UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Faculty of Social Sciences

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MA Thesis

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ADAPTATION OF DIPLOMACY TO THE DIGITAL AGE

CASE STUDIES: THE USA, ISRAEL AND RUSSIA

Supervisor: Eoin McNamara (PhD candidate)

Tartu 2019

The author's declaration

The Master's thesis has been written by my own efforts. All perspectives and views of other researchers, scholars, academic sources and data used in the research process have been cited.

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The defence will take place on 21st of January, Lossi 36, at .... / time / in auditorium number 301

Opponent: Thomas Linsenmaier, PhD candidate, Lecturer

Title: Adaptation of Diplomacy to the Digital Age. Multiple Case Study

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Reviewer: Thomas Linsenmaier (PhD candidate)

Year: January, 2019

Original language and volume of paper: English (91 pages)

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the transformations in the nature of diplomacy in order to adapt new age. The research investigates the distinct form of diplomacy identified by the changes result of technological development and compares the views on this type of diplomacy. It attempts to explain the phenomenon from a broad perspective, while more elaborating its communication aspect.

The principal mission of the thesis is to find a more relevant explanation for what purpose the states have begun to apply digitalization in diplomatic activities and how it affects diplomatic rhetoric. With help of the comparative case study involving three countries, the United States, Israel, and the Russian Federation, the study provides an understanding of the motivation of these countries in employing of digital instruments in diplomacy. Along with that, it investigates the status of digital diplomacy at the policy level in these countries.

Keywords: digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, communication, the USA, Israel, Russia, ICTs, international affairs, social media networks, target audience

Acknowledgement

I express my very profound gratitude to my parents and my teachers for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. Thank you.

Author

Zumrud Pashayeva

List of Abbreviations

Department of State – DoS

Digital Diplomacy – DD

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Gross Domestic Product – GDP

Gulf Cooperation Council – GCC

Information Communication Technologies – ICTs

International Political Communication - ICP

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – MFA

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD

Public Diplomacy – PD

Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review – QDDR

Research and Development – R&D

Russian Federation – RF

Social Media – SM

Social Media Networks – SMN

United States of America – USA

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – USSR

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1. Introduction

When British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston received the first telegram in the 1840s, his response was that this is the end of diplomacy. In spite of passing 150 years, since diplomacy has survived and even adapted to all other technological innovations through the centuries. The principal aim of states was to use possibilities of technological progress, especially in the field of ICTs to advance a state's foreign policy activities.

The XXI century - digital age provides various possibilities. Those opportunities such as access to large audiences, dissemination of information in a short time, collecting data, to monitor, all these encourage diplomacy, its practitioners to adapt the digital age. And this adaptation has led to the emergence of a new phenomenon calling Digital Diplomacy (DD). However, there is a diversity of views among scholars on the identification of digitalization in diplomacy; whether it provides a new set of tools in the conducting of public diplomacy, or completely unique phenomenon what enhances the capability of diplomacy to achieve foreign policy goals.

The process of digitalization in diplomacy is termed interchangeably with other names—as digital diplomacy (Bjola, 2015), e-diplomacy (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Sharp, 2012), cyber-diplomacy (Barston, 2014), modern diplomacy (4th ed. New York, Routledge), diplomacy 2.0 (Harris, 2013) or Twiplomacy (Sandre, 2012).

The State Department of the United States terms it "21st Century Statecraft"; the UK Foreign Office calls "Digital Diplomacy"; the Canadian diplomats name it "Open Policy"; Foreign Ministry of Russia identifies this phenomenon as innovative diplomacy.

Digital instruments are the same for all states, but the messages sent through these channels, the targeted audiences, adaptation process are diverse.

The purpose of this study is to find proper explanations of these differences.

1.1. Statement of the Research Problem

At the beginning, diplomacy had strict interpretation of all communication between the government of one country and government of another. This type of engagement between states called Track I diplomacy - official diplomacy or traditional diplomacy, thus all issues were /are discussed on the state-level. Direct communication between government of country and population of another country was prohibited by international community and was regarded as violation of sovereignty. Then the society has met with new phenomena naming public diplomacy that is a governmental or governmentally funded foreign policy activities. Its objective is to create as positive climate as possible among foreign publics in order to facilitate the explanation and acceptance of its foreign policy.

Since the beginning of 21st century revolution in information and communication technologies has affected on all dimensions of human activities. The innovation dramatically transformed way of communication and the process of exchange of information across the globe. This revolution in ICTs has resulted in the control of the way information flows anywhere, making the spread of information fast and large scale. This innovation also contributed in fundamental changes in the conduct of diplomacy globally. The majority of states, especially, those of having strong ambitions have understood and adopted this "new dynamics" because this adaptation is important in terms of reaching wide audience, time, as well as, economic terms.

Traditional diplomacy is still there and implementation of it is unavoidable, but digitalization of diplomacy is an opportunity. However, from the practical perspective this phenomenon searched, but in academic area it is less studied topic, and uncertainty around it exists. The questions; what is digital diplomacy, what motivates states to accept it, does the personality of diplomat, politician affect the outcomes of digitalization and etc. need to be answered.

1.2. Statement of the Aim and Research Question

The aim of research is to help understanding the adaptation of diplomacy to the changes of the new century in terms of ICTs. Thus, this research is going to address to the question that "For what aim has diplomacy adapted to digital

platforms?" The put forward hypothesis is that "The more states are aware of opportunities [and risks] of new ICTs, digital tools the more they are going to follow policy aiming at adaptation of diplomacy to the digital age."

1.3. Methodological Framework

To measure digital diplomacy efficiency is a challenge for researchers. Quantitative indicators are used in studies related to effectiveness but it sometimes may not reflect reality. For example, a number of followers of official accounts on social media platforms can be taken as an indicator. However, it is difficult to know the impression given by posts of those official accounts or the audience whether bots or real people.

This research does not seek to measure effectiveness, for this reason, quantitative method that has been applied to understand the case countries' digital footprints. With the help of quantitative indicators, the research reveals to what extent the case countries' diplomatic activities on digital platforms have grown, for example, in terms of increasing social media accounts.

As already noted, to define how the interaction via digital platforms influences people's mind on "sender" country, whether positively or negatively is complicated, but it is viewed as an opportunity to reach the audience. However, it is also problematic because a large number of followers may not be stable due to the high existence of bots and fake accounts, but still, the certain part of the target public is real and states try to influence through digital space as much as possible.

Applying quantitative method, the statistical data related to the activity of MFAs, diplomatic missions on social media platforms, also some projects carried out by the case countries through digital tools have been used.

The data in the study has been taken from reliable sources, such as the websites of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, official social media accounts of certain diplomatic missions of the case countries, statistic materials of Twiplomacy Study, Digital Diplomacy Review 2016/2017.

The statistic materials give an evidence to understand the extent of digital diplomacy activities of the case countries in the physical sense.

In this study interviews, speeches, articles of high-ranking officials, diplomats of case countries which are used, such as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's famous speech about the Internet freedom and the role of the Internet in foreign policy, former Secretary of State John Kerry's blog post on digital diplomacy, or the Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech with the Russian diplomats help us to get familiarized with their viewpoints about the adoption of digital instruments in foreign policy affairs and e-diplomacy itself as a concept, and their expectations from this new phenomenon.

The purpose of analyzing MFAs' press releases and documents, official reports, and reviews, such as the Foreign Policy Concepts of Russian Federation, QDDR 2010 / 2015 is to assess the status of DD at the policy level, the position of countries on the application of digital instruments and to understand their adoption policy related to technological innovation.

To influence, to persuade by communicating is one of the essential tasks of diplomacy. Digital tools provide a more convenient way for interaction with, to send a message to the target audience. Communication through social media networks what is an aspect of DD gets more attention from researchers. For understanding how target publics in cyberspace are influenced, to know the content of the shared messages with these people is needed. For example, the case country in the study, Israel which is one of the innovator countries in new diplomacy actively engages with the nations of Muslim-Arab countries. It is fact that the relations between Israel and these countries do not officially exist. Considering this fact, to examine the content of message sent by Israeli diplomats to the citizens of those countries is important. For this reason, the content analysis research method seems appropriate in the study. But all posts are not separately analyzed, the general content of verified accounts is examined to understand the rhetoric.

In general, it has not been taken the certain time frame in examining the social media accounts because the study does not focus on particular cases or events, the

purpose is to evaluate the overall activity of these accounts. However, in analyzing some official accounts, for example, virtual Israeli Embassy to GCC countries, the time frame has been taken into account what shows that the digital channel's dynamic period meets to Gaza war in the summer of 2014 and this demonstrates how digital tools utilized in the crisis time.

Multiple–case research design is applied by selecting three countries which are active users of digital tools in diplomacy and have different foreign audiences, discourses and strategies at the official level.

Using the comparative analysis in the study, it is questioned that how the states perceive e-diplomacy, use digital tools in the conduct of diplomacy, such as comparative analysis between Case 1 and Case 3 - the United States and Russia whose reactions have been different to the application of new ICTs at the beginning and now use it for different purposes.

Case 1 – The United States of America

Case 2 – Israel

Case 3 – Russia

As above-mentioned, the selection of the cases is not random, those, according to the statistics, are at the top of the dominant countries' list in the field of DD.

Another reason of picking these countries is connected to their status on the international stage. The purpose is to investigate the digital footprints of countries which have distinct roles in international affairs.

These states share some similar features in the use of digital tools, but on the other hand, they have distinct discourse, in terms of the content of messages, target publics and the approved state policy.

The countries seriously taking the innovations of the digital age into account, have accepted the certain strategy since the beginning of the digital revolution, like the United States' 21st Century Statecraft or Israel's strategy about digitalization including digital diplomacy. However, countries like Russia which takes the 4th place on DD ranking, do not have the government's policy. From the

functional perspective, Russia is active in this sphere, but as for the policy level, Kremlin has not taken formal actions in this regard.

The similar feature is that the governments of the countries are aware of digital age's resources, opportunities, and they actively practice.

1.4. Literature Review

Technological progress is one of the factors has affected the redistribution of power on the international stage, shaped the connections among the global actors. This factor's impact on modern international relations has been demonstrated in the operational mechanisms of global relations, including the institutionalization and management of the international environment, interaction, collaboration among countries (Szkarłat and Mojska, 2016).

Technological development, more specifically innovation in ICTs impacted the conduct of diplomacy what is called "hallmark" of international relations, and resulted with the rise of a new phenomenon within diplomacy – e-diplomacy.

In the academic sphere, digital diplomacy, in recent years, has been popular and taken scholars' attention. Research papers and policy papers on the subject are mostly dominant, besides several publications on this topic have been published. However, it should be admitted that there is still place further studying the phenomenon, because of uncertainties related to the adaptation process and the sufficiency of classical diplomacy, the difference between this and public diplomacy.

"Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice" (Holmes and Bjola 2015) is one of the significant publications consisting of a collection of articles on the phenomenon. The objective of the book is to conceptualize DD, to examine its benefits and weaknesses in comparison to conventional diplomacy, and estimate the circumstances under which digital diplomacy informs, regulates, or constraints external policy.

Some chapters in the publication make a comparison between digital and classical diplomacy what gives primary knowledge to differentiate them. The

comparison is presented from diverse perspectives. For example, A.Wichowski (2015) in her chapter in this book problematizes even positive features of DD, like speed, transparency. The author gives a view that these advantages of digitalization how can be threatening for a state's interests.

J.P. Singh's piece (2015) in the same book examines digital diplomacy from communication and human interactions perspective. While analyzing the concept of diplomacy and its practice by going through history, the article does not view diplomacy's tasks as simple activities, but the power, in particular, in light of communication and negotiation. Taking his point into account, in the digital age, this research argues that the power of diplomacy has increased.

The thesis's argument on the changing rhetoric within diplomacy is backed by the concept of the article that traditional persuasion method may not be effective in the new environment what is identified in the study as information-rich digital environment.

In conceptualization of digital diplomacy, to identify DD as a change management is one of the widespread approaches what originally belonging to M. Holmes (2015). Holmes explains e-diplomacy as a strategy of managing transformation by digital tools and virtual collaboration, but the most significant point that he touches upon a comparison between public diplomacy and the web-diplomacy.

There is a prolonged debate on the subject that whether e-diplomacy is a new model of public diplomacy or not. The principal argument supported by some of the experts including Holmes is against to accept the concept of e-diplomacy as a continuation of PD and claim that this view overshadows broad employment of ICTs and their effect on different functions of diplomacy, like knowledge management, information storing.

According to Holmes, to reduce e-diplomacy to public diplomacy is to miss much of the capacity that ICTs provide, and in the thesis, this capacity is explained through the examples.

Digital Diplomacy: Conversations on Innovation in Foreign Policy (Sandre 2015) presents a collection of views from practitioners, academics, and diplomats via

interviews. Through these interviews, it is cleared that how they understand innovation at the interface of diplomacy and technology. The conversations with the DoS officials, ambassadors, public relations executives, public policy experts, and academics explain what the current dynamics, developments, benefits and weaknesses are.

In this study, the opinions which expressed in those interviews are referred in order to give practical explanation.

Not all international relations scholars, practitioners are positivist about DD. For this reason, the author does not seek to persuade the audience by highlighting its advantages, yet he indeed offers diverse views with help of interviews, thus publics are familiarized with skeptic and critical perspectives. This variety of approaches of interlocutors enable to identify the vulnerabilities and limitations of DD in the research.

There is a broad debate that DD is whether the only use of social media in, or all modern ICTs´ application and their effect on the conduct of diplomacy. Sandre (2015) presents a more detailed explanation of the subject from the perspective of social media networks´ use in diplomacy.

The use of the Internet and other digital tools in the conduct of international affairs is globally accepted. And naturally, scholars investigate the scope of influence of these new tools. The research report written by a British expert, Westcott (2008) seeks to answer that question. The classification of the effects produced by the Internet in three categories provides a clear picture of the changes like an increase in a number of voices in international stage and interests in global decision – making. Investigating dangerous consequences of the changes, Westcott continues that by the Internet channels people may be radicalized and mobilized for dangerous purposes.

Westcott's viewpoint is especially referred in one of the case studies of this thesis. While analyzing the USA governments' efforts on digitalization in foreign policy, particularly since the 9/11 attack, we see how the American governments have revised their policy related to innovative ICTs and their application and effects.

The speed of dissemination of data what is a significant impact of the Internet is in the category defined by Westcott and in the thesis this category is examined from both negative and positive perspectives.

The third that Westcott (2008) highlights in his report is the Internet's impact on traditional diplomatic services in terms of being much faster, more cost-effective what directly is reflected in the structure of the diplomatic mission such as cutting diplomatic personnel.

The report concludes that digitalization is new dynamic what cannot replace traditional conducting of diplomacy. Westcott substantiates his opinion governments' law and power what enable to things to occur.

However, considering the profound changes in rhetoric, communication way, a number of participants from society in political conversation, to perceive DD as a new dynamic does not comprehensively cover the subject.

"Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy" (Adesina and Summers 2017) is one of the recently written academic works what provides an overview of digital diplomacy. The article presenting the widespread approaches on the phenomenon, concentrates on the management of social media and application of these instruments by states in the realm of their foreign policy activities. The article presents a very generally illustrative review of the status of DD in the variety of countries including the United States, Canada, Russia, Europe, Africa, and Asia countries. The author stresses that diplomatic processes and structures have been affected by digital age but it is not given the detailed explanation of it.

Needless to say, that if we discuss the new thing, we investigate benefits and risks stemming from it.

Digital diplomacy's benefits and risks are the most debated part of the subject, in particular, practitioners share their experience that what sort of difficulties they encounter or how to take advantage by representing their country on digital platforms.

