection of larger adjustments made by the Trump administration to U.S. foreign policy priorities and communication tactics.

6.4.2. The Biden Administration

Fig. 6.13: Do you agree that the transition from Trump to Biden affected the aims of U.S. digital diplomacy?



In addition, a noteworthy change in U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East occurred with the transition from the Trump to the Biden presidency. This modification represented President Biden's more expansive objectives for foreign policy, which were significantly different from those of his predecessor (Hu & Minghao, 2024).

In the Middle East, Biden's strategy for digital diplomacy signaled a return to multilateral cooperation and established diplomatic channels. The Biden administration's emphasis on collaborating with international organizations and allies was mirrored in more restrained and well-planned social media messaging (Hu & Minghao, 2024).

In its attempts at digital diplomacy, the Biden administration has brought back the emphasis on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. As part of U.S. engagement in the region, there was a renewed focus on addressing human rights issues in nations like Saudi Arabia and Egypt and advancing democratic administration (Hu & Minghao, 2024).

In contrast to Trump's policy of maximum pressure on Iran, the Biden administration prioritized diplomacy, especially by working to resurrect the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA). This change was mirrored in digital diplomacy, where the messaging emphasized discussion and compromise above conflict resolution.

In the Middle East, the Biden administration expanded the purview of digital diplomacy to encompass concerns such as climate change, refugee crises, and humanitarian assistance. This was a component of a larger plan to deal with the underlying issues causing instability in the area.

The Biden administration placed a high priority on battling misinformation and promoting reliable information, both locally and globally, in addition to carrying out ongoing efforts to

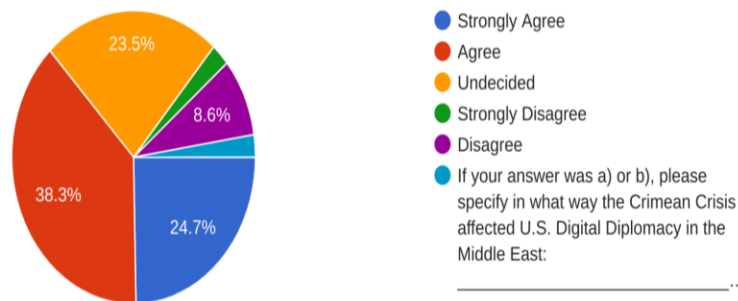
oppose extremist narratives online. A reaffirmation of U.S. support for a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was made by the Biden administration. Biden's digital diplomacy includes demands for renewed communication between Israelis and Palestinians, with an emphasis on peace and security for both parties, even as he supported the Abraham Accords.

Compared to Trump's direct approach, the Biden administration's internet diplomacy had a more diplomatic, less personal tone. The goal of this was to give American communications some stability and predictability again. Biden's digital diplomacy placed a strong emphasis on collaboration and common values to regain the trust of long-standing partners in the Middle East and beyond. Coordinated social media efforts on important subjects with allies mirrored this. In contrast to Trump's more transactional approach, there was a discernible growth in the Biden administration's digital diplomacy messaging emphasizing human rights, democracy, and multilateralism. Although the Biden administration continued to prioritize counterterrorism, it was frequently done so within a larger framework of regional cooperation and stability as opposed to just using a security lens.

In conclusion, the change in leadership from Trump to Biden resulted in a move in the Middle East towards more conventional, multilateral, and values-based digital diplomacy. The Biden administration used digital media to foster communication, mend ties, and address a larger variety of issues influencing the area to strike a balance between security concerns, human rights, and diplomacy.

6.4.3. The Russian Digital Transformation

Fig. 6.14: Do you agree that Russian digital disinformation had an impact on U.S. digital diplomacy?



Russian digital disinformation significantly shaped international narratives and perceptions during the 2014 Crimean Crisis, which directly affected U.S. efforts at digital diplomacy. There is a great deal of misunderstanding and skepticism because of Russia's use of internet channels to propagate misinformation and false narratives regarding the validity of the takeover of Crimea (U.S. Department of State, 2022). Because the United States found it difficult to refute these tales with information, this damaged the credibility of American efforts at digital diplomacy.

Russian disinformation frequently painted the U.S. as an interventionist and hypocritical nation, undermining the efficacy of American digital diplomacy by raising questions about the country's intentions and actions everywhere, not just in Crimea (US Department of State, 2022).

