Diplomacy and Digitization: A Profession Adapting to New Networks of Power

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Abstract:
Diplomacy's methods have changed with the times. The need to communicate and represent through diplomacy has remained consistent regardless of the capacities of the communicative forms available. In this context, digital technologies create openings for new communicative practices that are simultaneously new strategic opportunities. This article offers an overview of the recent growth of public and digital diplomacy, and of some of the ways in which digitalisation is connected to a complex series of threats to the power and centrality of foreign ministries and diplomats, and to new ways of countering these threats. The article argues that the study of diplomacy's digitization is also the study of how diplomacy has met the challenge of globalisation, adapted to complex interconnectivity, and embraced the concept of the transnational audience.

Key Words:
Globalization, ministry of foreign affairs, mediatization, social media.

Diplomacy's methods have changed with the times.[1] The need to communicate and represent through diplomacy has remained consistent regardless of the capacities of the communicative forms available. Historical studies have observed the importance of changes in communication technologies and channels upon message transference processes, and hence upon some of the contingent structures and practices of diplomacy.[2] The rollout of telegraph systems and undersea cables during the

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[1]   S. Sofer, "Old and New Diplomacy: A Debate Revisited", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1988, pp. 321-349; J. R. Kelley, "The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2010, pp. 286-305; B. Hocking and J. Melissen, *Diplomacy in the Digital Age*, The Hague: Netherland Institute of International Relations "Clingendael", 2015.

[2]   C. Jönsson and M. Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; J. Black, *A History of Diplomacy*, London: Reaktion Books, 2010; J. Dittmer, "Theorizing

latter half of the 19th century, for example, provided a partial reconfiguration of the geospatial landscape, with consequences for the ability of diplomats to "collect information, convey messages, and secure a knowledge base".[3] Before this new technology existed, diplomats in the periphery were qualitatively and psychologically "further away".

Such changes affect the ways in which specific diplomatic tasks are conducted. The telegram carried news faster than horse and carts, and hence information circulated at a different cost and pace. It is the collective consequences of these changes to the practice of diplomacy – to the profession as a whole, rather than simply to communicative work processes – that makes technological change interesting. For example, intensified information circulation in the late-19th century strengthened the central power of foreign ministries at the expense of overseas missions, placed new demands upon the speed of analysis and decision-making, and to some extent downgraded the plenipotentiary discretion of distant ambassadors.[4] The sense of a more "joined-up" organisation impacted upon power relations between centre and periphery; changes in communication channels spill over into fundamental questions of what diplomacy and diplomats are for and how they work.

Unsurprisingly, the impact of globalisation, digitization and the Internet on 21st century society has awakened a great deal of interest in what these changes might mean for the future of diplomacy. For example, the introduction of emails to ministers and diplomats at the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) hastened the end of hierarchical telegram distribution; junior diplomats could henceforth email their ideas directly to senior staff, shaping the potential for new practices of

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a More-than-Human Diplomacy: Assembling the British Foreign Office, 1839-1874", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2016, pp. 78-104.

[3] J. Der Derian, "The question of information technology in international relations", *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2003, pp. 441-456; D. R. Winseck and R. M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860-1930*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.

[4] D. P. Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 41.

information circulation, decision-making and power relations.[5] When assessing the impact of digitization on diplomacy, the task is not simply to tally the number of foreign ministry Twitter and Instagram accounts currently in use, do content analyses of representational practices, or to plot maps of who is following whom online. Old practices co-exist and intermingle with new; digitization is not so much a clean break from old practices as a gradual, uneven series of tectonic shifts.[6] Digitization is embedded into complex social practices that reconfigure how individuals and organisations understand and interact with the world around them, and diplomacy is no different to any other industry in a process of social change.[7]

However, an overt focus on digitization runs the risk of lapsing into technological determinism. Vincent Mosco[8] has convincingly argued that the "utopian discourses" accompanying digital technologies undermine "the reality of struggles for control of communication devices and hegemony over norms and systems." On the contrary, debates into the potentially revolutionary impact of digital technologies may be placed in a long tradition of redemptive mythologies about the transformational capacity of other historically "new" communication technologies, such as the telegraph, telephones, radio and television. Tracing these discourses, Mosco observes common expectations placed upon media when they are new, such as the ability to collapse geographical and temporal distance, to flatten hierarchical power relations, and to establish the common norms and values for a post-political global community. "Almost every wave of new technology, including information and communication media, has brought with it declarations of the end".[9]

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[5]   J. Dickie, *The New Mandarins: How British Foreign Policy Works*, I.B. Taurus, 2004, p. 232.

