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Twiplomacy: An Analysis of Digital Diplomacy on Twitter

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ABSTRACT

Social media and its influence are becoming more and more significant in international diplomacy. The vast majority of diplomatic actors from state officials to non-state actors have Twitter accounts, indicating how the speed and availability of information through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are an essential component of diplomatic practices. Thus, it is of great importance to have an understanding of how such technological advancements are altering the process of the conduct of diplomacy. This study will zoom in several selected tweets posted by the government officials during particular events to find out the influence social media causes on the evolution of digital diplomacy, while discovering the ways Twitter as a social media networking plays a key role in shaping the conduct of diplomacy in a digital environment. This is particularly critical in the light of the rise of digital efforts, which actors of digital diplomacy now must cope with.

Key words: social media, Twitter, digital diplomacy, ICT

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
COVID	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DD	Digital Diplomacy
DOS	Department of State
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
TMC	Transnational Media Corporations
UN	United Nations
VCDR	Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations
WOH	World Health Organisation

SECTION I

1. Introduction

Diplomacy, in short and blunt terms, is called the ‘‘engine room’’ of international relations (Cohen, 1998, p. 1). However, the term diplomacy has long been criticised due its lack of theoretical framework while the absence of a concrete intercourse between the International Relations theory and diplomacy has gone further up to the point, where the latter was defined as ‘‘poor child of the theory of International Relations’’ (Sofer, 1988, p. 196). Diplomacy, essentially, functions as a vital established method in conducting international relations to obtain agreement among countries. Hedley Bull’s prominent definition of diplomacy as a result of the ‘‘conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means’’ (1977, p. 156) carries on such significance of the term while emphasising an international community of the states and that the major functions of diplomacy are of the essence to it. However, the way diplomacy is conducted could not resist the ongoing technological improvements by including social media networks such as Twitter. The implementation of social media and Internet in general into conducting diplomacy has been so widely practised that it is no longer an unofficial engagement; rather, it has maintained itself as an accustomed set of habits practised by the majority of government officials. This trend to move diplomacy into the digital world by incorporating it into social media, therefore, merits an in-depth analysis. As the Twitter accounts of the government officials are on the rise, Twitter, particularly, has stood out as a prominent social media platform to conduct digital diplomacy. For that, even the term ‘‘Twiplomacy’’ was first coined in 2011 in an attempt to highlight the diplomatic activities and interactions among the government officials in digital world (Chhabra, 2020), while many scholars have adapted the term into different regions (Šimunjak and Caliandro, 2019; Uysal and Schroeder, 2019). The authors have concluded that social media, Twitter particularly, may be quite feasible in conducting diplomacy. Twitter has been proven to be allowing significant communication channels to be performed among the government officials (Choo and Park, 2011; Jansen et al., 2009). This plausibility drives the field of digital diplomacy to find out whether tweets within their 280-character word limit can allow the conduct of diplomacy to be carried out effectively. Thus, it is of great importance to have an understanding of how such technological advancements are

altering the course of the conduct of diplomacy. In order to monitor this transformation, this research will analyse and compare tweets, intended to carry out digital diplomacy, of the government officials from various regions across the world within particular events and context.

This research will aim at contributing to the existing literature of digital diplomacy, which has been underlined by many researchers (Ilan and James, 2019; Nadine et al., 2015; Wekesa et al., 2021; Bjola and Holmes, 2015; Westcott, 2008). The increasing number of articles and studies in the field prove the fact that this area of research is in need of further exploration. Pointing out the utmost need to define what digital diplomacy means within the framework of social media, Bjola and Jiang highlight that ‘‘Little is understood about how social media can help diplomats articulate an effective message to a foreign public, how to get it across and how to keep the target audience engaged’’ (2015, p. 74), thus encouraging further studies to be conducted in the field. As such, it is quite evident that digital diplomacy is widely being practised although how it substantiates itself, how it influences the foreign policy and how it shapes the future of diplomatic practices are little known. So, a particular attention must be paid to find out in what ways modern advancing technology is affecting the conduct of diplomacy. The aim of this research, therefore, will analyse how such practice of diplomacy (tweets posted by the government officials) is assisting in evolving the nature of diplomacy and whether it preemptively creates obstacles in the essences of conducting diplomacy defined by Bull as ‘‘negotiation, communication, symbolism and information gathering and dissemination’’ (1977, p. 177). The objectives of this research within its aim will zoom in several selected tweets posted by the government officials during particular events to find out the influence social media causes on the evolution of digital diplomacy, while discovering the ways Twitter plays a key role in altering the essence of conducting diplomacy in a different environment. In the light of such transformation, the research questions can be formulated to *how the conduct of diplomacy on Twitter by the government officials can shape the course of diplomacy*.