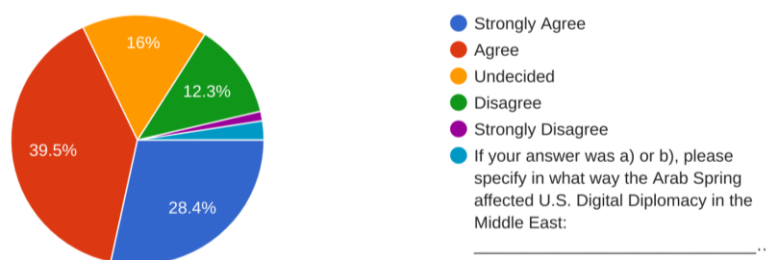
By encouraging pro-Russian and anti-Western attitudes, Russian disinformation successfully influenced public opinion, particularly in Eastern Europe and among Russian-speaking groups (US Department of State, 2022). Because of this, American diplomatic statements that stressed international law and sovereignty had a tougher time connecting with these audiences.

Russia skillfully exploited social media platforms to disseminate its version of events, forcing the United States to continually defend its position in the digital information sphere (US

Department of State, 2022). It was challenging for US ambassadors to participate in meaningful digital discourse or refute lies before they were widely accepted due to the quick spread of misinformation (US Department of State, 2022).

6.4.4. The Arab Spring

Fig. 6:15: Do you agree that the Arab Spring transformed US digital diplomacy in the Middle East?



Findings show that U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East has seen a substantial transformation because of the Arab Spring, with a more aggressive, engaged, and strategically orientated approach to leveraging digital platforms for diplomatic initiatives. The Arab Spring had the following significant effects on U.S. digital diplomacy: social media may be an effective tool for mobilization, communication, and public opinion molding, as seen by the Arab Spring (Ricaud, 2018). The U.S. realized that it could no longer disregard internet platforms in diplomatic relations. As a result, social media engagement with the local populace has become increasingly important, as opposed to depending exclusively on established diplomatic channels. The U.S. embassies and diplomats in the Middle East started to actively use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to convey American policy, show support for democratic movements, and dispel false information (Ricaud, 2018). This signaled a change towards more interactive, real-time diplomacy.

The United States recognized the potential of digital tools to uphold civil society and advance freedom of expression in the Middle East. Programs were created to give journalists and activists the tools and training they need to use digital media securely and efficiently. Programs such as "Civil Society 2.0" were introduced to provide digital tools and tactics to

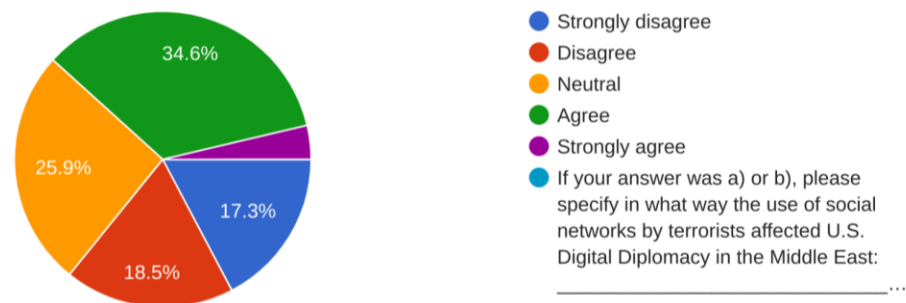
grassroots organizations. This was part of a larger initiative to facilitate democratic transitions and make sure that reform-minded voices could take advantage of technology.

The Arab Spring also highlighted the need for U.S. diplomacy to be more flexible and agile. This resulted in the adoption of "real-time diplomacy," in which US officials responded to events as they unfolded, typically via social media (Ricaud, 2018). This enabled the United States to react quickly to developments and influence narratives in a rapidly shifting environment. The U.S. further realized how important it is to successfully frame narratives in digital arenas. During the "Arab Spring", messaging frequently emphasized topics such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, which resonated with many in the area (Ricaud, 2018).