[6]   R. Negrine, *The Transformation of Political Communication. Continuities and changes in media and politics*, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

[7]   S. Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, London: Routledge, 2013.

[8]   V. Mosco, *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005, p. 21.

[9]   *Ibid.*, p. 117.

In the diplomatic context, declarations of "the end" suggest a break with history due to new networks of power, knowledge and interconnectivity enabled by digital technologies: a "new" diplomacy and a "new" public diplomacy.[10] Scholars have emphasised the significance of new communication practices in supporting and enabling the collaborative participation of formal and informal actors in foreign policy areas. This has seen the state adapt from a position of unquestioned authority to the role of enabler and facilitator of complex coalitions of interdependent actors with unique capacities and expertise; a shift that emphasises changes to how, where and with whom diplomacy is conducted. The changing global context – in terms of the borderlessness of many global issues, proliferation of actors, agendas and communicative techniques – means that many diplomatic objectives require the support of multiple stakeholders if they are to be successful.[11]

Consequently, debates have focused upon co-option techniques for drawing multiple stakeholders with diverse interests into common agendas, including through intangible principles such as values, ideas and norms. Public diplomacy has traditionally been considered as state-based communication aimed at influencing well-connected individuals and organisations that are capable of impacting upon a foreign government's policy choices. More recently, definitions have adapted to encompass the efforts of a variety of actors "to understand cultures, attitudes and behaviour; to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mo-

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[10] Der Derian, "The question of information technology in international relations"; J. Melissen (ed), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Hocking and Melissen, *Diplomacy in the Digital Age*; Kelley, "The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution".

[11] P. Sharp, *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; B. Hocking, "Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Forms, Functions, and Frustrations", in Kurbalija and Katrandjiev (eds.), *Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities*, Malta/Geneva: DiploFoundation, 2006; B. Hocking, J. Melissen, S. Riordan and P. Sharp, *Futures for Diplomacy: Integrative Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael", 2012; J. Pamment, "The Mediatization of Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2014, pp. 253-280; N. Cornago, *Plural Diplomacies: Normative Predicaments and Functional Imperatives*, Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013.

bilize actions to advance their interests and values".[12] Likewise, soft power refers to the ability of actors to attract others to want the same policy goals, and may be considered as part of the pool of institutional resources used in public diplomacy activities.[13] Efforts to adopt new concepts, working practices and structures in response to these contextual changes are simultaneously struggles over power and control in the context of digitization.[14]

In this context, digitization of public diplomacy has consequences that go far beyond discussions of communication technologies to the fundamental question why and how diplomacy should be conducted in the 21st century. Efforts to maintain and reassert power in the midst of an apparent assertion of global public opinion assume the form of better stakeholder and public engagement. Digital technologies create openings for new communicative practices that are simultaneously new strategic opportunities.[15] The rise of public and digital diplomacy is connected to a complex series of threats to the power and centrality of foreign ministries and diplomats, and to new ways of countering these threats. Hence the study of diplomacy's digitization is also the study of how diplomacy has met the challenge of globalisation, adapted to complex interconnectivity, and embraced the concept of the transnational audience.

Two Forms of Digitisation

During the 1990s, two forms of digitization motivated significant changes to public diplomacy. The first was the digitization of satellite television,

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[12]   B. Gregory, "Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field", in Cowan and Cull (eds.), *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 616, SAGE Publications, 2008, p. 353.

[13]   J. S. Nye, *Soft Power: the means to success in world politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004; C. Hayden, *The Rhetoric of Soft Power: Public Diplomacy in Global Context*, Lexington Books, 2012.