Qualitative research will be applied in this research so as to achieve its contribution in the digital diplomacy field since qualitative research intends to ‘‘give privilege to the perspectives of research participants and to ‘illuminate the subjective meaning, actions and context of those being researched’’ (Fossey et al. 2002, p. 723). Therefore, in this context, it will allow us to ascertain the diplomatic actions of the government officials and their meaning on Twitter.

Since qualitative research aims to ‘*explore, explain, or describe* a phenomenon... Synonyms for these terms could include *understand, develop, and discover*’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2014, p. 168), this research will provide an insight into the ever-developing term of digital diplomacy and how the government officials’ diplomatic activity on Twitter is influencing the conduct of diplomacy in a trendy course of action. The individuals’ behaviours, interactions and social/cultural contexts are of great significance in qualitative research: the government officials’ engagements with ongoing social and political events in a social media platform, therefore, are establishing their own experiences of the conduct of diplomacy.

The research will depend on nonprobability sampling, “in which the researchers select their sample elements not based on a predetermined probability, but based on research purpose, availability of subjects, subjective judgement, or a variety of other non-statistical criteria” (Guo and Hussey, 2004, p. 2), in an attempt to gather the main source of information from tweets. For that, the research will include the four major events that took place in 2020: Australian bushfires from December 2019 to January 2020, ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matters protests following the killing of George Floyd in May 2020, Joe Biden becoming president-elect in January 2021. The events were chosen in order to delineate various occasions that have taken place due to their distinctive nature: natural phenomena, global pandemic crisis, decentralised political and social movement, political and presidential transition. The listed events do not only differ from each other in terms of their essential nature, but they also surpass the region they took place, placing themselves in the international agenda due to their complication and large-scale impact. Such reasons have necessitated the government officials to touch upon in their conduct of digital diplomacy on Twitter.

The tweets that will be analysed are going to be ones posted by the following government officials that address to each occasion outlined above: the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison; President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan; Former President of the United States, Donald Trump; British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, thus applying the research design as small-N comparison with components of Most Similar Systems Design. The selected officials have been chosen bearing in mind their preferred language in their tweets: English and Turkish; as well as being representatives of different regions that have gone beyond in international political matters, thus shaping the course of digital diplomacy. They are also ranked in the most followed world

leaders on Twitter; D. Trump accumulating over 88 million followers before his account was suspended, while R. T. Erdogan ranked as the 8th with more than 18 million followers (Twiplomacy, 2020). Yet another reason to include D. Trump's tweets in this research despite his absence on Twitter is that his tweets have been widely considered controversial and served as "diverting attention away from issues that are potentially threatening or harmful to the president" (Lewandowski et al. 2020, p.2). Being one of the most prolific Twitter users, D. Trump and R. T. Erdogan have touched upon many events while substantiating their own way of diplomacy in explaining their presidential actions and policy proposals. In general, the selected actors make a good fit to be selected in that although there exist different crises and cases the actors react to, they all utilise Twitter for diplomatic purposes through their accounts followed by millions, hence strengthening the notion of digital diplomacy.

In order to observe and monitor the interactions achieved on Twitter, the researcher will use his Twitter account, which will lead to a better understanding of the engagement of the government officials.