The Arab Spring demonstrated how rapidly extremist groups may use digital channels to propagate propaganda. In response, U.S. digital diplomacy began to focus more on counter-messaging to discredit extreme narratives and promote more moderate voices (Ricaud, 2018). The U.S. grew more cognizant of the importance of countering misinformation and disinformation campaigns, particularly those that threaten fragile transitions or damage U.S. interests (Ricaud, 2018). This prompted the creation of more complex systems for monitoring and responding to incorrect information online. The U.S. government tried to strengthen ties with technology businesses, recognizing their role in molding public debate and their potential as partners in fostering free expression and combating terrorism. This included collaborations on topics such as content control and cybersecurity. The U.S. became a more vocal advocate for global internet freedom, arguing that open, interoperable, and secure internet access is a fundamental human right. This was largely in response to the censorship and repression that occurred during the Arab Spring when authoritarian regimes attempted to control the flow of information.

6.4.5. Terrorists Use of Social Media

Fig. 6.16 Do you agree that terrorists' use of social media influenced U.S. digital diplomacy?



The evidence from the above does not support any conclusion for this question. The interviews shed more light by arguing that multiple factors would have influenced U.S. digital diplomacy in the Middle East, including terrorists' use of social media. However, there is overwhelming literature that supports the view that terrorists' use of social media in the Middle East was a major factor in shaping U.S. digital diplomacy in the region.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings in the previous chapter.

7.1. Conclusion

"Digital diplomacy" is a new field of diplomacy that has steadily grown in popularity over the last 20 years or more. Digital diplomacy, also known as "e-diplomacy" by the British and "numerical diplomacy" by the French, refers to a novel approach to managing international relations and diplomacy that makes use of the internet and other ICTs.

A new approach that is more visible, open, and inclusive than the previous style of diplomacy, which operated covertly behind closed doors and was more exclusive and secretive. As I've noted in earlier chapters, diplomacy has changed significantly over the past 100 years to become more transparent and public. Furthermore, a wide range of actors, including elected officials, non-governmental groups, trade and cultural associations, academic specialists, and civil society organizations, administer it today. Modern technologies are significantly contributing to the advancement of diplomacy's openness, transparency, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness.

With the proliferation of ICT, non-state actors, including those with subversive motives, are exploring social media platforms to promote radicalization and subvert national security. As a result, nation-states have started responding, using the same social media tools. Consequently, this thesis sought to examine the U.S. digital responses through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter terrorism in the Middle East, a region generally seen as enmeshed in complex and protracted conflicts that have had negative impacts on human security.

Chapter one of this study provides the background information needed to undertake the study. The chapter contains an examination of relevant literature and the gaps that informed the study. Chapter Three focused on the concept of diplomacy. Diplomacy, which comes from the Greek word "diploun," is the practice of managing relations between states. The state is the primary and most influential actor in diplomatic relations, and the classic statist approach

is the dominant paradigm. The English School offers a complete understanding of diplomacy in the social and political environment, acknowledging the existence of an international society that operates independently of state actors. Diplomacy includes both practical and intellectual components, and contemporary interpretations vary greatly depending on epistemological and methodological perspectives.

Multiple typologies have been used to explain the concept of "diplomacy," with some scholars characterizing it as a manifestation of a country's foreign policy, contending that current definitions are vague, inadequate, and incorrect, and Marshall (1999) emphasizing the term's recurring misinterpretation. Others distinguished three distinct schools of diplomatic thought: traditional state-centric approaches, emerging frameworks centered on non-state actors, and innovative paradigms that emphasize the coexistence and potential collaboration of traditional and modern forms of diplomacy.

The Waltzian perspective emphasizes the state's role in international relations as the primary driver of diplomatic reform. Some scholars take an interpretive approach, arguing that the effectiveness of diplomacy is dependent on diplomats' actions and decisions. They provide five parameters for understanding diplomacy: the identification of actors, their purposes, modalities of interaction, the profession, and the competencies required for diplomacy. Non-state actors, technology advancements, and increased public awareness of global-local issues have all had an impact on diplomacy. There are two types of diplomacy: traditional diplomacy and current diplomacy. Diplomacy originated in ancient cultures and has evolved to emphasize conflict prevention and global concord. The Americas and other regions experienced significant expansion and development, and the concept of diplomatic society did not entirely match international society. Diplomats typically acquire their abilities through experiential learning and mentorship networks, and their standards reflect characteristics associated with luxury and nobility. Despite the rigorous frames of hierarchy and power, the heart of Old Diplomacy is more like a chaotic but cultivable garden than a structured game.