Though Adesina's classification of the benefits and risks of e-diplomacy does not embrace all, it describes very timely ones and creates a clear view in minds.

While highlighting positive sides of new diplomacy, Adesina, in conclusion, notes the importance of classical diplomacy and its irreplaceability. Her argument is that traditional and digital diplomacy can integrate, rather than compete with, each other. But considering the nature of both in terms of secrecy/transparency, communication level - governmental/individual, they are contrary to each other, however, working to achieve the same goal.

The capacity of adaptation to the new environment, interpretation of change and diversity makes the nature of diplomacy resilient against "digital disruptions". According to the discussion paper on DD and its future by Clingendael Institute (2014), the revolution can occur in areas where there is no other option. But in diplomacy, there is always alternative what is even older and stronger one, the traditional way of conducting diplomatic activities.

Identifying the vulnerability of digital diplomacy, openness, and transparency what usually perceived positively, appear as a weakness of DD that the discussion paper features. The confidentiality of diplomatic decision-making appears in contradiction with the move toward more transparent foreign policy.

"Some foreign policy information is indeed too sensitive to be free and it is not always desirable to have all information available to the public," stressed in the discussion paper.

Another issue asked in the paper that is really important, the future of digitalization of diplomacy. Nearly all researchers of this subject try to find an answer to this question and put forward their hypothesis.

As noted in the thesis, technological progress is a continuous process through history and influences all spheres of human activity including diplomacy. Consequently, the paper concludes that the digitalization in diplomacy will be a constant process. In this process, the important task of researchers and practitioners is to focus on the practical utilization of ICTs in diplomacy, instead of worrying about technical matters.

One of the important questions on the subject that this thesis also attempts to find a more convincing answer is what reasons have led to inventing digital diplomacy?

The research paper explaining digital diplomacy and its global practice written by Manor (2012) asks this question and tries to explain it in a more practical way by applying empirical pieces of evidence, concrete samples. For example, according to him, employing of the Internet by terrorist organizations to make propaganda against American foreign policy, to radicalize and mobilize people is one of the reasons which pushed the USA governments to pay more attention in this area. However, the author does not analyze the modified rhetoric in the diplomatic language of the USA governments in online space.

The argument in this article seems a bit questionable when it is claimed that the absence of a diplomatic mission may not be interpreted as the loss of communication, for solving this issue embassies can be founded in online space by MFAs, namely virtual embassies and he gives Virtual Embassy Tehran as an example. It is fact that despite digitalization in diplomacy provides good possibilities in terms of direct interaction but it cannot replace methods of conventional diplomacy. And most importantly, if we consider that in the country like Iran suffering from the destruction of liberal values, where civil society has no voice, in these circumstances to influence people's understanding will not notably change something in relations between Iran and the USA. Because citizens do not have authority over the Iran government to urge the government to reform its external policy towards America.

The article also underlines the insufficiency in the conceptual prism of digital diplomacy. According to Manor, the term of the digitalization of diplomacy comprising the temporary and regulating effects of digital technologies requires more study.

The report of "Revolution @State: The Spread of E-diplomacy (Hanson 2012) helps to follow the development of DD in America since earlies of 2000. This report, as most of the other works, does not seek to address the theme from the analytical perspective, has more descriptive character.

As indicated in this study the majority of researches identify digital diplomacy by employing digital media platforms, that is why even a new concept has emerged such as Twiplomacy - Twitter diplomacy.

Hanson, in his report, criticizes that kind of view and adds that to explain e-diplomacy in terms of using social media is to restrict the phenomenon. Digital age provides other means that practiced in diplomacy and affects diplomacy such as in service delivery, consular affairs and etc.

In conclusion, the research's result related to the literature on this subject reveals that there is a lack of analysis on the level of adaptation to e-diplomacy among countries. International relations scholars, experts, practitioners more focus on the study of specific cases, practical models rather than investigating states' policies on digitalization.

Literature review also shows that there is room for further studying on diplomatic rhetoric in DD and to examine the difference between countries in terms of employing capacity of digitalization.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

Theory building around the phenomenon is challenging. There is no single view related to the DD and furthermore, most of the writings belong to practitioners rather than academics what is unusual for academic discipline.

Certain theories help to understand the phenomenon, components of the concept.

Considering that this study aims at defining the status of diplomacy in the age of digital instruments, perspectives on the role of technological development are touched upon. The issue on whether the Internet and new ICTs play a significant role in the shaping of the relations or their role depends on people, decision-makers, is discussed in this research.

In general, there are two standard approaches to technological development: the first group of people who think humanity must restrain the self-propelled dynamics of technological development because they worry about the destruction of humankind. However, another group appreciates technological progress as an opportunity for self-realization (Leidlmair 1999)Leidlmair classifies two standings linked to technology: The Luddite and the technophile. The Luddite

have skeptic and conservative mind on technological progress, traditional techniques are preferred by them. Contrary to the Luddite, the technophiles welcome technological development and employ innovations.

Sociologists put forward two perspectives on the impact of technological development on relations.

Technological determinism what elaborated by Karl Marx whose theoretical frame based on the idea that changes in technology are the primary impact on the organization of social relations.

In the contemporary era, technological determinism seeks to show technical development as the key player in social transformation. According to the theory's advocates, technological progress impacts and gives shape to the community and people adapt to the results of technological development. A technological determinist thinks that adjustment and adoption is a must for society. And most importantly, they view unfavorable results of this progress as an outcome of wrong management of technology by the people, not the failure stemming from the nature of technology (Hauer 2017).

Chadwick (2006, p.18) characterizing technological determinism, notes that technology has its own intrinsic qualities "and that these are beyond the scope of human intervention." These innovative technologies include specific norms, such as on the Internet what contains values like freedom, community, equality, and democracy (May, 2002).

Innovation in technology, more specifically, in ICTs has led to an emergence of information society what is fundamentally different from the social systems of the past (Webster, 2002).

However, social determinism theory does not put technologies on the top, while technological determinism does. According to advocates of this concept, technology in itself does not much matter.

Applying the example of the Internet, a social determinist debates that it is nothing particularly distinctive or novel and its effects can be understood by referring to previous models of social and political transformation. A social determinist stresses to explore the social, political forces that produced it – the influential groups, individuals, and organizations which initiate technological change.

Chadwick (2006, p.19) continues that this kind of approach does not imply that there are no disputes regarding the impact of the Internet but those discussions usually focus on the usefulness of competing or prevailing forms of social scientific analysis. In other words, "technology becomes just another policy area, like transport, or agriculture."

According to advocates of social determinism, circumstances in social environment define technological advancement. To initiate and employ modern technologies are the effects of the social and political system. Development of technology is a result of the demand in domestic institutions, not to adjust to external changes.

A social determinist contradicting to the view of technological determinist, does not accept an approach of information and communication technologies, digital tools are something that the communities have to adjust. (Hauer, 2017).

Taking the most recent and influential technological innovation of the modern age, cyber technology what has administrators, paroles and reasonable ambitions into account, Chadwick (2006) claims that to prefer one of these approaches to another might be wrong and instead of that, he offers another approach what states "technologies have political properties while simultaneously placing their use in political contexts."

It is clear that along with having technological innovations, ideas, values matter.

In contemporary age, "power lies not in resources but in the ability to change the behavior of the state," (Nye 1990). States attempt to change the agenda in global politics by persuasion, attracting others through the power of beliefs, values, and

ideas, not military or economic pressure. Joseph Nye names it "soft power" what is important in modern international politics is "the ability to get others to want the outcomes that you want" (Nye 2004). Others' attitude is changed without competition or conflict, but by using persuasion and attraction through communication, an important instrument of the diplomatic toolkit.

Now soft power is combining the classical means of diplomacy, negotiation and the capacity to manage the power and potential of modern technologies. (Adesina, 2017).

2. The Evolution of Diplomacy

Developing international system has opened doors to new participants in international relations, including global organizations, transnational corporations, interest groups, and citizens. "Diplomacy has become one of the last monopolies of a government, is accessible to and performed by those who have one main characteristic: credibility" (Klavins 2011).

However, the old school of diplomacy rejects the aforementioned idea and characterizes it as the conduct of official bilateral relations which established at the high level – government-to-government. Through history, diplomacy defined as an art of statecraft and it usually was/is conducted behind the closed doors by diplomats. Traditional diplomacy - "government-to-government" - is focused mostly on efforts by officials of one country to persuade officials of another country to take certain actions.

Throughout the years, related to the changes in the international environment, the nature of world politics, diplomatic communication evolved, in other words, it has adapted to the new age. For this reason, Barston (2006) referring to Hocking, suggests seeing diplomacy in an evolutionary sense. According to him, diplomacy is the subject of constant change, rather than major shifts constituting a new form. But considering the alterations such as more transparency affected by an increase of democratic ideals and globalization, the involvement of new actors in diplomacy, Barston suggests that the changing diplomatic language

necessitates accepting the emergence of new models of diplomacy, unlike Hocking.

In the previous century, one of the most profound changes in the practice of foreign policy was the advent of public diplomacy what was described as a revolution. The various functions of diplomacy specifically, management, information, and communication, as well as the simultaneous participation of multiple state and non-state actors in international relations led to its emergence.

Some political scholars define public diplomacy as a public face of traditional diplomacy (Barston 2006). According to the argument supported this group of scholars, the end goals of public and traditional diplomacy are the same, the main difference is the involvement of distinct parties. The conventional diplomacy embraces relations between the official delegates of states or other global players; while public diplomacy aims at working with communities including non-governmental organizations, associations and individual persons in foreign countries.

Comparing traditional diplomacy with public diplomacy adds that the latter has different objectives, and targets and in reaching these targets different tools are used. "Public diplomacy seeks to promote the "ideals" and "wants" (Lynch, 2005).

At the early stage, public diplomacy embraced various exchange programs supported by governments, the opening of culture and art houses, to organize events in host countries which are also continuing today. All these are physical symbols of public diplomacy. Later new tools started to be employed within public diplomacy with the advent of ICTs. The purpose of external broadcasting, setting up TV stations, radio channels was to influence other countries' nations by one-side communication. With these efforts, public diplomacy provided an appropriate framework to think about the impact of the "communication revolution" on the practice of foreign policy (Cowan and Cull 2008).

The reason of all these efforts of governments to get support from and to persuade people, non-state actors of the other countries has been that under democratic governance they have the power to transform the position of

government (Ociepka 2018). However, conservative diplomats who believe the power of bilateral relations at the governmental level, define public diplomacy as a model of political advertising. According to them, after having official relations, active engagement with civil society is not required (Melissen 2011, p.6). Addition to that, in authoritarian states civil society has no voice, considering this condition, in real politics sometimes politicians prefer to good diplomatic relations.

Diplomacy owning the evolutionary character has adapted digital technologies. And this digitalization process has especially boosted discussions around public diplomacy discourses specifically, the "talking" vs "listening" dispute started to be manifested as "public diplomacy 1.0" and "public diplomacy 2.0" (Hocking and Melissen, 2015). These two models characterized differently because of the way of communication.

The traditional form of public diplomacy has promoted top-down 'broadcast' communication model. The second model what emerged with the advent of the Internet and digital technologies is dialogue-based. There is an interchange of information and mutual interaction between the citizens and state delegates (Hocking and Melissen 2015). Citizens who were perceived as passive participants in political communication in comparison to media and politicians, actively involved in this communication (Ociepka 2018, p.12).

Along with the above-mentioned, digitalization has affected other functions of diplomacy such as data collection and monitoring. Digital tools are effective to expose changes in the foreign policy preferences, and attitudes of the distant audience at the population level.

2.1. Public Diplomacy

A group of scholars, experts are against to invent a new phenomenon related to innovative diplomacy. They claim that as a result of digital transformation new tools emerged and they are used to advance public diplomacy (PD).

To understand this debate, firstly it should be conceptualized the notion of PD then it will be much easier to make a comparison between these approaches.

As explained, PD includes different government-sponsored efforts aimed to communicating with foreign publics (Hachten and Scotton 2002). In a foreign country, to create sympathetic atmosphere by understanding, appraising and persuading foreign publics is a principal task of PD. Snow (2004) emphasizes the importance of mutual learning in public diplomacy.

There was debate around PD, for skeptical commentators, public diplomacy was simply a euphemism for propaganda. However, this comparison has usually been rejected because of the negative connotations associated with propaganda. Propaganda or psychological operations which compared with public diplomacy, involve in false information, fake news and engage in mis/dis-information (Berridge, 2010).

According to Robert Fortner (1993) "public diplomacy aims to affect the policies of other nations by appeals to its citizens through means of public communication." To influence a foreign government by influencing its citizens "through activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture," Frederick (1993) explains.

Ross (2002) highlights remarkable changes in the practice of public diplomacy with the proliferation of communications technology and the increase in global mobility.

The most comprehensive explanation and classification related to public diplomacy have been presented by Eytan Gilboa (2008). Defining basic idea behind of public diplomacy, Gilboa (ibid.) writes, "to communicate with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and ultimately, that if their government". About the content of public diplomacy, he agrees with other scholars that activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture are the forms of it. Depending on participants, goals, and methods, three methods of public diplomacy categorized by Gilboa (ibid.). The basic method considers using the media and other tools to change the minds of people in countries with hostile governments. The goal is to create a nice image for a

country's policies, actions, and the political and economic system by using media. If the target society accepts that image, then it will put pressure on the government to reconstruct its policy. According to this method, the target community should be provided with more balanced information about one's own country, in order to counter the domestic propaganda of its - the target society's - government.

The basic variant of public diplomacy, we know, the first time was actively utilized during the Cold War by the USA and USSR. Their weapon was international broadcasting such as the Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe on the American side, and Radio Moscow on the Soviet part.

Digitalization directly affects this method of PD. Media channels launched by a state might be prevented in the target public's country but the message to the target audience can be delivered throughout channels provided by the Internet. Along with airing of TV and radio channels on the Internet, social media platforms give an opportunity to reach out to people.

According to Gilboa, the second method is the non-state transnational when "government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions."

Nowadays wide-spreading online campaigns, petitions can be an example of this method in the digital age. It is more accessible and gets support from online society.

Domestic public relations what Gilboa put forward another method of PD is aim to cooperating public relations firms and lobbyists in the target country to achieve goals. "A local support group or a movement in the target country strengthen the legitimacy and authenticity of the campaign" (Gilboa 2008).

Analyzing these three methods put forward by Gilboa in the digital age, we observe an influence of digitalization on them, especially on the basic method intending the use of traditional media and the non-state transnational method.

Media has always seen as an important instrument of PD and most of the researchers have not attempted to classify separately public diplomacy efforts involving the mass media.

However, Gilboa (2001) differentiates media diplomacy and public diplomacy because of the purpose of using media. In public diplomacy media and other communication channels are employed by state and nonstate actors to influence public opinion in overseas and this model provides one-sided communication. In media diplomacy media is employed by state officials to promote conflict settlement. And he studying further, adds that in the third model, "media-broker diplomacy, journalists temporarily take the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations."

In general, media diplomacy requires close cooperation between diplomats and journalists. Media plays a mediator role by disseminating diplomats' messages to the audience. But innovative diplomacy of digital age directly engages in its audience without the involvement of media, journalists. Via social media platforms, a diplomat sends his/her message.

2.2. The Concept of Digital Diplomacy

There is no agreed definition on digital diplomacy. Assessing the views related to the concept, we observe the dominance of two approaches. According to the argument put forward by the first group of scholars and diplomats who believe in old-school practice, digitalization has not altered the primary purposes and methods of diplomacy but brought novel techniques by which those goals can be accomplished, more precisely, digital tools are used in the conduct of public diplomacy and they call it public diplomacy 2.0.