[14]   J. Pamment, *British Public Diplomacy and Soft Power: Diplomatic Influence and the Digital Revolution*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

[15]   I. Manor and E. Segev, "America's selfie: How the US portrays itself on its social media accounts", *Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice*, 2015, pp. 89-108; C. Hayden, "Cyber/Digital Diplomacy", in Martel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*, John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

and more specifically of transnational news broadcasting. During the Gulf War, a concept known as the CNN-*effect* sought to explain the ways in which satellite media intervened in decision-making cycles. The CNN-effect saw politicians and military leaders consciously monitoring 24-hour news streams and adapting their media relations to real-time feedback; hence, analysts were quick to assert that these news channels forced their way "inside the government's decision cycle" and created the impression that "officials have lost control of decision-making".[16] Although satellite broadcasting did not begin upgrading to digital services until the mid-1990s, the principle of intensive real-time public scrutiny took shape as a consequence of these new journalistic practices. This had an impact on the news broadcasting aspects of public diplomacy, first in terms of developing a new competition and market for transnational audiences, second in reconfiguring how news was produced and consumed, and third in changing the levels of expectation upon these services.

Simultaneous to these pressures was a sense that both corporate and government communication practices were in a long-term process of change. The burgeoning field of *international public relations* during the 1980s and 1990s is often defined in terms of a demand for more participatory, symmetrical communication practices.[17] In a piece entitled "A Postmodern President", *Newsweek* declared that "Clinton intuitively understands how to send a message in the information age" because he gets that "communication was now two-way interactive".[18] Communication textbooks of the period argued that power relations between governments and their citizens was fundamentally changing as a consequence of new communications paradigms. "A guiding principle will be that, unlike the traditional media age of one-way communication

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[16] B. Baker, 'Public Relations in Government', in Clarke (ed.), *Handbook of Strategic Public Relations & Integrated Communications*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1997, pp. 470-471; E. Gilboa, "Mass Communication and Diplomacy: A Theoretical Framework", *Communication Theory*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2000, pp. 275-309.

[17] J. E. Grunig, *Organizations, Environments, and Models of Public Relations* (1983); B. H. Signitzer and T. Coombs, "Public Relations & Public Diplomacy: Conceptual Convergences", *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1992, pp. 137-147.

[18] Baker, *op. cit.*

(government to media to public), the public has now gained a real-time interactive voice (public to government, government to public)".[19] The CNN-effect therefore pointed to broader underlying issues with how public diplomacy needed to be managed, because it heralded new demands upon how governments related to transnational audiences.

The second form of digitization that changed public diplomacy was the Internet. The opportunities for public diplomacy were major. Both the US and UK launched their USIA and FCO websites in 1995, with the expectation that this would change the dynamics between governments, media, and both domestic and foreign publics.[20] Diplomats now had a platform to reach out directly to mass publics, without packaging information to suit the gatekeeping function of journalists. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, foreign ministries and overseas posts developed websites, thereby simplifying many information-based public services such as commercial and consular. Furthermore, international broadcasting such as the BBC World Service added web-based news platforms and Internet radio services, thus gradually changing their profile and business model.

These two waves of digitization in conjunction with fundamental changes in public relations communication models has led to many new theories of public diplomacy, as may be exemplified by terminologies such as media diplomacy, media-broker diplomacy, techno diplomacy, television diplomacy, photo diplomacy, sound-bite diplomacy, digital diplomacy, instant diplomacy, mediated public diplomacy, twiplomacy and real-time diplomacy. Many of these changes were cosmetic, in the sense that they simply shifted the point of contact between the public and diplomats to digital platforms. Application forms for consular services, for example, could be downloaded or filled out online instead of sent by mail. Others, however, threatened to quite fundamentally change the ways in which diplomats work. It may therefore be argued that the two forms of digitisation in satellite broadcasting and Internet changed some of the basic assumptions about how diplomats should relate to foreign

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[19]   Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

[20]   N. J. Cull, "The Long Road to Public Diplomacy 2.0: The Internet in US Public Diplomacy", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2013, pp. 123-139; Pamment, *British Public Diplomacy …*

and domestic audiences, and hence also changed the professional skills expected from diplomats.