Chapter Four discusses the importance, development, catalysts, and challenges of digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy is a growing field that uses digital technology to improve communication and comprehension between states. The digital revolution, known as the "Third Industrial Revolution," has transformed many aspects of society, including the

economy and social institutions. The digital revolution has improved the accessibility of banking services, optimized supply chain management, and expanded the use of GPS technology in logistics. It has had a significant impact on many aspects of human existence, including education and healthcare, by allowing people from different parts of the world to communicate. The use of digital technology has accelerated scientific progress worldwide. Diplomacy has evolved in tandem with societal transformations, such as the foundation of sovereign states and the establishment of a permanent ambassadorial system. Accelerated advancement in information and communication technology has had a significant impact on foreign policy, encouraging global equity while enabling direct connectivity and commercial transactions. Digital diplomacy seeks to quickly offer accurate information, rebut falsehoods, and validate material from reliable sources. Digital diplomacy is a growing field that uses information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance diplomatic communication. It has two tiers: the foreign ministry and the network of embassies located in various international locations. Digital diplomacy refers to diplomats using digital communication technologies, such as social media platforms, to undertake strategic communication on both domestic and international levels. It encompasses knowledge management, public diplomacy, information management, consular communications and responses, disaster response, internet freedom, the use of external resources, and policy formulation.

Digital diplomacy is a branch of public diplomacy that uses a variety of strategies to study cultures, attitudes, and behaviors, develop and sustain connections, and influence perceptions and actions to advance nations' interests and ideals. Diplomats are increasingly using social media channels, particularly Twitter, to communicate with unconventional audiences, allowing citizens to influence their governments in ways that were impossible a decade ago. The collaborative element of diplomacy endures, regardless of the digital domain, as governments increasingly rely on their foreign ministries to interpret global events from a national perspective and pursue foreign policy objectives that align with their national interests. Digital diplomacy emerged in response to the growth of information and communication technology, as well as social media, which was influenced by Al-Qaeda and the Arab Spring. It enables real-time information distribution from combat zones; yet, issues remain, such as the "culture of anonymity" on the internet and the need for state adaptation. The transition from monologic to dialogic communication is not limited to government sectors, with three impediments to embracing Web 2.0 culture: resource allocation, optimal

social media practices, and normative concerns about relinquishing control of the communication process. The US Department of State has emerged as a key player in digital diplomacy, with over 150 full-time social media workers working across 25 bureaus.

Chapter Five provides a thorough examination of the elements that contribute to terrorism in the Middle East. Marginalization, state failure, weak governance, instability, and injustice are all factors that contribute to terrorism in the Middle East, particularly among Muslim groups. Political marginalization, or perceived marginalization of ethnic or religious groups, is thought to enhance the possibility of violent extremism. The absence of Sunni Arabs from Iraq's post-2003 political settlement is frequently blamed on the civil war and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Extremist groups frequently use religious and ethnic identity to gain public support and sympathy. However, this is not always true in democracies with operational security and justice institutions. In unstable or failing regimes, violent extremist groups may exploit religious or ethnic identities. The Middle East has seen an increase in violent extremism due to state failure, ineffective governance, and the effects of globalization on extremist ideology and identity construction. Religion and ethnicity have important roles in defining individual and communal identity, particularly in the context of Islamist violent extremism. Ethnic fractionalization is strongly associated with civil conflict but has no link with terrorism. Individual identity is extremely important in pulling people to terrorism because it fuels their search for meaning and self-definition. Radicalization is typically described as a social process rather than an ideological one, with the social movement theory approach to violent extremism emphasizing interactions between individuals and groups. Masculine masculinity is the most visible embodiment of masculinity within Muslim communities, as men struggle with global racial vilification.

Women are commonly presented as victims of violence or as peacemakers, but they also engage in violent extremism and terrorism across religious and political lines. Research reveals that women have little link to peace and nonviolence; yet, their active participation in violent extremist operations, such as suicide bombings with groups such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the PKK in Turkey, and the 'Black Widows' in Chechnya, backs up this claim. Women can be a valuable labor resource when men are scarce or in high-risk situations, such as suicide missions with little military value. Women are currently involved in counter-

extremism operations in a number of countries; nevertheless, there are opposing perspectives on the efficiency of using stereotypes in counter-terrorism narratives. Socialization has a substantial impact on radicalization, as the majority of people who become violent extremists do so after a period of socialization. Education influences radicalization, but it may not be the only factor determining vulnerability to extremism.