According to the second group, a new form of diplomacy emerging in the digital era, and that is distinct from public diplomacy because of its characteristics. Their principal argument is that digital diplomacy develops the capacity to communicate with local and international societies and dynamic interaction with them facilitates the transformation from monologue to dialogue what making

digital diplomacy distinctive. In public diplomacy, communication is a form of a monologue that foreign audience faces the flow of information from another state.

To the definition suggested by Manor (2017), e-diplomacy is the expanding application of ICTs and social media by a state for succeeding its foreign policy objectives and performing public diplomacy activities. He includes all opportunities extending from electronic mail to mobile applications.

According to Manor and Segev, digital diplomacy is performed at two levels - foreign ministry, and diplomatic missions in different countries. The messages related to international policy and nation-branding prepared at these levels adjust to the characteristics of local communities from the point of past relations, culture, values, and traditions (Bjola and Holmes, 2015).

Holmes (2015) characterizes digital diplomacy as a tool for change management, - "digital diplomacy is a strategy of managing change through digital tools and virtual collaborations". Digital diplomacy is resource intensive in terms of time and audience, meaning that the speed of information flow, size of audience digital is affected by digitalization but, in any case objectives of diplomacy are the same either online or offline.

Potter (2002) explains digital diplomacy in face networked technologies, the Internet which applied in the conduct of diplomacy.

To understand digital diplomacy in the context of using social media in diplomacy overlooks the whole capacity. Hanson (2012) commenting on the definition of the phenomenon in his paper emphasizes that when explaining e-diplomacy it should not be confused with the use of social media tools alone, it has a broad definition. According to him, it includes the use of the web and new ICTs what helps carrying out diplomatic objectives.

Shaun Riordan (2016) also agrees with this view explaining that digital tools which applied in diplomacy are not limited in social media but embraces more possibilities such as "web-sourced analysis, big data, data mining, digital platforms for conflict simulation, gamification - the use of gameplay for education and shaping policy environments," and interaction with key stakeholders and influence important policy disputes.

Marco Ricorda (2014) who is active practitioner, head of Social Media of ALDE group in the EU Parliament, argues that digital diplomacy is the adoption of modern tech communication in diplomatic activities what has not truly impacted diplomacy but increased the number of channels through which people are informed by governmental institutions, diplomatic representatives. According to him, conventional methods in diplomacy is more effective than to tweet.

Along with definition, the terminology is another complicated issue. The question is that how digitalization of diplomacy should be named. It is used interchangeably with other terms, such as digital diplomacy (Bjola, C. (2015), e-diplomacy (Hocking, B., Melissen, J., Riordan, S., & Sharp, P. (2012), cyber-diplomacy (Barston, R. (2014), modern diplomacy, diplomacy 2.0 (Harris, B. (2013), Twiplomacy (Sandre, A. (2012), public diplomacy 2.0 or web-diplomacy. The State Department of the United States calls it 21st Century Statecraft; the UK Foreign Office calls it Digital Diplomacy; while the Canadians refer to it as Open Policy. The Russian Foreign Ministry has come up with its own term — "innovative diplomacy."

Riordan (2016, May) does not accept interchangeability of these terms. He claims that this makes uncertainty on the status of relations between diplomacy and the digital environment. According to him, digital diplomacy attributes to the practice of digital instruments and methods to operate diplomatic activities including consular affairs and cyber diplomacy involves the application of diplomatic means, and the strategic mentality, to solve matters coming from cyberspace.

On the other hand, Riordan (2017, Jun.) argues that creating of new "types" of diplomacy such as public diplomacy, digital diplomacy or recently appeared health diplomacy, education diplomacy, diplomacy via sport should be stopped because this causes to conceptual complexity deriving from wrong differentiation of instruments what employed as a component of a comprehensive diplomatic strategy rather than the essence of diplomacy.

Still, there is a confusion that digital diplomacy is to tweet, to post on different social media platforms. But approaching the notion from a broader perspective, it

goes beyond it and involves activities which extend the capacities of foreign service in data collection and storing and sharing knowledge, service delivery.

Diplomacy is experiencing a transformation in response to progress of ICTs. This transformation may take years, but it is not a temporary process that after reaching the certain stage it will be completed, indeed the digital development is a continuous process and diplomacy needs to catch up the speed of digitalization.

Sandre (2015) notes that e-diplomacy is much more than communication.

It is essential for communication and engagement, listening and responding, but analyzing from the perspective of the networked world it means much more; "how to engage all different networks; how to keep them connected and build new connections; how to monitor what's happening; how to advance your interests; how to use big data; how to create technologies allowing people to collaborate with each other extremely easily in all sorts of ways."

According to Sandre (2015), digital diplomacy comprises all the above mentioned which require a certain kind of structure to control them and considering these, he offers to create foreign policy apparatus to solve the issues of the Internet world.

3. Tools of Digital Diplomacy

Diplomatic communication has remarkably changed in recent history. Innovations in communication technologies have influenced diplomatic activities, especially in terms of efficiency.

The invention of the electric telegraph was one of the most important steps in this regard. It transmitted electric signals by interpreting into text. By using the electric telegraph, messages were sent across the oceans in a short period of time that before it had taken several months. With the invention of this new communication system, now "sender" governments and their diplomatic missions abroad could easily communicate, instructions were sent speedily and regularly to their representations around the world. Representatives would not worry about taking decisions related to important issues on their own, thus telegraph gave

them an opportunity to consult with the central government. The telegraph utilizing for interstate communication affected international relations. Evaluating the influence of the telegraph, some historians emphasizes that with the application of electric telegraph in international relations modern diplomatic communication emerged.

Those who applied this invention also were impressed. To recall British PM and Foreign Secretary Palmerston's reaction when he got the first telegraph message is a good example.

According to Jovan Kurbalija (2013) at that time telegraph was an essential part of geo-strategy. To have control over telegraph technology indicated to be dominant in the controlling information what considered a core element of power as today. For creating telecommunication infrastructure, a large distribution of telegraph cables was required and Britain developed its capacity in this direction and different countries had used these networks for formal diplomatic communication.

This period called the Golden Age in diplomatic communications because of noteworthy changes. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the golden age and digital era are similar in terms of the revolutions in diplomatic communications.

Following the telegraph, new inventions such as the telephone, fax system more advanced the quality of communication between countries and diplomatic representatives, in terms of acceleration and accuracy (Kurbalija 2013). These inventions' influence is indisputable, but the most significant invention, the Internet was to come. With the advent of the Internet, and other new information and communication technologies, the obstructions in communication in terms of time and distance have been reduced. But the most important detail is that through these new tools, the interaction between political and societal level has been possible. In other words, if before communication was on the inter-governmental level, now ordinary people may participate in discussions, moreover, states recognize the importance of reaching out to the societies.

The studies on the role of the Internet, digital instruments in political communication have increased over the passing years. The scholars regardless of their view on e-diplomacy whether it is a new phenomenon or not, affirm that the changes produced by digitization have remarkably developed the quality of performances in diplomatic engagement.

3.1. Websites

"If cyberspace is considered a separate entity and "space", then websites of diplomatic services could be considered as a country's representation in that space" (Kurbalija and Badi, 2000, p. 100). Physical embassies and consulates in a country or region are given autonomy for the certain location and mostly be reached by individuals living there. But their web equivalents can be "visited" by everyone.

Now nearly all MFAs and diplomatic representatives have websites that provide materials owning rich content about home country, foreign policy objectives of state, trending news from home and host countries, online archive entailing historical documents, such as treaties, agreements, video materials, consular services, a list of speeches, and links to web-pages of country's embassies and consulates abroad relevant to the audience. The websites are available in several languages usually depending on the target audience. For example, in this research, the websites of the foreign ministries of case countries are examined.

The website of Israel MFA provides information in several languages – in native language Hebrew, internationally norm languages, English, Russian and Spanish. Along with these, Arabic and Persian languages are also available. Considering cold diplomatic relations between Israel and Muslim-Arab countries, this an attempt to reach these countries' citizens.

The Russian ministry's website is also available in a variety of languages. It presents information in seven languages like English, French, German which are intended for the European audience, Chinese. The Russian version of the website has rich content.

The website of State Department that is presenting all materials in English alone but it is very convenient to use. Under the pillars of Business, Careers, Education & Exchanges, and Travel, important and helpful information is provided to the visitors of website, and quick access to the links of websites that may be needed such as the USA embassies across the world are given.

3.2. E-visa

The concept of delivering consular services through the Internet varies according to countries; some countries simply provide a source of information which complements the physical presence.

The strategy of certain countries is to leverage their virtual presence to remove certain tasks from consulate or embassy, such as the scheduling of appointments and interviews.

In recent years electron-visa what does not require to go to a consulate or an embassy has begun to be applied. A person who needs visa completes an application form, pays visa-fees online and within several days he/she gets a visa.

Among the countries in this research cases, only Russia applies this system, so, citizens of the certain countries can apply electron visa to visit the free port of Vladivostok, Russia.[1]

Across the world, there are several countries provide electron visa, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, Bahrain and etc.

3.3. Virtual Embassies

Traditional diplomacy requires representation with embassies. In the host country, "sender" country is represented by an ambassador and the staff of embassy but in the digital age, we have been introduced a new type of representation called virtual embassy. Physical presence is not required, it is internet-based space. Virtual embassies can partly implement the tasks of diplomatic missions

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[1] https://electronic-visa.kdmid.ru/index_en.html

promoting the country's values, informing foreign society, sharing relevant data and so on.

The USA virtual embassy to Iran is one of the first. It was an initiative of the Obama administration to communicate with Iranians. Answering to the question related to the initiative in the interview with BBC Persian, former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton said that the reason of this web initiative is that they get a lot of questions from Iranian people who do not know where their questions can be answered and these answers are given online to those people.[2]

In this interview, the former secretary acknowledges the government's failure in reaching out to the Iranian government, and using digital channels the American government has tried to reach out to the Iranian society.

In the statement of virtual mission, it is explained that the "website is not a formal diplomatic mission, nor does it represent or describe a real U.S. Embassy accredited to the Iranian Government. But, in the absence of direct contact, it can work as a bridge between the American and Iranian people."[3]

3.4. Wiki

One of the digital tools, wikis, is usually applied for internal purposes, like knowledge management. However, Wikis are not recognized as reliable sources because of access given to everybody for writing and editing, but official wikis do not provide access to everyone. For example, Diplopedia launched in 2006 by the State Department as a part of former Secretary of State Condolezza Rice's "Transformational Diplomacy" is one of the first Wikis used by the federal government. The purpose is to provide information in central space for foreign affairs specialists, to enable horizontal sharing of analytical, informal information among foreign affairs officers whose experience and knowledge are similar

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[2] https://www.politico.com/story/2011/10/clinton-virtual-embassy-for-iran-066944

[3] https://ir.usembassy.gov/tehran/

(Bronk & Smith, 2010). A diplomat assigned to a foreign country can connect to personnel abroad, read their blogs, interact directly with them via Diplopedia.

Articles are continuously updated and linked to original sources, some Wiki pages are edited by the administrator providing data that has a long-lasting value for the whole department.

It is managed on MediaWiki software, the same platform used by Wikipedia (Anderson, 2010). Contrary to Wikipedia which authorizes anonymous contributors, there are strict requirements to edit in Diplopedia. Wiki access to Diplopedia is only granted with the appropriate Department of State ID and clearance (Department of State, 2009).

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The functions of Diplopedia defined by Hanson (2012) as below:

- Primary depository for DoS data;
- Central information interchange and dissemination medium like Deskipedia what provides useful information for new desk officers;
- Space for collected reports - for example, submission of country reports of foreign service officers in Diplopedia page (Mergel 2011)

Diplopedia is a good example that the use of Wikis can increase the speed, accuracy, and inclusiveness of reports.

3.5. Blogs

Blog is a webpage managed by an individual or a group. Articles in a blog may cover various topics such as travel, a particular period of history, political issues and etc. Blogs' writing style is more informal and conversational. Bloggers are

not only individuals but also governmental institutions, and blogs are used as a weapon in the information war.

Popular blogs of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, such as DipNote, Foggy Bottom Rambles, FCO Blog provide a platform for diplomatic employees to engage in a direct and informal dialogue with audiences about international affairs, familiarize them with their works by presenting first-person perspectives from the USA government representatives working in diplomatic missions.

According to the explanatory note of the State Department's official blog, the purpose of creating DipNote is to offer a forum for informal conversation among the people on international affairs and global concerns, to give an opportunity to the people to debate United States external policy with senior DoS officials. The blog offers professional perspectives from the USA government employees who are working to implement that mission.[4]

The blog managed by United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is accessible at "blogs.fco.gov.uk." The blog publishes articles written daily by the staff of the FCO, British diplomats and ministers on certain foreign policy issues, the work of the FCO and other issues on the international level. Content on the blog is available in several languages.[5]

3.6. Social Media Networks

The use of social media networks in political communication is internationally adopted. These online channels have brought a new tendency that has never experienced before, such as openness, transparency, close engagement.

ICTs have diminished an envoy's intermediary role before a foreign leader, but they have expanded this role in front of foreign societies (Manor, 2016).

Digital means have removed the constraints which conventional diplomacy faced and provided an opportunity for constant interaction with a massive and distinct

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[4] https://blogs.state.gov/dipnote-content/about-web

[5] https://blogs.fco.gov.uk/about/

audience. Additionally, the most important feature of social media, two-way communication symbolizes the principal distinction between innovative diplomacy and classical public diplomacy (Manor, 2016).

According to Hanson (2012), in political communication following opportunities provided by social network platforms employed:

Real-time monitoring - to observe and analyze reactions in social media platforms to processes which have the capacity to influence national interests of the state;

To identify and create influencers in online space - to recognize online influencers by related field, that let diplomats have a better understanding of who encourages, intensify debates on particular matters and with whom they may collaborate. Hanson compares this feature with traditional diplomacy where diplomats use foreknowledge to identify and build relationships with politicians, representatives, correspondents they think influential;

Ability to communicate directly with a wide public - to connect with above one billion people around the world on different social network platforms what is increasing.

Discussions impacting public interest on digital media platforms defined by a state then government institutions, politicians present their own argument, position to a wide online public, and clarify their viewpoint to influential people in online space in order to get their support (Hanson 2012).

Hanson claims that social media plays a role of diplomatic barometer to analyze and predict international relations.

Some governmental institutions consider the advantages and disadvantages of interaction in social media, others do not restrict their activity within Twitter, Facebook, for reaching out to people they adopt new online applications such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram.

There is a widening digital gap between governments that are active on social media platforms with trained units and those that do not seriously take digital engagement into account.

Social networking and micro-blogging service that enables users to read and post messages, *Twitter* founded in 2006. When it was created, messages were limited to 140 characters, but in recently Twitter doubled the character count, thus it expanded to 280 characters. It also allows users to upload photos, short videos.

According to the statistics, as of the fourth quarter of 2017, it averaged at 330 million monthly active users.[6] Comparing with other social media networks, nowadays, Twitter is the most preferred platform by governments, political figures, and others. According to the study results provided by international public relations and communication company, Burson-Marsteller, the presidents, PMs, and ministers of foreign affairs of 178 countries what is 92% of member states of the UN have 856 official accounts on Twitter and these accounts own an international audience of 356 million followers.