There exist many available tools in order to retrieve tweets easily: Twitter Archiver and Twitter API will be utilised to find the relevant tweets. Some other third-party software companies (Nodexl or most commonly used one, TweetAttacksPro5) offer the similar service along with additional features such as scraping any tweet link due to more setting detailed keywords, filter options, period dates or the use of hashtags. The data, tweets, will be extracted from the selected government officials' Twitter accounts using such methods. Followingly, the first stage of analysis will be devoted to analyse the tweets, which are separated within the four chosen occasions. Each event will be accompanied by the selected government official's at least one tweet featuring the relevancy of the event. The analysis will follow up with a respective order of each event and actor.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the leaders' diplomatic usage on Twitter for this study, qualitative content analysis is used to discover themes, characteristics, categories, and other conclusions (Holsti, 1969), just as the tweets provide significant data with regards to the "the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative, and cognitive)" (Wodak, 2011, p. 36). Such an approach as a result of content analysis should be able to reveal the meaning from the exchanged tweets through connecting with other relevant tweets in reference to the social and political

context, while offering a ‘‘knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study.’’ (Downe-Wamboldt, 2009, p. 315). The tweets will allow the researcher to ascertain the major essences of diplomacy (negotiation, communication, symbolism and information gathering and dissemination) carried out on Twitter and to ‘‘examine trends and patterns’’ (Stemler, 2011, p. 140). In conclusion, social media has generated a vast quantity of information and data, which might be daunting when conducting study. In accordance with the theoretical framework, it is crucial for this study to focus on specific data to conduct content analysis on the style, themes and attributes of the heads of the states and their tweets.

The secondary or additional sources of information will include news, books and journals in order to integrate all areas within one relevant theme using the Library and Discovery Service for the University of Tartu through EBSCO, Publication Finder, JSTOR, BASE and Google Scholars. The gathering of the sources will assist in evaluating the complexity and scales of the selected events in relation with digital diplomacy on Twitter. They will also explicate the existing information for digital diplomacy and its theoretical framework, attempting to provide understanding of the concept and come up with findings as to how and why diplomacy on Twitter is shifting to a general accustomed conduct of diplomacy.

Since the tweets are publicly available, there will not be a need for a consent from any party without raising any confidentiality doubts.

A translation of the tweets (in the case of Erdogan) will be provided while all selected tweets will be demonstrated in a thematic form so as to improve the reading experience.

Although Twitter decided to suspend D. Trump’s Twitter account permanently on January 8 2021 on the grounds of risking ‘‘further incitement of violence’’ (Twitter Inc., 2021) as a part of its community policies, more than 56.000 tweets of Trump have been archived in the Trump Twitter Archive that is available online with options to filter tweets by date.

2. Literature Review

Being the prominent method to conduct international relations, diplomacy has been exhausted to a great extent in the literature to understand how it functions, prevails and collapses. The term has been exemplified in numerous case and regional studies (Proedrou 2017, Carter and Perry 2006,

Simon 2012) to shed a light on the factors that might assist the scholars to scale the impact of diplomacy in conducting international relations. However, Hedley Bull's renowned definition of diplomacy as a result of the "conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means" (1977, p. 156) still serves as a fundamental guide through the nature of the term in that it highlights the utmost attempt to have the common interests of the states. Bull further argued diplomacy to have five major essences: "negotiation, communication, symbolism and information gathering and dissemination" (1977, p. 177). Of all the essential elements, information remains as the basis for diplomacy, without which it would not be feasible to carry on the knowledge and tool to inform. In addition to Bull's valuable contribution to conceptualize diplomacy, the term could not resist the ongoing technological advancements - mainly in the broad field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Essentially, incorporating social media into the way diplomacy is conducted has been greatly practiced by the international actors, thus substantiating digital diplomacy or e-diplomacy. Twitter, in particular, has stood out as a prominent social media networking to conduct diplomacy. As such, the odd term Twiplomacy was coined in 2011 to reveal the diplomatic activities and interactions among the government officials (Chhabra 2020). Diplomacy's growing dominance in the digital world, hence, merits an in-depth analysis.