The Middle East has emerged as a global issue because of the spread of terrorism and regional entities attempting to rise above their status as secondary power centers. The region's volatility has affected international relations, as the global economy relies on oil riches located beneath the Middle Eastern deserts. The political-strategic context has facilitated the spread and escalation of risks, altering their manifestation and structure globally. The chapter also identifies factors that influence geopolitical risk in the Middle East. These include ethnic and religious conflict, reliance on oil for economic stability, political volatility, and threats to state sovereignty and defense.

Using quantitative and qualitative tools for data collection and analysis, chapter six reports the thesis examination of four major objectives. These include:

- Contents of U.S. Digital Diplomacy Against Terrorism in the Middle East.
- Addressees of U.S. Digital Diplomacy Against Terrorism in the Middle East.
- Communicational Patterns of U.S. Digital Diplomacy in the Middle East.
- Factors that Shaped U.S. Digital Diplomacy in the Middle East.

Based on the above general objectives and research questions, the findings are:

The United States of America is chiefly involved in the war against terrorism in the Middle East by establishing a multilateral coalition. The primary objectives of the United States' anti-terrorism posts are international terrorist organizations. In the United States, the blogs tend to prioritize structural issues that contribute to radicalization. The anti-terrorism communications disseminated by the United States predominantly focus on individuals from Middle Eastern nations, with comparatively less emphasis on American nationals. This effort aims to augment awareness and vigilance within communities that may be susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups.

The numbers indicate that the primary target audience for anti-terrorism propaganda disseminated on social media by the United States in the Middle East is the general populace, rather than elites such as diplomats. Targeting is the principal strategy employed to select the audience, however, customization is applied in certain instances. The United States of America disseminates anti-terrorism messages on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, both in real-time and in reaction to specific events, targeting the Middle East. Commenting or reacting is frequently prohibited, particularly on Facebook accounts. The predominant anti-terrorism messaging on social media platforms in the United States that focus on the Middle East is sequential rather than algorithmic. Terrorist entities like ISIS and Al-Qaeda propagate radical propaganda, with the primary aim of countering and discrediting this narrative. The findings indicate that the United States' digital diplomacy in the Middle East has experienced a substantial transformation due to the Arab Spring. This shift has led to a more proactive, engaged, and strategically focused approach to using digital platforms for diplomatic activities.

The transition from the Obama administration to the Trump administration resulted in a substantial shift in the United States' digital diplomacy in the Middle East. This modification coincided with significant transformations in both foreign policy and communication methods. The Trump-Biden administration initiated a transformation in the United States' approach to digital diplomacy in the Middle East. This move resulted in President Biden's foreign policy objectives being markedly distinct from those of his predecessor. These ambitions were broader. The disinformation disseminated by Russia during the 2014 Crimean Crisis significantly influenced the evolution of digital diplomacy in the Middle East by the United States. The impact of the increasing utilization of social media platforms by terrorists on the United States' digital diplomacy in the Middle East cannot be ascertained due to the inadequacy of the acquired data. The literature appears to corroborate the notion that terrorists' use of social media significantly influenced the United States' adoption of digital diplomacy. The study concluded by emphasizing that digital diplomacy enhanced the space of diplomacy. It allows the diplomats and politicians to introduce themselves to a large audience. It also certifies the outcomes to the decision-makers to achieve rational policies based on goals.

7.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the insight provided in this study:

To the Sovereign States;

1. Promotion of a digital coalition against terrorism. Such coalitions should aim at denying identified terror organizations access to popular cyberspace that they use for recruitment and radicalization. The promotion of the digital coalition model will require the introduction of certain cyber norms based on international standards. Just as there are developed principles of peace support operations, the digital coalition model will produce a global digital framework that will prescribe basic regulatory principles for digital diplomats who will drive the process of preventing cyber wars, cyber espionage, and cybercrime. As an emerging field characterized by some level of confusion, the field of digital diplomacy will need to begin to put together some digital code of conduct for diplomats, a range of appropriate skills, and a modicum of exposure to knowledge of cyberspace.