The governments of all G20 states, six of the G7 leaders have personal or institutional accounts on Twitter. Majority of European governments actively use this social media platform. But the study of the firm also reveals that there are states from the regions of Africa, Asia, Pacific which do not use Twitter and a number of these governments are 15. [7]

Twitter as a social network is highly appreciated by some state leaders. For example, President Trump whose daily and personal twittering changes agenda of the international media and gets reactions from various governments around the world, in his interview with the Financial Times, has described the social media, Twitter as an important tool that helped him to come political arena and get support from people: "without the tweets, I wouldn't be here. I have over 100m [followers]. I don't have to go to fake media." (Lionel Barber, Demetri Sevastopulo and Gillian Tett, 2017).

It is also an example that how social media what provides direct communication gets ahead of traditional media.

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[6] https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/

[7] https://www.burson-marsteller.com/what-we-do/our-thinking/twiplomacy-2017/twiplomacy-2017-full-study/

Italia's former foreign minister Terzi identifies Twitter's impacts on foreign policy within two spheres; promotes an interchange of views, opinions between policymakers and community, and expand diplomatic representatives' capacity of data collecting, expecting, analyzing, and responding to processes (Sandre 2015)

Active use of Twitter by diplomats has resulted in the emergence of a new notion, Twiplomacy. A view supported by a certain group who equate digital diplomacy with Twitter diplomacy has caused debate.

Commenting on the use of Twitter in diplomacy, Sandre (2012) claims that Twitter diplomacy has transformed the genetics of diplomacy: a kind of genetic adjustment to modern technologies. He characterizes the use of Twitter in diplomacy as an attempt in order to make diplomacy more effective, more comprehensive, and more communicative. It has pushed conventional players to embrace a more open manner in diplomacy that listening emerges as essential as performing. In other words, Twitter encourages diplomats and communicators to rethink and redesign diplomatic activities.

Facebook having the biggest audience with 2.2 billion monthly active users takes the first place on the list of the most famous social network platforms. Describing itself as a —social utility that assists people to communicate more efficiently was established in 2004.

In spite of the biggest audience, Facebook has but it is less prevalent than Twitter among diplomats, politicians. But, "Facebook pages are more popular than Twitter accounts, with an average of 38,891 likes per page, compared to 16,848 followers for per Twitter account" (Twiplomacy, 2017).

According to the statistics provided by Twiplomacy Study (2017), the presidents, the PMs and foreign ministers, of 169 countries have page on this social media platform. These official Facebook pages have an audience of 283 million likes.

It has been noticed an immense universal increase in the use of Facebook, for this reason, now the site is available in over 100 languages. This international increase encourages governments to employ Facebook as an instrument for diplomatic activities. It provides an opportunity to disseminate information in

diverse forms, messages, photos, videos and most importantly, unlike Twitter, it has no limit on characters.

Arab Spring has demonstrated the role of social network platforms in mobilization. Facebook did not create the revolution, but it was like as a contemporary city square where residents of online world assembled to bravely criticize their governments for inefficient policies. It was an experience that has never occurred offline (Manor 2016).

Social media helped to spread this movement across the countries in the region. Manor (2016) notes that after the Arab Spring, MFAs intensified to move online space to better predict processes in foreign countries.

YouTube is the third most used social media platform by governments. The foreign ministries have regularly updated pages on YouTube. Videos on these pages cover official news like ministers' interviews, official meetings, briefings, press-conferences. But some ministries manage accounts working on nation branding. For example, MFA of Israel has an official page, but it also manages a page, "Israel".[8] The uploaded videos on Ministry's verified account cover political issues, in particular, Israel-Palestine conflict[9], but in another account – Israel, rather than political matters, it exhibits the life in this country. According to an official of MFA, these videos portray Israel beyond politics (Benjamin Spier, 13 Oct. 2010).

Giving just a little remark that there is a similar difference between @Israel and @IsraelMFA accounts on Twitter, too.

This fact reveals that how social media may be applied for both, in nation branding and knowledge management in digital diplomacy.

Obama's video message in 2009 addressing to Persian-speaking people of the world who celebrate Nowruz is another example of this kind of information penetration through YouTube. However, the Iranian government did not welcome this gesture, but ordinary Iranian peoples appreciated (Black, 2009).

Instagram is also among the most used social network platforms. "The heads of states and governments, foreign ministers of 140 countries have personal and

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[8] https://www.youtube.com/user/Israel/videos

[9] https://www.youtube.com/user/IsraelMFA/videos

institutional accounts on Instagram, what is 72.5 percent of all UN member states." 111 out of 140 accounts are personal profiles. Embassies also are active on this platform (Twiplomacy 2017).

It is a space providing the visual communication what is sometimes more effective to show behind of official scenes what have always been interesting for publics.

In certain cases, one photo can send a much stronger message to the audience than a piece of text.

Periscope is employed as a means to live transmission of press briefings, to hold digital video conferences.

Other SMPs, such as ***Snapchat, Flicker, Google+, LinkedIn*** are less applied in comparison with the abovementioned.

4.Risks of Digitalization in Diplomacy

The changes brought by the digital revolution into the different spheres of human life are noticeable. This revolution made modernization inevitable from very simple to complicated aspects of human activity. The digital transformation has led to remarkable achievements, on the other hand, the concerns raised against the emergence of a new digital world. Along with the advantages, downsides of digitalization have always been on the agenda for research.

In the digital age, data protection and privacy have become main concern. In the process of storing immense volumes of data, the digital platforms' role is indispensable, but on the other hand, it provides an opportunity for unapproved tracking of individual activities and interests. Without cautious using of digital means, there is a risk of stealing the private information that may be used for the purpose of damage.

Due to possible disadvantages, some criticize widely using of digital tools in politics. They find these challenges stemming from digitalization as threatening and real.

While analyzing the characterization of these challenges we see two types of them: technical challenges – problems, and the challenges to the nature of conventional diplomacy.

Technical challenges are very timely issue nowadays and they can be classified as below:

- information leakage
- hacking
- change management problems
- the digital battle with non-state actors

4.1. Information Leakage

Information leakage referring to the loss of confidential information is a serious threat in the digital age. A leaky nature that the digital landscape has, makes exposure much easier regardless of its purpose (Wichowski 2015).

According to Wichowski (2015, p. 54), participants of a leakage process encompass government, leakers and the community of civilians to whom leaks are revealed.

Owing to have a broad concept of government, in this context "government" refers to the foreign policy institutions of government: diplomatic organizations and defense agencies which are most responsible for protecting sensitive data and preventing leaks.

An individual and his/her motivation behind the leaks are always in focus. A leaker is examined more specifically. Their status varies depending on the support that they get. If public opinion is on their side, they to be called "whistle-blowers" and when general view of society is against them, they are simply "traitors."

Leakers are continuously entangled with the first and third groups. They are part of the community of citizens but they are also members of the government, for

example, soldiers, contractors, like Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning, Edward Snowden.

Community - "the public" that Wichowski (ibid, pp.54-55) divides into two distinct subgroups: citizens promoting information-sharing as a natural right, and working-level government officials who usually do not support this.

The speed and scale make information leakage a complicated issue in the digital era. However, the rapid spread of information is perceived as an advantage but depending on situation it may become a disadvantage. Because the digital landscape makes leakage to happen on the global scale possible. "Once the information is out, it's impossible to just burn some files and make the leak go away. Leaked data finds a way to reach at the all corners of digital space" (ibid, p.59). This feature of the digitalization makes it dangerous. Release of confidential documents by WikiLeaks proved that how information leakage can be large-scale and cause the global diplomatic crisis. The WikiLeaks had already started to release those documents since its establishment in 2006, but following that, in 2011, the mass release of classified diplomatic information of the US government by Chelsea Manning, with the assistance of the WikiLeaks created global shockwaves.

"This leakage alerted diplomats to the complications of digital information sharing – while still valued for fostering greater collaboration and transparency, Wikileaks also created an air of nervousness among diplomats, some of whom vowed to scale back technology use" (Cull, 2011).

Information leakage is not seen as a flaw in the digital world but as an error made by humans (here it is diplomats) by some experts, diplomats what overlaps with the view of a technological determinist. For example, they argue that in happening of the WikiLeaks case, internet security does not have a role, it was a failure of the American government to monitor the use of sensitive information by official persons who had access to that data. In other words, not technology but the authorities must be criticized (Diplomat Magazine, 2014)

4.2. Hacking

The term "hacker" invented in the late 1950s. At the outset, hacking did not have a negative connotation what it possesses today. A hacker was "someone who does interesting and creative work at a high-intensity level." The culture of computer hacking based on an informal ethos. The principles of hackers' ethics code followed:

- Access to computers should be unrestricted

- All data should be free

- Promotion of decentralization

- Hackers should be judged for their hacking, not another criterion such as degrees, age, race, or position

- You can create art and beauty on a computer

- Computers can change life for the better (Bernner 2012, pp.15-16)

As the principles indicate, hackers explored computer systems and shared what they learned.   This principles of exploring and sharing developed when computers were closed systems, not accessible by outsiders, and software was not a profit-oriented product. But with time, hacking became a serious challenge. Diplomatic rivals, including state and non-state actors would attempt to hack into government systems and steal data to use or just with the purpose of damage.

"To break into seriously secure systems requires the full resources of a state apparatus to operate the scale of attack and sophistication of software necessary for successful attacks" (Westcott, 2008).

4.3. Difficulties Deriving from Change Management

There is a challenge arising from the self-feeding character of digital diplomacy (Bjola and Jiang 2015, p.87). The fast-changing nature of social media platforms requires diplomats continually to update their digital skills and strategies for maintaining their place in cyberspace. For instance, before Weibo became influential, Renren.com used to be a more popular platform.

In order to get success in digital diplomacy, along with classical forms of diplomatic engagement, diplomats should use a combination of social media platforms.

4.4. Internet's Culture of Anonymity

Anonymity at first seemed like a feature in the Internet's original design (theatlantic.com, 2016) but has been gradually utilized for different purposes.

For many years, the advantages of online anonymity outweighed over its disadvantages. This feature of the Internet has provided to people an opportunity, in expressing themselves freely what is more important in the countries where an authoritarian system is in power. But anonymity has turned to become a problem due to the presence of trolls, hackers, bots. It has a negative impact on civil discourse by facilitating hacking, cyberbullying.

Using anonymity in Internet users can adopt different persona, address, or attack anyone. Fake accounts can mimic and pretend to be someone else (Yakovenko, 2012).

For understanding the severity of the problem, to recall the Russian troll armies' activity during the presidential election in the USA what has been revealing through ongoing investigations in this regard is enough.

4.5. Challenges to the Nature of Diplomacy

Prof. Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2018) suggests another classification originated from digitalization contradicting with the nature of diplomacy. According to her, online tools have created the world of openness what never experienced before. This openness, in turn, challenges three foundational pillars of diplomacy; time, confidential space, and tact.

Diplomacy requires time to develop a process of negotiation, to share post or tweet instantly does not settle the diplomatic tensions and even a very small

mistake in a tweet can be misunderstood, lead to conflict escalation, or vice versa, give society false hope.

Secondly, confidential space in diplomacy is important to find out other parties' red lines. Without confidentiality, it is difficult to maneuver, to improvise, to make brainstorm.

According to Prof.'s view, tact or protocol is about to save the other's face by taking the emotions, feelings of other people into the consideration but thinking that digital diplomacy is shaped by algorithms, to define these is complicated.

5. Advantages of Application of Digital Means in Diplomacy

Nobody doubts about the essence of traditional diplomacy, face-to-face negotiations, meetings have always had a crucial role in maintaining and developing relations between nations and it will continue in this way. Although digital transformation does not change the subject matter of diplomacy, indeed, provides with good opportunities such as to be heard by vast audiences, being able to segment them and to send direct messages (Hocking and Melissen 2015).

Digital platforms have the transformational effect on policy-making. Simply explaining, politicians, diplomats can monitor and predict events around the globe, identify and engage with influential actors, and find out public opinion on their work via digital platforms. Consequently, the general mood either in local or international society help them in the process of decision-making.

While commenting on the benefits of digital diplomacy, Adesina (2017) in her article notes that in case of a proper application of digital tools, digital diplomacy can be a convincing and timely supplement to traditional diplomacy, will contribute advancing a state's foreign policy objectives, extend international reach, and influence people who will not come to embassies.

5.1. Talk to Wide Audiences

According to the most supported argument on the definition of digital diplomacy, the use of social media in diplomacy does not encompass the original denotation

of the subject, it is only one of the instruments on the path of achieving policy goals. But there is an agreed view that the use of social media platforms in diplomacy is quite effective.

Social media provides spaces for interaction, increased engagement, and thus furthering the goals of diplomacy in near real-time. In modern times, it is one of the convenient ways to reach the youth what is a major goal of public diplomacy efforts.

Technology in itself does not provide solutions to hurdles of international policy, but it allows governments to ask diverse questions to diverse societies in order to find solutions to those problems (Ross and Scott 2011).

5.2. Cost-Effectiveness

Analyzing the role of the Internet on international relations Westcott (2008) notes that Internet "enables traditional diplomatic services to be delivered more cost-effectively, both to ones' own citizens and government, and to those of other countries."

Budget cuts and competition from other institutions of government are challenges for Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Manor 2015). Digital diplomacy makes possible sharing information, promoting a nation's image and taking part in debates with foreign publics at reduced costs what are the tasks of foreign ministries.

Due to the advancement of ICTs, there is no longer need to visit a remote country to hold a meeting. Modern telecommunication products connect people, thus foreign offices save the costs of transportation.

Or another example, public diplomacy initiatives require financial resources such as to organize events, meetings, to launch TV and radio channels and etc., but the use of digital tools does not demand much finance.

Digitalization in consular services reduce the number of officials at consulates.

5.3. To Provide Communication during Emergencies and Disasters

"Global disasters and emergencies in the last few years have shown that social media may serve as an integral and significant component of crisis response" (Tomer Simon, Avishay Goldberg, and Bruria Adnini, 2015). In those situations, through social media, it is raised security awareness, given life-saving information and instructions to people, reached out them to offer assistance. Relevant and timely information from official and unofficial sources are made accessible by social media (Taylor, Wells, Howell, & Raphael, 2012). This connectivity provides reassurance, support to distressed people (Taylor et al., 2012).

Mobile applications are used to inform citizens who prepare to travel to regions where are dangerous. For instance, the MFA of Poland has launched a mobile application, iPolak 3.0 what facilitates contacting Polish embassies and consulates around the world and shows travelers how to get to the closest one. iPolak 3.0 also features the latest alerts issued by the MFA, safety and visa guidelines and recommendations for emergency situations.[10]

Smart Traveler, the official State Department app, designed for travelers from the U.S. The app provides regularly updated verified information about country, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, USA embassy locations.[11]

5.4. Dynamic Content

In digital diplomacy, content is delicate matter, at the same time the core element. A vast audience is reachable with the help of digital platforms, but the issue is that what should be shared with the audience and by using which form - text, photo, video links.

Inappropriate content can cause tension in society or monotony does not get attention from people and it can be ignored.

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[10] https://poland-mfa.droidinformer.org/

[11] https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/165020.htm

Stephane Dujarric compares content to storytelling (Sandre 2015). If storyteller wants the story to be accepted by the audience, he/she should be more careful in selecting a story and presenting it. In e-diplomacy the process is similar, content shared with the public requires to be interesting, timely, persuading. More dynamic and rich content, such as videos, photos, and links differing than traditional methods of giving lectures or passing out pamphlets is an advantage because visual content increases the reach and engagement of the online message. Users tend to spend more time looking at images than they do reading text on a webpage. This is a reaction to information overload what intensified by social media, but cognitive factors also have a role.

Studies show that people possess the capacity to retain visual information better than text as our brains work much better as an image rather than word processors. Images, videos exhibit a unique ability to evoke strong emotional responses (Bjola, 2017).