Not Just External Communication

While international public relations has heavily influenced debates surrounding public diplomacy, it is important to observe that external communication is only one small aspect of how digitization has impacted upon the work of diplomats.[21] For example, in 2000 the FCO published an extensive e-diplomacy and e-business strategy, with the argument, "Diplomacy is information and communication".[22] It continued, "e-business… [is] about the way that the FCO works as a global organisation, and about the networks of relationships we have to maintain in the UK and internationally".[23] E-diplomacy was positioned as a set of tools that could fundamentally change how the FCO approached its work and its stakeholder management. On the one hand, these tools would have an impact on external communications. E-diplomacy could be used for:

- analysis of whom we need to be able to communicate with, and what we need to communicate,
- assessment of how best to communicate with them,
- knowing what our sources of information are,
- deploying to best effect the information, expertise and knowledge we can tap within or outside the FCO.[24]

On the other hand, a major part of the digital change programme was focused upon the internal management tools, Prism and Knowledge. Prism was an integrated resource management tool that shared finance, person-

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[21] Cf I. Manor, "Are We There Yet: Have MFAs Realized the Potential of Digital Diplomacy?", *Brill Research Perspectives in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2016, pp. 1-110.

[22] FCO, *E-diplomacy: the FCO e-business strategy*, London: FCO, 2001, p. 2.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[24] *Ibid.* p. 2.

nel and procurement across the network. This was intended to enable better decision-making by providing "a single version of the truth", that would in turn generate efficiency savings.[25] Prior to Prism, each post used templates to process their annual returns, which led to duplication of effort and major gaps in accounting. Joined-up accountancy systems, such as the database for managing consular services, enabled tasks to be timed and compared across posts. Passports were issued via the single global system Compass rather than typed out on typewriters. Such initiatives may not be as novel or attention-grabbing a result of digitization as ambassadors on Twitter, but their impact on the running of the FCO was arguably far more significant to the conduct of the organisation. Digital diplomacy was thus heavily associated with the expansion of new public management into the provision of diplomatic services.

Knowledge was an internal platform designed to help share information and best practice, which would be particularly useful in crisis management and the flexible deployment of expertise and resources. Thus, it was essentially an intranet tailored to the FCO's reform programme.[26] Despite being mostly completed and staff around the world receiving basic training in preparation for rollout, the programme was withdrawn at the eleventh hour due to security concerns. A joined-up knowledge platform could not be deployed at overseas posts because different locations have different security levels. This made it impossible for Knowledge to adapt to the security classifications of different documents based on where they were being viewed. The much-anticipated intranet component would take almost a full decade to be completed.[27]

Similar technological advances such as smartphone access to de-classified inboxes, the replacement of telegram systems by email distribution lists, the provision of global internet telephone networks, access to analytical software on secure systems, joined-up global visa databases, and the online provision of basic citizen services provide further examples of the mundane ways in which digitalization have changed a diplomat's

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[27] Pamment, *British Public Diplomacy* …

working practices. Thus, while external communication is an important factor for understanding the impact of digitization on foreign ministries, it should be remembered that digital technologies have had a far more fundamental impact on the relationship between diplomats and foreign ministries. Much of the research on digital diplomacy mirrors research on mediated public diplomacy insofar as it assesses the content of communications, but this is merely the tip of an iceberg that extends into the depths of the diplomatic profession.

A Changing Profession

One of the more problematic myths propagated by the Anglo-American post-9/11 public diplomacy scholarship is that public diplomacy is about public opinion. Public opinion has been called the sole remaining superpower; the product of globalization and the Internet that will henceforth determine outcomes in foreign affairs. This is the argument that public diplomacy represents a major technocratic shift in global politics, and that the transnational publics unleashed by the CNN-effect have become decisive for the conduct of foreign policy.[28] Research in the field of mediated public diplomacy tends to focus on this approach, usually studying the contents of foreign policy relevant texts (whether digital or analogue) in order to show which issues gain salience in public debate. While this is clearly an important endeavor, it is also important to note that this often entails a de-coupling of public diplomacy from diplomacy proper in the literature. Many of the examples used in such research have little to do with the practice of diplomacy and public diplomacy in their narrow meaning, and are instead more general mediations on representations of foreign policy.[29]

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[28] M. Castells, "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 616, 2008, pp. 78–93.

[29] B. Gregory, "Mapping Boundaries in Diplomacy's Public Dimension", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2016, pp. 1-25.