To the Heads of Foreign Missions:

2. Foreign missions should increase their investment in the digital capabilities of their diplomats, especially the older diplomats with deficits in advanced cyber skills.

CSOs and Funding Partners

3. Building local capacities of civil society organizations in the Middle East to help create a bottom-up approach to digital diplomacy against terrorism.

7.3. Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis achieved the objectives that underpin its investigation. However, in the course of the study, some concerns that were outside the scope but relevant to this work surfaced. These are important for further research and are highlighted below:

1. There is a need to explore how non-state actors, especially terror organizations, perceive U.S. digital social media messages.

2. The study methodology is more reliant on the use of questionnaires and content analysis with very limited in-depth interviews. Further studies will benefit from case studies such as U.S. digital diplomacy in a specific Middle Eastern country.
3. A comparative study of U.S. digital diplomacy across countries in the Middle East will throw more light on the nature of U.S. digital diplomacy in the region.
4. Research on the impact of U.S. digital diplomacy and specific challenges with terror organizations in the Middle East also remains vital to the understanding of the nature of US digital diplomacy in the Middle East.



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Appendix 1

“Questionnaire”

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for participating in this interview. I am interested in gathering insights on “**The U.S. Digital Diplomacy and Anti-terrorism in the Middle East**”. Your perspectives are valuable in helping us understand the digital diplomatic efforts of the US on combating terrorism in the Middle East.

Instruction: Please tick (√) as appropriate and fill in the gaps where required.

SECTION A: Demography

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: 18-30 ☐ 31- 40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-70 ☐

Highest Qualification: High School ☐, Degree ☐ Postgraduate degree ☐ others ☐

Employment Status: Self-employed ☐ Employed ☐ Student ☐ Not employed ☐

Career Option: Diplomat ☐ Embassy Staff ☐ Journalist ☐ Academic ☐ Others ☐

Section B: Some Factors that Shaped the US Digital Diplomacy

This section seeks to collect data on the factors that shaped US digital diplomacy in the Middle East					
The Arab Spring in 2011 contributed to shaping the US digital diplomacy in the Middle East because it highlighted the importance of social media for mobilizing the people.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Russian digital disinformation campaign during the Crimean crisis of 2014 contributed to shaping the US digital diplomacy.					
The change from the Obama to the Trump Presidency (2017) ushered in a different understanding of the aims of U.S. digital diplomacy.					
The change from the Obama to the Trump Presidency (2017) ushered in a different understanding of the self-images of U.S. digital diplomacy.					
The Trump administration ushered a robust US digital diplomacy.					
The increase in terrorist use of social media platforms contributed to shaping US digital diplomacy.					

Section C: Contents of the US Digital Diplomacy on Anti-terrorism in the Middle East					
This section seeks to collect data on the US Facebook and X (Twitter) posts on terrorism in the Middle East. Select any of the options that best represent your opinion.					
The US anti-terror messages on Facebook and X target only transnational terrorist organizations (al-Qa'ida, IS) and not States sponsoring terrorism.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
The US anti-terror messages on Facebook and X target States that sponsor terrorism.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
The US anti-terror messages on Facebook and X target both transnational terrorist organizations (al-Qa'ida, IS) and States that sponsor terrorism.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
The US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address only specific issues.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
The US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address specific issues within the larger narrative.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Section D: Coverage of the US Digital Diplomacy in the Middle East					
This section seeks to collect data on the coverage of the US posts on Facebook and X. It covers the geographical focus of the posts, audience, and class of people.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address only people from the Middle East.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X are meant to address both people from the Middle East and US citizens living in the US.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address the public in the Middle East.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address only the elite in the Middle East.					
Some of the US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X address only social media influencers or gatekeepers in the Middle East.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X target a more specific defined audience such as secular-minded people in the Middle East.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X do not target a more specific defined audience but a large audience such as a country.					
Section E: US Digital Diplomacy Communicational Patterns					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X appear in real-time during a terror attack.					

US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X usually appear a couple of days after a terror attack.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X allow for responses or comments.					
US anti-terror posts on Facebook and X do not allow for responses or comments.					