5.5. Data Collecting and Processing

Some experts compare diplomatic practice to knowledge construction because of their certain elements such as data collecting, information dissemination, developing knowledge. In the digital age, these processes happen more efficiently (Kurbalija 2012).

Thanks to the online channels, states can rapidly disseminate information to the target audience, social media engagement facilitates to monitor people's reaction, their view on political decisions and helps to get direct feedback related to a government's policy.

Digital tools give an opportunity gathering data and analyzing it, considering the result of the analysis, government can make a change in its policy.

ICTs, digital instruments help in the handling of an extensive amount of data to store, transmit and share.

5.6. Capability of Humanizing

A dialogue between diplomats and the audience via digital means is the most discussed part of digital diplomacy. Addition to that, with the use of digital tools in diplomacy, diplomats personalize themselves. Thinking about Manor's view on the impact of a diplomat's personality on his/her country image, it is definitely important to create a good image for a representative. Sotiriu (2015) adds to this that sharing information or photos/ videos on digital platforms increases the transparency and accountability associated with diplomats' unelected, power-wielding professions.

6. The Sceptic's Point of View on Digital Diplomacy

There is no single view of the application of digital tools in diplomacy. It passes through from skepticism to promotion to acceptance and mainstreaming. This experience is normal, the past proves that innovation in diplomacy was not easily accepted, particularly, by practitioners. "British diplomat Harold Nicolson, in writings in the 1960s, characterized the telephone as a dangerous little instrument through which to convey information or to transmit instructions"(Melissen and Hocking 2015). Nicolson argued that accuracy is a critical component of sound diplomacy but the telephone fails to provide it.

Since the invention of the telephone, much has developed. Internet, social media brought a real-time feature to diplomacy and made communication extremely speedy (Hocking and Melissen 2015, p.14).

There is no consensus between diplomats on the use of social media platforms, whether actively practicing or avoiding them. While a certain group actively encourage this innovation in diplomacy and adopt change as an opportunity to reform, for others it is challengeable.

Skeptic view on digital revolution within diplomacy is not restricted within advantages and purposes but also related to the legitimacy of states' powers, respect to the old-school diplomatic practices what already confirmed its effectiveness thorough history.

One of the open critics investigating digital diplomacy Evgheni Morozov claims that technological developments cannot succeed in opening up the world where traditional attempts fail (Barton 2012). As other experts who promote the secrecy of diplomacy, Morozov emphasizes that diplomacy is an element of statecraft what that "should not be subject to the demands of 'open government'; whenever it works, it is usually because it is done behind closed doors, but this may be increasingly hard to achieve in the age of Twittering bureaucrats" (Lichtenstein 2010, para. 29). He criticizes the recognized role given to digital diplomacy in comparing with traditional diplomacy what universally approved (Sotiriu 2015, pp. 39-40).

Another issue Morozov raises is the close relationships between the private sector of ICT and the governments, foreign affairs institutions. For example, he has criticized alliance between Internet companies, organizations and Clinton's administration and continuing that this partnership convinces external forces with whom the USA have unfriendly relations that "Internet freedom is a Trojan horse for American imperialism" (Barton 2012, para. 19). Morozov, addressing this issue from the protection of users, writes that authoritarian governments may recognize these tech-Internet companies as limbs of American external policy's research and this puts the users of those companies' products under suspicion (Barton 2012). Among these tech-Internet products, Lichtenstein (2010) underlines social media platforms.

These arguments have been based on evidence. For example, the State Department has requested from social media companies, more precisely Twitter, to remain accessible in Iran during protests in 2009 (Lichtenstein 2010).

There is a skeptic view on digital tools' impact on the nature of diplomacy, experts dispute whether real change comes in or not.

According to Carne Ross, administrative director of the well-known diplomatic advisory group, technology has not affected the fundamental nature of classic diplomacy, its non-transparent nature has unquestionably not changed, negotiations are still held behind closed doors. In his interview, Ross describes:

"For example, here at the United Nations in New York, the press is not allowed into negotiations whether for General Assembly resolutions negotiations or for Security Council discussions. Diplomats don't come out and tweet—or don't tweet—what's going on while they're at the negotiating table" (Sandre 2012, p.25)

Some of experts admit that social media platforms are actively used but as new means of propaganda for governments. They argue that to view social media as a platform where dialogue happens between governments and the public is not genuine. As in traditional public diplomacy, here one-way communication is also dominant, and public messages which governments want to spread, are sent out via social media channels (Sandre 2015, pp.25-27).

7. Israel

Before to analyze Israel's foreign policy in the digital era and to define the status of state's strategy, it is important to have a brief look this country's external policy, the priorities of Israel in the international system that promoted via digital tools. Thus, we will have a better understanding of Israel's digital footprints in cyberspace aiming to achieve its political goals.

The world's only Jewish-majority state, Israel is the only officially non-Muslim country in the Middle East (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998) where is featured as the region in turmoil, nowadays. Another more important character making Israel unique in the region is democracy comparing its neighbours. Moreover, the dynamics of the country's relationship with most of its neighbours what goes through a period of intense conflict makes Israel a special case (Ray Sanchez, 2018 Aug.). Conflict escalation, wars have been part of relations between Israel and its Middle East neigbours. Contemporary border lines reflect the outcomes of two of these wars, in 1948 and 1967. The 1967 war is the main factor for today's conflict because it left Israel in control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, two territories home to large Palestinian populations (Beauchamp, 2018 May). Sporadic clashes between Israel and Hamas since earlies of the 2000s what resulted with high civilian death toll among Palestinians have been criticized by the international society. The conflict is on the focus of international actors but in

so far, it has not been resolved, moreover, at any moment there is a possibility of an escalation of violence.

The fundamental approach to settling the conflict today is a so-called "two-state solution" that would declare Palestine as an independent state in Gaza and most of the West Bank, leaving the rest of the land to Israel. Although this plan is apparent in theory, the two parties are still deeply divided over how to implement it practically.

The alternative to the first solution is a "one-state solution," that seeks to create one state, either one big Israel or one big Palestine. Most experts think it would cause more problems than it would bring solution.

Today Israel has good reputation thanks to its resilient democracy, technologically advanced economy, innovations - the "Start-up nation" enjoys its popularity as the high-tech playground of the Middle East. Along with these positives, Israel faces harsh criticism, because of its policy toward Palestine.

BBC World Service poll finds that Israel is on the list of countries gets more negative view than positive.[12] Interesting fact that while the majority see Israel negatively, but this is not reflected in the governments' policy. The governments of countries whose nations have a negative approach toward Israel, have full diplomatic relations with this state and even do not officially recognize the independence of Palestine.[13] Thus, assessing Israel's achievements in its foreign policy on the internationally governmental level, we can say the state has been doing well so far, but on the other hand, it seems a bit hard for Israel to win foreign publics' hearts. So, in this way, the use of opportunities of new ICTs to engage people in overseas directly, to explain the state's policy, to address audiences' concerns can be helpful for changing people's view about the country.

Israel effectively uses social media tools to make connection with people living in countries which Israel does not diplomatic relations, like Gulf countries. Israel

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[12] https://cdn0.vox-cdn.com/assets/4830948/BBC_Israel_polls_2012-2013-2014.png

[13] https://saint-tepes.deviantart.com/art/Israel-Palestine-recognition-map-312486757

PM Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the technophile leaders, particularly has highlighted this dimension in the first Digital Diplomacy conference held in Israel in 2017: "We already have a different relationship with regimes and the governments. But we want to get to a different relationship with the people — and that you do through social media," (Ahren, 2017 Dec.).

According to the Israeli PM, digital tools facilitate contacting populations of Arab countries.

7.1. "Innovation Nation" of Middle East

Israel is one of the leaders in the field of hi-tech and Internet infrastructure. Research and development expenditure of Israel is much higher than some OECD countries (Deborah Housen-Couriel, 2017) and the vast majority of these R&D centers in the country focus on ICTs (Israel Innovation Authority Report 2017). Along with the national investment, foreign investment in this sector is growing, between 2014 and 2015 alone it grew 20%, reached at USD 540 million (Deborah Housen-Couriel, 2017, p.5). This figure shows that foreign companies also are interested in Israel's ICT sector because of high-skilled and educated labour, the supportive conditions provided by the Israeli government.

Israel has a strong place in the cybersecurity industry, with many companies playing a prominent role in cyber defense technology, research and development, and data protection. Indeed, Israel has the world's second-largest cyber market after the United States (Ron Cheng, 2017 Feb.). In 2017 alone, 60 new cybersecurity startups founded in Israel what is a fairly high number for the small country (Ofer Schreiber & Iren Reznikov, 2017).

Among the OECD countries, the Internet penetration rate in Israel is 78.89%, that puts the country on the 33rd place in the rank. The 74.2% of people who are over 20 years old have Internet access and this percentage changes according to gender, 76.4% of male and 72.1% of female (Deborah Housen-Couriel, 2017, p.5).

7.2. Israel as One of the Developers of Digital Platforms

Since the 1990s companies in Israel started to offer online services in different sectors and laid the grounds for the contemporary Internet practice.

Instant messaging (IM) client, ICQ is one of the most notable initiatives that earned interest from international society launched in 1996 in Israel.

Well-known international Internet and tech companies have invested in the country to take advantage of domestic innovation and skilled labour. Microsoft was the first corporation to do this, founded its Israeli office in 1989 and then, built three regional research and development hubs. Since 1996, Microsoft has bought sixteen companies in Israel, including the new $200 million purchase of cybersecurity enterprise, Aorato (Raviv and Yachin 2015, p.15)

In 2014, R&D center of Facebook in Israel was established. This hub is the second of its type in a foreign country, another one is in the United States. Before the opening of this center, Facebook selected up local technology company, Face.com, and mobile application platform, Snaptu to cooperate.

Yahoo also had opened a local research center in early 2008 (Raviv and Yachin 2015, p.15).

These facts show that Israel is a powerful front-runner at the ICT sector.

The Israeli government is fully aware of the importance of this sector in the digital age and creates supportive conditions for development and encourages new initiatives. The government's support in this field is understandable because digitalized and networked world requires it. In addition to that, the geopolitics of Israel has a role. Since Israel became an independent state, the country has had tense relations with neighbours, it had to handle with enemies and threats coming from out its borders.

To protect Israel from threats takes the most important place in governmental strategy. As a result, computing technologies are developed.

On the other hand, the state faces growing international isolation for its Palestinian policy, so with these efforts, Israel demonstrates that everything is not about the conflict, it is a highly developed digital country.

According to the rating table of countries employing soft power prepared by an international communications company - Portland, Israel has been 26th on the list. The evaluation was realized with the assistance of indicators and achievements of countries in six sections: government, culture, engagement, education, digital, and business. In the digital category, Israel has taken the 4th place.[14]
According to the study's author, Jonathan McClory, Israel has won admiration due to its potential of innovation in different spheres of technology and this country has the considerable performance in digital diplomacy, actively apply digital media platforms to interact with the foreign publics (Raphael Ahren, 2016 Apr.)

The recent ranking reveals that Israel's Foreign Ministry takes the eighth place for its digital diplomacy activities (Digital Diplomacy Review 2017). These show that the Jewish state is attempting to effectively utilize its digital capability.

7.3. Israel's Digital Diplomacy Initiatives

Cold diplomatic relations between Israel and Muslim-Arab countries have been already mentioned. We can argue that the citizens of these countries are the target audience of Israel. Today digital instruments, more precisely, social media networks offer to Israel an opportunity to reach out the Arabic audience with whom the government cannot communicate with through conventional means of diplomacy, so, in this regard, Israel government has launched several initiatives.

In 2011, the Facebook page in Arabic, "Israel Speaks Arabic" that designated for Arabic-speaking audiences, was created by the Foreign Ministry's Media and Public Affairs Department.

Then-deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon who is one of the first Israeli diplomats embraced social media platforms has characterized this initiative as a sample of the Ministry's broader efforts in the social media and especially to the Arabic-speaking society: "It is vital that Israel's voice is heard in every corner of the world and even more so amongst its immediate neighbours. Social media is

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[14] https://softpower30.com/country/israel/?country_years=2015

an unfiltered medium to speak directly to the people without any intermediary" (MFA of Israel, 2011, 13 April).

At that time Foreign Ministry's Deputy Director General for Media and Public Affairs Yigal Caspi said that the purpose in creating of the page is to assess the reaction of the Arabic-speaking population on Israel, what is considered one of the advantages of digital diplomacy. The constantly updated page, "Israel Speaks Arabic" presents a diverse content to its over one and a half million followers. Apart from the content related to the politics, it covers social, cultural issues, for example, the posts of Israelis singing in Arabic, videos, and pictures of life in Israel, articles of coexistence in Israel, close cultural heritage between Israel and its Arabic neighbors. The posted videos on the social media platform less political in comparison with the page in English. Some translated from English or Hebrew but mostly original content is presented in Arabic.

To the followers of the page are given an opportunity to interact directly with the Israeli diplomats. For instance, after several months opening of the page, followers were notified that Lior Ben-Dor, Senior Deputy Spokesman at the Foreign Ministry of Israel who was in charge with the issues of the Arabic media, would respond questions on chat. In spite of worries that the invitation could be ineffective, chat attracted more people (MFA of Israel, 2011, 04 Dec.). Following the chat's success, the Foreign Ministry declared that it will frequently hold online discussion sessions.

Israeli digital diplomacy researchers describe this page as a window for the Arab public to watch Israeli life.

Considering the status of the relations between Iran and Israel that they have no diplomatic ties, the aim at the opening of Persian language page, @IsraelPersian by the Foreign Ministry of Israel is understandable, to reach out to the Iranian public, to directly convey messages to the people.

It is admitted that social media cannot overcome the challenges and solve a dispute between Israel and the Iranian regime, but it is a part of diplomatic efforts to advance the peaceful results (Yuval Rotem, 2016). The page's followers are much less than the page in the Arabic language, above 187.000.

Along with these two languages, the Israeli MFA has other six accounts on Facebook in various languages - English, Hebrew, Spanish, Russian, Indian, Indonesian that a number of followers change between over 100.000 and 500.000.[15]

Addition to the MFA pages in different languages on Facebook, a range of Israeli diplomatic missions around the world has an online presence on this social media platform. A number of official Facebook accounts of diplomatic missions are 108.[16] Most of these pages operate in host countries' languages. According to the Deputy Director General and Head of Public Diplomacy in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Noam Katz, Israel conducts digital diplomacy in over 50 different languages in terms of its diplomatic missions' accounts on diverse social network platforms (Israeli embassy in Athena, 2018 Oct.).

This fact explains that the Israeli government is very attentive on the issue of target publics. The message of Israel is transmitted in the native language of the host country, of course, in this case, the message will be likely perceived more clearly and reach out a much wider audience.

However, Israel has no official relations with and diplomatic presence in the GCC states despite having the secret business investments and transactions between them, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has employed digital tools to reach out to the public of these countries.

A virtual embassy of Israel to Gulf states on Twitter - @IsraelintheGCC was launched to advance the dialogue between the state of Israel and the population of six Gulf states. The engagement of the virtual embassy with its audience is realized in Arabic and English, covering holiday wishes, promoting Israeli innovation. The virtual embassy avoids from interaction with provocative users (Doha News Team, 2013 July).

Indeed, it is not a new thing, before Israel, the United States opened a virtual embassy "in" Iran in 2011 to improve dialogue opportunities with Iran citizens, to

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[15] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutTheMinistry/Pages/Israel-MFA-Social-Media-Network.aspx
[16] https://www.facebook.com/IsraelMFA/app/208195102528120/

promote the government's policies, culture and the American people (Sotiriu 2015).