This raises an important point about public diplomacy: that its definition should acknowledge its position as part of diplomacy, and not as a separate practice. If diplomacy may be defined as the activities of monitoring, advocacy and negotiation conducted between representatives of states,[30] it should be clear that a great deal of a diplomat's work is public diplomacy, even if it is conducted in private. A lunch, a phone call, a private event: these are all sites of public diplomacy when the guest list goes beyond official government representatives, even if the engagement with "public" representatives takes place in private. This is diplomacy, and it is also public diplomacy. If we begin thinking about public diplomacy in this way, it will be obvious that it has existed for as long as there have been diplomats. It will also be apparent that public diplomacy is not the major revolution in foreign affairs many would like to believe.

The extension of this metaphor to digital public diplomacy shows that digitization is a substantial challenge to the profession of diplomacy. As Owen[31] argues, it is suggestive of new tools and techniques for influence, as well as of the emergence of a new target group that can be defined by their digital actor*ness* and networks. A useful way to think about reform in diplomacy in the digital age is to consider the Ambassador's dining table, and the care taken over formulating the right guest list, as the model for extending those invitations more widely. Public diplomacy expands the dining table by making use of digital and informal networks, openness and transparency, public debate, and symbolic resources such as culture and brands. They are used as tools for supporting diplomatic outcomes. It doesn't remove the need for the Ambassador's quiet meetings; it also makes use of complex communication channels to extend the discussion, where appropriate. These are highly significant steps towards transforming diplomacy, but they are also little more than a means to an end based on their utility to a set of goals.

Diplomats traditionally spend a great deal of time and effort working on guest lists for events, on the basis that the right blend of participants can

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[30] I. B. Neumann, *Diplomatic Sites: A Critical Enquiry*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

[31] T. Owen, "The Networked State and the End of 20th Century Diplomacy", *Global Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2016, pp. 301-307.

make or break a policy initiative. This often involves working both with established players and "talent spotting"; the latter of which refers to identifying future influencers in their respective fields, such as in youth political parties or up-and-coming journalists and business leaders. The core skill is to develop the profile of a policy issue by managing the salience of the players who should have a voice in that issue. One challenge of digital media is to extend those private meetings, such as at the Ambassador's dining table, and to extend the range of participants. This means adopting new techniques to manage guest lists, and the development of new sites for hosting them. A Twitter hashtag, for example, can act as a site to gather interested parties into a network focused on a specific issue. Simple acts of favouriting and retweeting postings can offer validity to certain actors, hence confirming their salience to the topic. These are the same skills already possessed by diplomats in their everyday work; the skill is to extend them beyond traditional settings and traditional players. Iver Neumann's[32] work on the changing *sites* for diplomacy is strongly suggestive of this change.

It is also important to remember that diplomats act as the interface between domestic and foreign interests, debates and influences. They receive information from many sources, and re-present that information backwards and forwards across national boundaries, in meetings, telegrams, reports, phone calls, and so on. It is not simply a role of transferring information, but of translating, transcoding, interpreting, adapting and representing that knowledge for different publics both at home and abroad. There is a sense in which more aspects of diplomacy are increasingly open to public discourse, at the same time as they may appear increasingly hidden behind the formats, conventions and general fragmentation of knowledge across different mediating channels. The context of digital diplomacy greatly challenges diplomatic practice by extending this representational gatekeeping role to new sites and new circumstances. One of the ways diplomats take advantage of public diplomacy is to learn the "language" of digital platforms, in the same way that they would learn the language of a host country. This involves individuals and institutions embracing new ways of representing themselves, from etiquette to "ne-

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[32]   I. B. Neumann, *op. cit.*

tiquette". It means developing the skills to coordinate and negotiate over the standards, codes and norms that are used to represent the key issues in their policy areas in different environments. In this sense, the digitization of diplomacy involves a breadth of communication skills that appear to complement and extend diplomats' traditional skills and tasks.