Today the virtual embassy of Israel in GCC has above two thousand followers that comparing other accounts opened by Israel MFA, this number is not much. Examination of the activity of the virtual embassy using Twitter Analytics program, it is observed that the most active period of the account overlaps with the Gaza war, between July and August 2014 what gives an insight of using social media as a weapon of information warfare.[17]

The Israeli MFA proposes Israeli diplomatic missions, diasporas to boost special tweets through message campaigns. The #IsraelRetweetedMe campaign started in May 2016, is a representative case. In this campaign, Twitter followers are invited to share good memories from Israel or to express affection about the Jewish state on Twitter. The best tweets are awarded a massive retweet from the 153 verified accounts of Israeli diplomatic missions what possess the international public of more than a million followers. (Twiplomacy Study 2017).

7.4. Q&A Sessions on Social Media as Engagement Method

There is a dispute about whether the real capacity of social media in the process of engagement with the public is used or not.

Social media platforms make to hold discussions with audience possible, using social media Q&A sessions, politicians, diplomats may answer people's questions. However, there are disadvantages of such sessions, like online criticism at best and trolling at worst case. Furthermore, traditional media often describe these sessions as a disaster due to the given negative reaction.

Advantages of these sessions are also worthwhile, as they give a good chance to policymakers narrating governments' actions, thoroughly justifying their policies and honestly addressing criticism of these policies (Manor, 2016 May).

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[17] http://www.twitonomy.com/profile.php?sn=@IsraelintheGCC

Looking at the experience of Israel's decision-makers, we can say, they are open and courageous in this regard.

#AskRivlin

Israeli President Rivlin held a Twitter Q/A session on his Twitter account - @PresidentRuvi.

During the session, the various questions with the hashtag of #AskRivlin were asked including the possibility of isolation that Israel may face, the status of relations between Israel and Arab countries, the refugee crisis what Europe deals with. With this session, Israeli President was the first head of state making a 'Twitter Moment'. The President's answers to the questions of audience shared in English and Hebrew.[18]

#AskNetanyahu

PM Netanyahu invited people to tweet their questions for a live Q&A session via his official Twitter page on 12th May of 2016 and the invitation was published on the PM's Hebrew, English, and Arabic Twitter pages. The purpose of publishing this invitation in three languages was to call three categories of followers - the domestic Israeli population, foreign populations, and the Arab world, to communicate. Manor's (2016 May) research shows that within two hours a number of Tweets with the hashtag #AskNetanyahu were more 3,000 and in general, the majority of 15 million users that the hashtag reached were from Arab countries which Israel does not have diplomatic relations. This is the very manifestation of the potential of digital diplomacy.

Some of these tweets have a negative connotation, mocking, critical tweets on his policy, but the Israeli PM responded to even critical questions asked in a sincere way, especially the questions addressed by Arab Twitter users on tense relations between Israel and Arab states.

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[18] http://gpoeng.gov.il/media-center/president-news/president-rivlin-answers-questions-on-israel-s-foreign-policy-future-and-food-in-first-twitter-qa-session-askrivlin/

But the PM did not deeply address sensitive issues which raised by Twitter users like settlement expansion, the military blockade of Gaza, the high death toll of Palestinian citizens during Israeli military campaigns.

Contrary to international media what presented the Q&A session as a failure[19], experts claim that instead of criticism, this kind of attempts deserves appreciation and approach from the positive perspective because these utilize the most important potential of social media platforms.

7.5. The Israeli MFA's Policy on DD

As in the USA DoS, there is a special division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel which deal with information and media issues and under this division Information & Internet Department works that collects information and disseminates it in real time to missions and reporters.[20] Recently under the Media and Public Affairs Division, new department, Digital Diplomacy Department created. The department of Ministry identifies the certain categories and under these, the content is defined. According to the approved content structure, it covers three areas: the official Israel includes official updates related to foreign policy, government statements; the content under the Israeli experience contains lifestyle, culture, travel, history, tourism, religion, sports and etc.; and the content under innovative Israel speaks about technology, science, economy, international cooperation.[21]

Some of MFAs provide digital workshops to evaluate skills of diplomats in digital diplomacy and to develop their digital knowledge. For example, MFA of Finland gives embassy staff abroad training via digital platforms, the Norwegian MFA offers one-on-one training to its ambassadors. The Israeli MFA is also among them, diplomats sent to foreign countries participate in training sessions

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[19] https://www.rt.com/viral/342713-ask-netanyahu-campaign-backfires/

　https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/benjamin-netanyahu-ridiculed-twitter-qa-160512095845756.html

[20] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA_Graphics/MFA%20Gallery/2012/12/MFAStructure.pdf

[21] https://prezi.com/b1mvtxi9ckbe/israel-mfas-digital-diplomacy-department/

organized by the Ministry that familiarize them with social media platforms, smartphone consular applications, website administration (Israel 1st DD Conference Summary, 2016, pp.9-10).

Similar to the guideline of the FCO of UK, the Israeli MFA has published a guideline to social media practices for its diplomats. It presents explanation to diplomats on various social media platforms, content (text, images) that properly harmonizes each digital media platform, regulations of engagement with people on platforms, communication in which language (local or Hebrew), the formulation of messages on social media by using hashtags.

These practices may help embassies to expertly employ SNS in peaceful time or emergency situation (Israel 1st DD Conference Summary, 2016).

To address target audience makes activities in digital diplomacy effective, digital tools enable to reach at the public in focus. The Israeli MFA taking seriously this issue into consideration manages websites and pages what intend for people working in various spheres.

For example, "CultureBuzz Israel" website and its accounts on social media aiming to promote Israeli culture and art. This profile's target audience includes museums, art critics, art bloggers, and even curators of important museums.

The MFA manages "GreenIsrael" profile sharing information about the development of green technologies and Israel's experience in this area. The profile's audience may include science editors, foreign companies, and environmental NGOs.

The Foreign Ministry of Israel is on the list of countries which have more than 100 diplomats and missions. And Israeli diplomatic representatives, ambassadors, spokespersons are active users of social network platforms (Twiplomacy 2017).

According to the statistics provided by the MFA official in charge of Media and Public Affairs Department, Noam Katz, the ministry manages over 350 online channels constantly updated on various platforms like Twitter, Facebook pages, profiles on Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr, and other digital media platforms, as well as, websites (Raphael Ahren 1Apr. 2016).

8. Russia

The soft-power potential of Russia was in its lowest level in the earlies of Putin's first term. The declining economy, conflicts within Russian borders – in the Northern Caucasus region, alcoholism, demographic decline were problems which the country faced. Russia was in turmoil in that period but, when oil and gas prices increased, the fortune coming from natural resources offered new opportunities, the government followed the certain policies in order to recover the state's reputation.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, impressive steps in the regard of soft-power politics taken by the Kremlin have been observed. According to Popescu and Wilson, Russian "soft power has been built on a bedrock of historical and cultural affinity – the presence of Russian minorities in neighbourhood countries, the Russian language, post-Soviet nostalgia and the strength of the Russian Orthodox Church," (Popescu and Wilson 2009, p.29). However, the authors note that after Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, Kremlin understood that kind of soft power is no longer effective and Moscow began to develop new tactics, like supporting the use of web technologies to export its own brands of political and economic influence (Marcel H. Van Herpen, 2016, p.68)

In order to promote its interests and policies, the Kremlin has utilized its extensive range of instruments:

Disseminating official Russian state propaganda directly abroad via foreign-language news channels, making use of TV and the Internet;

Disseminating official Russian state propaganda indirectly via Western media;

Gaining a hold over the news social networks and setting up Kremlin-friendly websites;

An active presence in blogs and discussion forums, as well as the publication of organized postings by "Kremlin trolls" on the websites of Western papers;

Financing Western politicians and or political parties in particular Far-right;

Reactivating spy rings, which had the task to penetrate influential political circles;

Activating the Russian Orthodox Church as a soft-power tool. (ibid, p.70)

Although Russia lagged behind most of Western countries in terms of Internet penetration until recent years, penetration rate was 43% in 2010. However, the country has been catching up fast over the past years, in late 2016, according to the statistics, Internet penetration rate has exceeded above 71%. [22]

On the governmental level, the use of the Internet resources was quite low, too. Russia was late consumer, in comparing with others, of digital tools. But today the statistics show that the state is among top countries of this area, according to the DD Review 2017, Russia is 4th on the list (Digital Diplomacy Review 2017) Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom, Alexander Yakovenko who is one of the well-known Russian diplomats argues that Russia is relatively successful in digital space and suggests an example of online presence of the Russian Embassy in UK (Yakovenko, 2012).

There are several reasons that why Russia began to activate digital tools lately comparing with others: the lack of capabilities, less investment, risk-avoiding, more conservative approach. Alex Ross, e-diplomacy guru and the first senior adviser for innovation to the former secretary of state Hillary Clinton suggests that Russian government has had paranoid view of the Internet and digital tools. According to him, Russia had an understanding that the Internet is a CIA product. But from the recent years, Russia has turned out very active user of online opportunities, as Alex Ross describes, Russia is now using powerful online propaganda machine (Ross 2016). Even this willingness of Kremlin and taking of risks stemming from digitalization surprised the western consumers.

8.1. Initiatives Related to Innovative Diplomacy

To the map released by Lowy's Index, Russia having 242 diplomatic posts abroad is the fourth among the countries (Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index 2017). Most of these diplomatic missions have made their availability on the social media platforms possible. Only 53 of them do not have a presence on social

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[22] http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/russia/

media platforms[23] and the list of these countries proves the argument on target audience in digital diplomacy and demonstrates somehow the state's interests. Those are mostly Central African countries which Russia does not have really strong political relations in traditional meaning.

Most of the embassies' accounts do not post in the language of their host nation and write in Russian, English or both, which narrows their outreach and prevents from communicating with a wider local public.

The Russian MFA is one of the dynamic and leading ministries on a social media platform, Twitter with its more than one million followers. The Ministry has made its presence on other social media networks. The Twitter account of the ministry has been launched in 2011.

Its Facebook page having over 370.000 followers is continuously updated. General content analysis reveals that its content covers mostly political issues in Russian, the few posts are in English.

Today the Russian MFA is assessed as one of the central ministries among the online diplomatic circle (Manor, 2016 Mar.).

VKontakte is a social media platform used by mostly Russians but also there are users from neighboring countries. Looking at from the perspective of the Foreign Ministry this social media space involving the internal audience. The Ministry uses it for mass notification. For example, when between Russia and Egypt the flights suspended after a bomb hit an airplane carrying Russian travelers, the Russian MFA asked VKontakte's help to inform Russian tourists in Egypt on evacuation. VKontakte directed the Ministry's information to above 20,000 users of this social media who received online from Egypt (RIAC, 2015)

In July 2016 during the attempted coup in Turkey, the Ministry, similarly, by using social media, sent a notification to 15 000 Russian-speaking people who register in VKontakte in that country provided contact details of the Russian diplomatic missions in Turkey and advised them to stay homes (Shakirov, 2016).

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[23] http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/social_accounts

VKontakte has been privileged several times by the MFA to be used for Q&A sessions. The question raises that if Russian diplomats want to engage with large audience, why they choose a social platform which is used by mostly Russians, why Russian MFA does not want to respond foreign publics via more international social platforms such as on Twitter, Facebook.

Along with the online presence on social media platforms, the Foreign Ministry practices other digital instruments within diplomatic activities. The mobile app, "Foreign Assistant" developed by "Satsoft" as part of the project related to the founding of the Situation and crisis center in the MFA. The purpose of launching the mobile app has been to send the Ministry's notifications and to make connection with Russian tourists in an urgent situation[24]. Via "Foreign Assistant" app, MFA sends a warning about the cases where an emergency situation abroad threatens the security and safety of Russian citizens. Users of the application are able to receive information about emergencies, flight suspensions. The app also lets users directly call the Foreign Ministry. For calling the Internet connection is not needed. The call center in the Ministry receives the call and provides proper guidance and instructions. The software operates in 144 countries.[25]

Among the social media accounts of Russian diplomatic representatives, the Twitter account of the Russian embassy in the UK whose tweets often get on the headlines of international media is more popular. In the study, this account has been selected to be analyzed because it very reflects the main rhetoric of Kremlin's foreign policy.

Looking at the embassy's account, we see the rich mix of content like memes, music, short videos, quotations from Russian government officials, statements of the foreign ministry. Along with original tweets, embassy account retweets from official accounts of other governmental structures.

It operates in two languages - Russian and English. Comparing their audiences, a number of followers of the account in English are nearly 15 times more than in

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[24]http://info-android.com/post-13694-cytsoft-by-order-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-russia-has-developed-a-mobile-application-to-help-russian-tourists/#.XBNsCvZuJdh

[25] http://tass.ru/obschestvo/3576236

the Russian language. The embassy account in English that closely followed by British and international media succeeds in reaching out to the international public and also receives attention from traditional media.

@RussianEmbassy has become the most-followed embassy account in London, with above 80,000 followers. The embassy does not identify the responsible persons for the tweets and social media activity of the embassy is characterized as collective work that the majority of diplomatic personnel have a contribution. According to Ilan Manor, digital diplomacy researcher who helped the embassy to organize a conference on innovative diplomacy, the press attaché is in charge of the Twitter account, with the ambassador's engagement.

The embassy's unique tweets draw the experts' attention, as well. Thomas Fletcher, former British diplomat and foreign policy adviser at PM Cameron's office commenting on the Russian embassy's account compares them with "the rookie drivers". According to Fletcher, managers of this account taking a risk want to be the spotlight, but it missed some of the diplomatic objectives.

Russian embassy often uses humor or sarcasm in its tweets, ridicules either the UK government or the EU institutions, Fletcher in his interview touching upon this point adds that this kind of posts take attention but indeed it does not change something truly, except making perception on Russia as an unfriendly country (Miller, 2017 Aug.).

According to Manor (2016 March), after the Brexit referendum, the Twitter account of embassy works in hyperactive online mode. Digital diplomacy researcher explains the reason for this hyperactivity, with the status of the country, so Manor claims that Britain is seen as digital frontline by Russia. After the referendum, there is uncertainty and transformation in British foreign policy and the Russians want to take advantage of that.

Russian diplomats are not able to convince the British to believe or follow Kremlin narratives, but these tweets, their narrative take attention of journalists, opinion-makers.

Another controversial issue related to the embassy's Twitter account is the so-called Russian Diplomatic Online Club that has promises such as invitations to a

special ambassadorial meeting to the followers joining this club. In return, it is requested the followers to provide access to an app that used for their accounts to retweet one post a week from Russian ambassador, Yakovenko's account, turning them a form of "bot" network. This online club has recently been suspended, after a complaint to Twitter.

Russia's embassy characterizes its activity on the social media platform as to counter to mainstream media when the stance of Russia is misinterpreted, twisted, or fake news is published about Russia.

To share information on existing circumstances in Russia, particularly about culture and partly economy that British media reports negatively is the principal task.

The Russian ambassador in the UK who understands the importance of using social media, criticizes diplomats because of their strict loyalty to old methods and to be self-restraint such as to be published on the official website or to hold a press conference and Russian ambassador calls those diplomats to learn new trends and practice them. He gives the UK as an example: "In a country like Britain, where two-thirds of adults are on Facebook and a quarter on Twitter, one cannot ignore these media and should learn the logic of communicating through them" (Yakovenko 2012).

Russian researchers of this area also emphasize the role of digitalization and they propose to hold compulsory digital diplomacy courses, workshops on effective use of social media by diplomats, and recommend cooperation between the MFA of Russia and national IT companies such as Yandex, Rambler, VKontakte.

All in all, we can claim that Russian scholars and most importantly, diplomats are informed of social media's role and try to employ it in diplomatic activities, but it seems, some of them miss the main detail, the content, the message sent through these social media platforms is also matter.

8.2. The Status of E-diplomacy at the Policy Level

A strategy concerning the innovative diplomacy so far has not been approved by Kremlin. For example, comparing the United States or Israel having the certain policy, guidelines with Russia, it appears that for Russia, digital diplomacy still remains undefined.

The strategy of the state is mostly on a statement or speech level. For this reason, for evaluating the Russian government's view, in the research, it has been gone through the President's speeches in the meetings with diplomats.

In June of 2012, at the meeting of Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Envoys, Russian President Putin touched upon the role of soft power in foreign policy explaining how it is implemented. Putin admitted that the portray of Russia is negative because of failure to adequately explain the state's position.

One of those who attended the meeting interviewed by Kommersant, stressed the influence of thoughts expressed by President: "Before Vladimir Putin's speech skeptics argued that digital diplomacy was momentary [under IT-savvy Dmitry Medvedev]. However, President Putin has made it clear: only traditional methods are not enough. In any case, it's necessary to master new methods" (Chernenko 2012).

In the meeting of 2014, Putin delivered a speech at the conference, but he did not address the issue at all. The traditional way of diplomacy was at the center of his speech.

Analyzing Putin's speech in 2016, at the same type of conference, Russian leader recognizes the deficiencies and challenges deriving from European superiority over the control of information in the digital age. Russian President in speech highlights the importance of impacting and shaping public opinion in the contemporary age and adds that Russian diplomacy must extend its activities in this direction.

"We are living in an information age, and the old saying that whoever controls information controls the world unquestionably sums up today's reality […]" (Putin, V., 30Jun. 2016)

Investigating the agenda of annual conferences related the achievements and medium tasks of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, the research has found that however officially the notion of e-diplomacy may not be accepted but it is in the consideration of Russian MFA.

Russian officials recognize the importance of employing the devices provided by the digital era in information campaigns conducted by Moscow. Even the meeting of 2014 has included the notion of "digital diplomacy" on the agenda:

"Russian diplomats were regular participants in thematic meetings, regularly appeared on television and in the press, were involved as authoritative experts at public events. The rich tools of "digital diplomacy" were actively used."[26]

Foreign policy concepts are a reliable source describing fundamental principles, preferences, objectives of Russian foreign policy.

Considering the fact that digital diplomacy appeared since the mid of the first decade of 2000, for this reason, the releases of foreign policy concepts of Russian government from 2008 to 2016 have been examined in this study.

In the concept approved in 2008, clause six – information support for foreign policy activities - underlines the role of communication with the world society by describing it as an essential part of international policy actions. According to the clause, comprehensive and precise information about Russia's position on global issues, external policy initiatives, and activities, social and economic progress, the achievements in the areas of culture and science are delivered to the world society in the communication process.

This concept highlights the role of Russian mass media in the international media environment but does not rule out the development of "effective means of information influence,"(The Foreign Policy Concept of RF 2008).

It intends that along with media, other new tools may be applied, but it will remain within the public diplomacy activities.

The notion of soft power with its explanation has been included in the concept of 2013.

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[26] http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1404057

The concept underlining the role of information and new technologies admits that the soft power going to be alternative to conventional diplomacy becomes the necessary part of contemporary international relations. For this reason, the concept adds that opportunities granted by modern information and communications technologies will be extensively employed in diplomatic activities by Russian diplomatic institutions (Concept of the Foreign Policy of RF 2013).

The Foreign Policy Concept adopted in 2016 is different from the previous two concepts due to the certain additions but, related to this study, I found out that in this concept the threats deriving from cyberspace are more elaborated that we cannot see in past concepts.

As for the use of the phenomenon of innovative diplomacy, there is no direct mention of the notion, the sentence relating to e-diplomacy has paraphrased from the initial one included in the concept of 2013.

The concept shows that the Russian government sees modern communication and information technology as an opportunity for information campaign (Foreign Policy Concept of RF 2016) - one-way communication what has been already tested and failed in George Bush's presidency in the USA.

Comparing other two case countries, in the MFA of Russia there is no specific structure would deal with digital diplomacy, there are no divisions at the diplomatic missions, as well. The Internet activity of the Ministry, except for its website, is spontaneous rather than following a particular strategy (Shakirov, 2013).

There is no official strategic document on the use of Internet technologies in foreign policy activities.

On the expert level, the researches, number of academic writings on the phenomenon are limited like the publications of Russian Council for International Affairs (INF) and the Center for Policy Studies (PIR Center).

In this regard, Russia is in a position of "catching-up party" in the field of digital diplomacy, according to the experts.

8.3. The Rhetoric in Russia's Innovative Diplomacy

Along with using of ICTs, digital instruments, in essence of e-diplomacy, the rhetoric –tone, arguments, the way of communication, identification of target audiences stand.

To study the Russian practice of digital diplomacy from these perspectives gives interesting but at the same time expected outcomes.

Looking at from the general perspective, Russia is a country that reminds how the opportunities of digital age may be misused for accomplishing the state's foreign policy objectives. Russian practice of digital instruments in politics has already indicated the risks of digitalization, in other words, "dark sides" of e-diplomacy (Bjola 2018).

The allegations on Kremlin's troll army attempting to manipulate presidential election in the USA in 2016, hacking of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's email by the Russia-connected hackers what almost disrupted her election campaign, attempts to manipulate elections in Europe by employing digital platforms are very recent cases of the Russian style use of digital instruments in the purpose of influencing international affairs.

The charges on troll army, hackers backed by Kremlin need more investigations, but this study intends examination official and visible digital diplomacy activities of the Russian state, and the general official discourse of Russian government in web-diplomacy is analyzed.

As already emphasized in previous paragraphs on Russia, in spite of non-existing government's policy, the state actively employs the digital tools in diplomatic activities. Through these means, the state's narratives are promoted and controlled (Krasnyak 2017).

It is fact that in Europe sentiment of society is decisive and Kremlin attempting to restrict free-thinking within the country benefits of this fact and for influencing public opinion, practices digital media platforms (Makarychev 2017).

Identification of target audience is explained through other two cases – the USA and Israel. The research shows that target audiences abroad are likely the

populations of host countries which home countries – that use digital diplomacy-do not have good relations. For example, Israel government more focuses on Gulf states, the USA governments have applied digital instruments for reaching out to Iranian people, to engage with Arab-Muslim nations to explain the American values.

Considering these facts, in the Russian case, the Western world is targeted audience in digital diplomacy activities of the Russian government.

Although with the advent of new ICTs, digital instruments communication way has been significantly influenced, they have made engagement between publics – non-state actors, citizens and state possible, but the communication way of Russian diplomacy has not changed.

According to Osipova (2012), Russia still uses "top-down, centralized and information heavy approach" what is incompatible with more open and direct communication style opted by Western society. Putin's administration seeks to sell its narrative rather than becoming enthusiastic about engagement, understanding the audience's concerns. It is indicated in official positions – in both Putin's speeches and Foreign Policy Concepts - to inform global society about Russia.

However, this is not only feature of the Russian practice of digital diplomacy. Along with dissemination of information about Russia in terms of its policy, values and culture, achievements, propaganda is another aspect of it what is more activated after Ukrainian crisis.

According to Manor, digital diplomacy has been used as an instrument for challenging truth in Russian interference in Ukraine in 2014.

"During the first two months of the Crimean crisis … Russian digital diplomacy stated that there were no Russian troops in Ukraine while the USA argued the opposite," Manor notes.

Later, the Russian government confirmed it had units in the region, but it characterized its operations as an attempt to defend Russian minorities in the country from Ukrainian neo-Nazis. America and its Western allies declared that

there was no such neo-Nazis movement and described these actions as an attack to another sovereign country. Thus, there were two contrasting facts that people using social media faced.

General content analysis of official pages of Russia diplomatic missions on social media platforms shows that their posts are about political issues, reposts from social media accounts of other governmental institutions, or reports on diplomatic activities.

Along with those posts, some of them use trolling the Western governments, share critical posts on "discriminatory" policy against Russia and even in some cases, a usual tool of Russian media diplomacy, conspiracy theories are included in these posts. Tweets posted by Twitter accounts of Russian embassies to the UK and USA are examples.

Experts highlighting the risks of such kind of approach in e-diplomacy says that this style decline credibility of official information and influences negatively relations in conventional diplomacy.

9. The United States

According to the Digital Diplomacy Review 2017, the USA State Department is e-diplomacy champion of 2017, containing a total of 36 digital assets in 16 different categories (Digital Diplomacy Review 2017). The state is also among the top countries investing in this field.

Zinovyeva (2013) claims that even the term of digital diplomacy originally has been employed in the context of the USA foreign policy. According to her, in the USA initial e-diplomacy programs were introduced in 2002-2003 when the Bush government started to make the traditional radio and TV channels broadcasting to the global public accessible on the Internet.

For providing an explanation of the reasons behind the USA's activity and achievements in digitalization of this sphere in the contemporary era, we can approach the issue from two perspectives: the continuity - to find a linkage

between history and the current state or as a requirement of the modern age, to become powerful and to compete.

According to Cull (2012), in the new information era, becoming of the USA determined practitioner of innovation should not be seen an unexpected matter because from the beginning Americans have recognized the power of technology to extend their national image, reputation, and influence abroad. He substantiates his argument by giving samples on the use of Morse code transmission by American president Woodrow Wilson when he sent out his Fourteen Points, or Voice of America radio broadcasting by the USA government as a part of public diplomacy policy in the Cold War era when the USA was in competition with USSR.

The USA governments regularly confirmed their capacities in technology to strengthen the state' s reputation.

Considering these precedents, to advance and use computer technologies in international affairs by the USA was not an unexpected thing (Cull, 2012).

By contrast Cull's view, Dizard (2001) claims that the DoS usually has not allowed special preferences in the process of information management. He agrees with Cull (2012) on the use of the Morse telegraph but about twenty-five years later its invention, during those years the State Department was using its own telegraph facilities. It more relied on paper documents and archived them in steel boxes. "Most diplomatic messages were still sent to and from overseas missions in pouches, usually by ship," Dizard (2001) argues.

Hanson (2012) continues that the DoS's rise as the leading user of e-diplomacy globally does not have to be recognized as a consequence of the USA's rich history of progress in the range of communication technologies, indeed the DoS was a latecomer of the technological evolution process in the past. Referring to Dizard (2001), he notes that this tendency maintained later. For example, in 1998, the DoS issued an "international affairs strategic plan" setting policy preferences. It included an array of matters such as national security, trade, environment, and etc. except for issues on the information century, the role of computerized technologies.

Taking Hanson's viewpoint related to the USA's experience in the area of ICTs into the consideration, it is fact that America has been a noticeable host of innovations in ICTs but the question is that to what extent these innovative changes in ICTs are also applied in politics.

The reason behind its leadership in digitalization of diplomacy is not because the USA holds high potential in the innovation of technology, but decision-makers are enthusiastic in the application of these innovations in policy, they are determined to get advantages from the innovative technologies.

It is fact that at the outset the State Department was skeptic about the use of computerized technologies in foreign policy affairs compared to other institutions what is expected approach, considering the responsibility of the DoS.

In the mid of 1970s, the computerization process began in the Department. There was a debate between partisans and doubters on the process. One of the advocates was president Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski who had stressed the importance of modernization in diplomacy: " Governments should conduct business the way international corporations do, with special representatives in modest offices utilizing telecommunications. The whole diplomatic system needs to be modernized" (Dizard 2001, p.119).

However, those debates, through the years, innovations in ICTs affected the DoS's diplomatic activities, in particular, interdepartmental operations in terms of data sharing, storing, but the development in communication function of diplomacy did not happen what it practices in the modern age.

9.1. Public Diplomacy in Bush's Presidency

The 9/11 terrorist attack demonstrated that how digital tools could be utilized for sinister ends by terrorist groups. Later investigations revealed that before the attacks, Yahoo e-mail and online chat rooms were employed for communication by Al-Qaeda members to discuss their plans, to conduct online research about the potential targets.

Since that the digital platforms have been actively used by terrorist groups to send messages, to mobilize and radicalize people. Now sound recordings, video speeches, images, and videos of beheadings by terrorist groups are easily disseminated by using Internet opportunities. Unregulated nature of the Internet has made their virtual actions easier and more accessible.

Thus, after the 9/11 the Bush administration had two battlegrounds to fight in the "War on Terror"; in concrete meaning, military units of the USA had to overcome the terrorist groups, namely the Taliban and Al-Qaeda what was more straightforward and the government had a clear plan and the second battlefield what was a result of the former, more clearly, when the American military and its allies started the war in Afghanistan and later in Iraq, virtual battle zones appeared where Al-Qaeda and its branches might bypass missiles, shells of American troops and boost their "grand narrative" to the masses (Hallams 2010, pp.542-543). Moreover, in Bush's presidency years, the negative opinion on the USA was powerful in the Muslim-Arab world. The war in Afghanistan, later in Iraq has been the principal causes behind of the hatred to the state.

There was always an assumption that the values which the USA supports explain America's motives and policies to the international society. But when the debates about reformations began, Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy Charlotte Beers declared that foreign public may not know those values:

"The burden is on us to act as if no one has ever understood the identity of the United States, to redefine it for audiences who are, at best, cynical. It is a war about the way of life and fundamental beliefs and values. We did not expect to ever have to explain and defend concepts like freedom and tolerance"(Hallams 2010, p.553).

Hayden (2011) adds that this view of the USA high –ranking official mirrors the state's external policy discourse regarding the global war on terror. The USA, as a party involved in the fight of ideological narratives, obliged to explain itself. And consequently, in the mid of the first decade of 2000, the public diplomacy of the state began to be developed in the purpose of improving the perception about

the USA employing "cowboy diplomacy". The Bush administration was aware of that classical model of state-to-state diplomacy is inadequate.

New threats and opportunities which diplomacy face, such as global terrorism, promotion of democracy, law enforcement induced invention of the transformational diplomacy concept what intended to develop the American diplomatic institutions' strategy. The concept was approved by then-Secretary State Condoleezza Rice.

The Bush government was acknowledging hostile reaction from the international public, at best, skeptical view on American foreign policy, but new rhetoric of public diplomacy based on persuasion, concentrating to convey positive messages to international society. But the modern age is featured information explosion information is accessible for everyone (Hughes, 2008). Being a dominant party to use one-way communication, to send out information without listening to the other sides' concerns may lead to the loss of credibility and trust. It reminds the logic on power enforces to be heard.

Failure of the Bush government's public diplomacy strategy proved that it should not rest on only messaging-based persuasion.

Since the end of Bush's administration, the strategic transformation in public diplomacy has been observed, message/information management, the reasoning of the state's policy replaced by two-way communication, networking. Along with shifts in foreign policy rhetoric, new information-communication technologies encouraged these reforms. For example, Digital Outreach Team is trained to interact directly with citizens of Middle East by posting messages on Internet forums, chat rooms in Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Pashto, Punjabi and English about the foreign policy of the USA (Craig 2011, Aistrope 2016, Hallams 2010). Online interaction with the skeptical foreign public on the USA government's intentions and policy was defined as the principal task of the team.

According to the clarification given by the State Department, the Digital Outreach Team providing accurate facts and evidence contradicts with the usually emotive, conspiracy-based thoughts on the USA. (Aistrope 2015).

Identifying themselves as representatives of the USA government, the DOT was chatting with people who might have sympathy toward Islamic radicalization or tend to anti-Americanism in online chat platforms.