While it is clearly important to activate the network and empower staff to extend their representational work into public and digital platforms, this comes with obvious risks. Many foreign ministries now encourage their staff to flourish online by using their expertise and representational skills to curate their policy areas. This makes the best use of the opportunities afforded by complex, decentralised networks of actors. At the same time, much of this work returns to questions of strategic coordination. Project or campaign approaches to diplomacy are increasingly common because they place accountability on a specific person or department, who then "drives" the initiative. They also encourage the central creation of "assets" that can be used across the network. Such assets might include pools of staff, funding, core scripts and press lines, factsheets, a corporate identity, images; and so on. The value of these assets is when both internal and external stakeholders are given access to them; in other words, when both internal and external actors make use of the same basic resources to make their own contributions to the policy area with their own voices. In these cases, the differences between public and traditional diplomacy become blurred, as does the difference between stakeholders and target audiences. Leadership is in this sense bolstered by digital platforms that facilitate the circulation of information within a campaign strategy.

Conclusion: A Digital Future for Diplomacy?

Many of the issues raised here point to the likelihood that digital platforms are reconfiguring everyday diplomatic practices in line with expectations established outside of foreign affairs' formal areas of operation.[33]

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[33] J. Pamment, "Digital Diplomacy as Transmedia Engagement: Aligning Theories of Participatory Culture with International Advocacy Campaigns", *New Media & Society*, 2015; Hayden, "Cyber/Digital Diplomacy".

This suggests that diplomacy is not simply changing because of digitization, but also more importantly because it is hybridizing with other representational and communication industries. Beginning with the CNN-effect, digitization has brought with it a sense of symmetrical information exchange that thrusts communication technologies and their relative affordances into the spotlight. Transnational audiences appear to be increasingly setting the agenda, but to what extent can the relationship between countries and foreign publics ever be symmetrical? The growth of public diplomacy and digital diplomacy during this period is suggestive of advancing techniques for diplomats to manage the roles of these new audiences, rather than simply as the empowerment of the "diplomacy of the public".[34] Hybrid media systems and mediatization are as fundamental for diplomacy as other areas of politics.[35]

The digitization of diplomacy is best defined in terms of the power relations it reconfigures. A few can be sketched out here. At one level, digitization reconfigures participation in diplomatic issues. Citizens feel empowered when they have an insight into how large organizations work and what they do; even more so when they can have direct communication with leaders of those organizations. Digitization allows the ambassador's dining table to be extended across the twittersphere, encouraging much broader transparency, consultational and deliberative processes to take place. However, the material structures underpinning an online presence must also be questioned. What makes an online pundit influential? Do traditional positions of influence – think tanks, journalists, researchers, consultants, business leaders, etc. – directly translate to online influence? Is digitization really shaking things up, or is it simply creating additional channels for the powerful to exert influence?

Within foreign ministries, digitization has had a profound, but often banal, impact on working practices. This may be summarized as "joining up" the network through multiple overlapping digital solutions. Such efforts intervene in the power relations between centre and periphery,

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[34] Castells, *op. cit.*

[35] A. Chadwick, *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition 2017; Pamment, "The Mediatization of Diplomacy…".

between ministry and mission. The provision of online transactional services has revolutionized the public face of overseas posts, while new public management structures have changed how diplomats account for their time and – in the example of consular services – enabled the remote timing and auditing of their work. Leadership, accountability and transparency have all been impacted upon by digital technologies. Power configurations are changing, but much is to the cost of the individual agency of the diplomat, who is more surveilled than ever. A smartphone may empower an actor on the move, but it also enables the centre to offer more detailed, real-time instructions.

Finally, it is also important to observe that management processes have increasingly sought to integrate diplomacy and public diplomacy under campaign structures. This ensures leadership of issues across multiple stakeholders, and is often supported by digital campaign assets created centrally to maintain brand identity. The ways in which policy issues are driven and organized is increasingly coordinated from the centre, and packaged as a consistent, cross-departmental activity. Eventually, it is conceivable that posts, and even foreign ministries, lose their identities and agency as they become reconfigured as "implementing" or "delivering" organisations for areas of national policy.[36] Digitization is not the cause, but it becomes an enabling factor in the representation, management and monitoring of diplomatic practice. Taken together, it is clear that digitization of diplomacy is one of the most central issues facing foreign ministries and the diplomatic profession today, and that its consequences will be complex and unpredictable.

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[36] Pamment, *British Public Diplomacy* …