9.2. Transformation in Diplomacy in Obama's Presidency

Before to begin analyzing the policy on digitalization in the state's foreign policy activities and the response to new diplomatic landscape under the Obama administration, it would be logical to introduce the changing diplomatic rhetoric of the U.S. government what was needed.

According to the Pew Research Center survey, during the Bush years, the reputation of America among its partners in Europe weakened, and in the Muslim world, Afghanistan war and later, America's intervention in Iraq strengthened negative view.[27] Thus, the Bush presidency left behind the damaged country reputation.

Following Obama's victory, the new government began to work on the country's reputation. According to Kelley (2012), the government had three choices: "change strategy, change policy or ride the coat-tails of the reputational savior". In the first term, Obama's administration these three options were realized to the certain extent.

Zaharna (2009) adds that a clear modification in the rhetoric of public diplomacy, in particular, relating to the approach the Muslim nations was witnessed even in Obama's first weeks in office. For example, he gave his first interview as a president to the Arab television – Al-Arabiya, appointed special envoys for Palestinian-Israeli conflict and for the Afghanistan and Pakistan region, the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton made her first international trip in Indonesia which has the largest Muslim population in the world.

These efforts confirm the determination of new administration to restore the relations between the Muslim world and the USA what had damaged in the previous years.

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[27] http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/12/18/global-public-opinion-in-the-bush-years-2001-2008/

Considering these facts, it seems clear that the countries populated Muslims has been the target audience for the USA government, to influence this segment of global society has become one of the USA foreign policy goals, especially in Obama's first term.

The most remarkable transformation in public diplomacy under the new government is more attention to listening and engagement to understand its target publics. In explaining this historic change Zaharna (2009) writes that the nature of American public diplomacy had historically based on the discourse of "telling our story," but Obama's discourse was more moderate, more tolerant and flexible and more compromising and most importantly, interested in listening to "others."

New information and communication tools, digitalization has helped to actualize this discourse. From this perspective, it is understandable the acceptance of the new policy agenda related to the role of ICTs in the state´s policy by the Obama administration.

Even before that Barack Obama himself had already practiced the power of the Internet and other digital means in the domestic sphere.

Taking the growing popularity of digital platforms into consideration, in Obama´s campaigns for the presidential election, to communicate with American society via digital platforms was given particular attention. It was not a coincidence that one of Obama's key strategists during the election campaign was Chris Hughes who was a Facebook co-founder.[28]

The Pew Research Center´s poll on the Internet and the 2008 Election revealed that the Democratic Party that has a more dynamic presence on the digital space in comparison with Republicans, got more sympathy, support from young voters who actively engaged in the political world online.[29]

Describing distinct feature of Obama´s election campaign, Miller (2008) writes that application of Web 2.0 means in this campaign brought changes into the pre-

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[28] https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2008/11/19/barack-obama-and-the-facebook-election

[29] http://www.pewinternet.org/2008/06/15/the-internet-and-the-2008-election/

election processes, such as coordination of supporters, communication with voters. Through online tools, Barack Obama's campaign mobilized the mass.

The professional assessment of the Internet´s significant role in the communication process and shaping narratives by Obama´s administration revived interest in digital diplomacy. It was obvious that in the modern digital age, the effective use of America's soft power requires the application of new ICTs and naturally, novel technology necessitates new and more efficient information and communication strategies.

The 2008 presidential election campaign had also an influential role in the shaping of Mrs. Clinton´s view on digital platforms. She recognized their potential to affect internal politics at home.[30] And later, when she was the head of foreign affairs, Clinton adopted the certain strategy on effective using of digital means in the conduct of diplomacy to accomplish foreign policy objectives. Thereby, under the Secretary of State, the State Department approved the policy of 21st Century Statecraft.

This statecraft has intended to complement conventional external policy tools with newly innovated and adapted instruments that fully leverage the networks, technologies, and demographics of interconnected world (DoS Archive 2009-2017).

By reshaping diplomatic agenda and employing innovation in ICTs to overcome old challenges in the modern age has been the principal object of this approved policy (DoS Archive 2009-2017).

According to the explanation of the new strategy of transformation given by Hayden (2011), it does not intend to rely on completely digital platforms for influence but instruments for the transformation in strategically mandated results.

One of the expectations from this strategic reformation that dialogue would be facilitated through new digital network platforms to make the changes it could otherwise not be succeeded simply by working to boost the state's own image.

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[30] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPuckfUw3cQ

Explaining how new ICTs may role in the transformation process, Hayden (2011) adds that people having the credibility to contribute this change should be empowered and connected through possible communication tools.

In 2009, the Secretary of State, Clinton announced the launch of new important initiative, Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, "the assessment of how the DoS and USAID can become more efficient, accountable, and effective in a world in which rising powers, growing instability and technological transformation create new threats, but also new opportunities." The review accepting unique features of 21st century, calls the USA political institutions to change the ways they follow and adapt to the new diplomatic landscape of new age. While explaining the adaptation process, the QDDR emphasizes the importance of engagement beyond the capital and leveraging the technological tools of 21st century statecraft. (QDDR 2010, p.7).

The review of 2010 highlighting the importance of engagement with citizens, groups and organizations adds that in order to build relationships, to implement effective engagement, diplomatic representatives should be supplied and empowered with "skills, resources, strategies and institutional structures."

The second edition of QDDR was published in 2015, under the Secretary of State, John Kerry. The edition promoting free access to Internet characterizes it as a primary requirement for open and democratic societies and promises to provide means, instructions, and assistance of the Department for more people in order to get access to data through the Internet. Developing further this edition discusses identification of threats to freedom of expression in online space and support for those who are attacked, threatened, or detained for addressing the issues related to democracy and human rights online what it is not stated in the 2010 edition of QDDR.

This document demonstrates the fact that free access to Internet as a natural human right of modern age what faces questions is recognized by the official foreign policy institute of the USA government.

9.3. Internet Freedom

Internet freedom was not recognized as foreign policy matter until approval of 21st-century statecraft. After the development of agenda of 21st-century statecraft policy, it has been identified as a principal component of this innovative policy and the USA emerged as the global leader in the promotion of freedom of expression in the Internet age.

The former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in her famous speech about Internet freedom compared it to one of the most important requirements of the free world:

"Now, ultimately, this issue isn't just about information freedom; it is about what kind of world we want and what kind of world we will inhabit. It's about whether we live on a planet with one Internet, one global community, and a common body of knowledge that benefits and unites us all, or a fragmented planet in which access to information and opportunity is dependent on where you live and the whims of censors."

The USA government's stance on the matter is not limited in speech or condemnation. The State Department funds campaigns and activities promoting Internet freedom.

According to Hanson's report (2012), between 2008 – 2012, $76 million have been invested in efforts by the DoS and USAID to advance human rights online.

The funded projects have covered:

- anti-censorship technology

- secure communications technology

- digital safety training

- crisis response support for netizens and civil society organizations under threat

- policy and advocacy

- research and evaluation of the technology and political context for Internet repression

- research on technology options for extending the free flow of information in extremely constrained environments

Explaining this decisive position of the USA government from the rational viewpoint, it is understandable. If the USA sends messages to foreign publics, it should make certain of receiving of its messages. If there is no Internet freedom in those countries, governments restrict access to the Internet or ban websites, consequently, it will be difficult to reach communities of those countries.

9.4. E-diplomacy Initiatives of the USA

Department State and its diplomatic representatives abroad have launched various initiatives to demonstrate being a leader country in employing new technologies and digital tools in the purpose of achieving foreign policy objectives.

According to the statistics of the State Department's activity related to digital diplomacy in the paper published by Australia's Lowy Institute for International Policy, above 150 government personnel at State's Headquarters working full-time on e-diplomacy issues, up 900 people in embassies abroad practice digital means as a part of their work, there are above 600 verified accounts on digital platforms which have global audience with more than 8 million (Hanson, 2012).

Considering this report published in 2012 and nearly six years passed, these figures have been rising. For now, it is challenging to give the accurate numbers because it requires an extensive research what is unlikely to accomplish in a short period. But the searches on the separate cases confirm this claim. For example, Twiplomacy 2017 has ranked the DoS having 284 verified accounts of the Department and its diplomatic representatives in foreign countries, at the second place on the list. The same study reports that the accounts of the most followed embassy (with 803.000) and diplomats' (with 1,654.000ollowers) on Twitter are

official accounts of the USA Embassy to the Philippines - @USEmbassyManila and the USA ambassador to the UN - @NikkiHaley.[31]

According to the information of the DoS official website, the Department and its diplomatic missions abroad including embassies, consulates are represented on various social media networks, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, Blogs and etc.[32]

By using social media platforms, the State Department has launched unique initiatives to interact with the local and international public.

One of them is twitter briefing by the DoS. The DoS usually holds press briefings where the journalists from the USA and international media functioning as a medium, join. But twitter briefing in itself is a very novel experience that spokespersons of the Department take questions under hashtag #AskState submitted via the Department's official Twitter feeds in 11 languages, such as @USAbilAraby, @USA_Zhongwen (Chinese), @USAdarFarsi (Farsi) and etc.[33] In these briefings media - mediator does not participate, the highest foreign policy institution of the USA directly communicates with its audience, answers to their questions. These briefings aired on the Department's YouTube channel.

But on the other hand, the question raises that, to what extent this kind of briefings is reliable, how it can be ensured that the DoS does not select the particular questions to answer and ignore others which it does not prefer.

In the digital age, the dissemination of information about major developments in a state's foreign policy affairs is realized more effectively in terms of the speed, size of the audience to reach.

One of the social media initiatives by the USA government which has certainly served to inform local and international society is to create a Twitter account during the negotiations with Iran about the nuclear deal.

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[31] http://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2017//
[32] https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ode/socialmedia/

[33] https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/01/180098.htm

The verified account, @TheIranDeal opened by the White House invited people to tweet questions they interested in about this issue. Analyzing the account, it appears that the content includes remarks, comments from the USA President, foreign service officials of the government, retweets from other accounts of the USA foreign affairs institutions, links of analytical articles about this matter. This official twitter account brings the essence of this issue and the importance of finding a common solution between Iran and the 5+1 group into the attention of followers.

@TheIranDeal during the negotiation period and later, the deal reached, continued to tweet. Its most active period covers between July of 2015 and 2016. Since the end of Obama administration, the Twitter account has stopped its activity and is maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Looking through the official account, a number of responses, retweets, likes give a conclusion that @TheIranDeal received attention from the mixed audience.

Speaking of Iran, it is worth to note that the nation of this country is among the foreign publics who are the target audience for the USA government. As known from diplomatic history, since 1979, after the Iran hostage crisis when American diplomatic personnel and citizens were taken hostage in Iran, there have been no diplomatic relations between these two countries.

Anti – American propaganda in Iran is pretty strong and because of censorship policy of the government, people may not get information from various sources, except the state information channels. Considering these circumstances, the USA actively employs digital means in the state's diplomacy to reach this audience, for example, to open the USA Virtual Embassy Iran, the Department's active Facebook account with 721.295 followers and Twitter account with 391.902 in the Persian language.

The object of these attempts is to communicate better with Iranians, to provide an alternative resource, to inform them about the USA policy, education, culture of this country.

However, the Iranian government has not welcomed these activities, for example, soon after the open of the virtual embassy, the government included the website on the list of banned URLs and in the country, people do not have secure access to these Internet channels.

The efforts of the State Department in digital diplomacy are not restricted to the active presence on digital media, the launch of mobile applications but encompass other activities. The technological progress itself is used as soft power tool rather than as a medium to send a message.

As part of 21st Century Statecraft program, in 2009, Apps4Africa project funded by the DoS, Bureau of African Affairs was started. The purpose of the project has been to promote the idea of "African solutions to African problems" by supporting African technologists. The project stimulates the advancement of socially concerned mobile applications for the continent (Milama and Avery 2012).

The project invites civil society and citizens to discuss and find technological solutions to problems of transparency and better governance, education and other issues.[34]

These activities intend creating and strengthening civil power in host countries that may welcome the American values.

The TechCamp project supported by the Bureau of International Information Programs at the U.S. Department of State is another this type of example. The organized workshops connect technology specialists with important communities — journalists, non-governmental organizations, civil society advocates — to search and practice innovative tech methods to global matters.[35]

10. Findings

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[34] http://www.afrik-news.com/article17895.html

[35] https://techcamp.america.gov/about/

The findings taken from this study can be classified into several categories. Firstly, the important one which also addresses into the research question – 1) digital diplomacy interpreted as an alternative to conventional diplomacy in the specific cases, more precisely, when the conduct of traditional diplomacy is unsuccessful, for example, Israel and Muslim-Arab countries, the USA and Muslim world, Russia and Western countries;

2) Another finding of this study is that the character of heads of states and governments has a significant role in the use of new information communication technologies in a state's policy, technophile leaders like Israeli PM and FM Benjamin Netanyahu or "digital president" of the USA Barack Obama has had specific role in promotion and development of digital diplomacy;

3) The study also has discussed the status of e-diplomacy at the policy level. Results from this research reveal that despite, these three countries actively practice digital diplomacy as a foreign policy tool, but its recognition by the governments of the states is different, for instance, the United States has approved 21st Century Statecraft Policy, but in Russia, it is on the speech level;

4) And concluding issue what is more symbolic is that some of the states' digital tracks overlap their steps in international affairs, for example, there is a similarity between the discourses of digital diplomacy and conventional diplomacy of Russia.

11. Conclusion

Technological development bringing risks and possibilities in the contemporary age has either transformed or influenced each segment of human activity. This study has attempted to explore technological progress's impact on humankind, taking e-diplomacy as an example. The thesis conceptualizing this new notion introduced its risks and benefits, classified its instruments. Referring to the literature on the subject, the study has tried to identify distinct features of digital diplomacy. Although, the thesis explained the phenomenon in a broad frame, in case studies communication aspect of digital diplomacy further analyzed. Taking

into consideration that communication is the most fundamental function of diplomacy, the thesis investigated the impact of digital tools on the communication process. The research has revealed that communication in diplomacy has developed in terms of time, accuracy, audience, and most importantly the rhetoric has transformed.

Along with all the above-mentioned issues, the principal purpose of the thesis to find a convincing answer the question related to the motivation of states to employ digital tools in diplomatic activities and to identify states' expectation from it. This study argues that the theory of soft power motivates the states to employ modern ICTs and digital instuments in the conduct of diplomatic activities. Technological progress itself is used as soft power, but also through the modern communication means what are ends of tecnological development, values, ideas, beliefs are promoted.

The research cases in the thesis, the United States, Israel, and Russia which are front-runners in the area of e-diplomacy according to the studies, make these countries relevant for this study. Along with the active application of digital instruments in diplomacy, they are practicing distinct communication way and discourse in the interaction process via digital media platforms.

The approved policies by governments of these states are different, according to the research's results. The USA, and Israeli governments have adopted an official policy related to the digitalization in foreign policy activities, high foreign policy institutions of these countries have special departments, divisions of digital diplomacy. To the research, the Russian government has not approved special policy on this issue.

The case studies show that the countries apply digital tools in diplomatic activities in the purpose of solving the difficulties arising a rational way of foreign policy, for example, the Israel government receives backlash and criticism because of its policy toward Palestine from international societies, Russian MFA and its diplomatic missions, particularly in the USA, UK and Canada have actively employed digital media platforms in order to deal with

"fake news", launched the certain campaigns in social media platforms in Ukraine crisis, or in George Bush's tenure the assertive foreign policy of the government negatively impacted on America's international reputation, the government took the certain steps in order to recovery and that policy included the active use of modern communication tools for interaction wit international publics. This policy continued in Obama's presidency years with remarkable changes in the diplomatic discourse and this transformation in the rhetoric and adopted startegy has given positive outcomes.

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