A large proportion of scholarly attention has been placed on digital diplomacy. The trend to move diplomacy into the digital world by incorporating it into social media has not gone unnoticed by many studies. For instance, the book titled *New Technologies as a Factor of International Relations* by Szkarłat and Mojska (2016) offers a handful insight into the empirical and theoretical approach towards the way technological advancements influence the course of international relations. It is relatively comprehensive to capture the trend in that the authors derive from various fields such as sociology, law, biochemistry and political science and such by means of applying them in various geographical places like the United States of America, Israel and Brazil. Thus, the book concludes a set of complexities that contemporary technological advancements bring up in the framework of conducting international relations. Another fundamental contribution to the literature has been made in the book *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* edited by Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes (2015), who brought together a number of scholars in an attempt to conceptualise and theorise digital diplomacy. The authors evidently strive to challenge digital diplomacy against the conventional way of conducting diplomacy by means of providing a set of

limitations in both ways. Similar to the first book outlined above, the book consists of empirical and theoretical approaches to the term. Sandre (2013), on the other hand, provided one of a few initial contributions to thematically dissect Twitter in conducting digital diplomacy. The author, in his book, mainly engages with the foreign ministers and their personal experiences in diplomacy through interviews. It often highlights the statement that Twitter should be encouraged to use while conducting diplomacy among the government officials in order to “keep communications channels open at all times and to bridge the gap between diplomacy and citizens” (2013, p. 35). Thus, the exponential potential of social media to influence the course of diplomacy, in particular Twitter, is being revealed. Such tendency, also, will allow this study to strengthen the fundamental ground in a way that the plausibility and potentiality of Twitter drive the field of digital diplomacy to find out whether tweets within their 280-character word limit can allow the conduct of diplomacy to be carried out effectively.

Although digital diplomacy is expanding within the field, only several studies have managed to measure the scale of use of social media as a diplomatic tool. One study (Bátora, 2008) detailed the two major questions concerning the technological advancements in diplomacy at an institutional sphere: Can improvements in ICTs in diplomacy be considered revolutionary and thorough? What course of direction does this change lead to? However, this study lacks a fundamental theory that might have possibly revealed the motives of diplomats opting for digital diplomacy. Besides, the similar approach the author has implemented could have been adopted in other various countries as Bátora included only three countries from Europe and North America. One MA dissertation from University of Malta (Radunovic, 2010) categorises a number of ICTs in detail, followed by which areas of it are at stake or open to advance in diplomacy. As the field is in need of further empirical studies, the study could give us a more comprehensive outline if the concerned government officials were to be interviewed or surveyed in several case studies. Similarly, a study from China (Chen, 2012) is effectively substantial in demonstrating online reaction of the people of China towards diplomacy, although the result could be very intriguing to see if supported by interviews on the Chinese diplomats. On the other hand, bolstered by interviews on Finland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Huxley’s study (2014) focuses on the influence social media brings upon the Ministry and whether such transformation can be observed by a number of actors in the Ministry. Divergently, the study implements the theory of actor network to highlight

the mediatization – a theory emphasising the dominance of media in political discourse and society.

In spite of the increasing number of articles and studies in the field, this area of digital diplomacy is in need of further exploration. Many studies (Nadine et al., 2015; Wekesa et al., 2021; Westcott, 2008) and those aforementioned above have already proven the fact that digital diplomacy is widely being carried out. However, how it substantiates itself, how it influences the foreign policy and how it shapes the future of diplomatic practices are little known. In recent years, the relationship between social media and diplomacy has become a prominent research topic. Numerous studies have evaluated this connection in the context of public diplomacy, with a special emphasis on the use of social networks as tools for conducting diplomacy. It should be highlighted that this relationship is in a state of ongoing development, and that this is a field of growing academic activity where new insights and methods to its analysis emerge periodically. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the characteristics of the relationship between the social network Twitter and the manners in which it was used by world leaders as the most recent mechanism for conducting diplomacy in their interactions with their audiences and counterparts during specific events. This study emphasises the significance of social networks in the framework of diplomacy, which alters the connection between hierarchy and power by placing the governments on the same level as their citizens. In the line of this objective, Harder argues that of all the social networks, Twitter is the most significant one because it transforms the direction of a country's foreign policy, and that it builds a new method for managing foreign relations between nations based on how governmental institutions communicate their constituents (2012). The attempt to merge Twitter into conduct of diplomacy, hence, “fits in nicely with the new sense of political empowerment that has accompanied the rise of social media” (Seib, 2012). Twitter is developing an unprecedented idea of community among members of the global community, and this will continue to grow as Internet connectivity continues to grow. Twiplomacy that arises from such a combination is believed to be allowing the politicians to be in touch with their counterparts (Zonova, 2014). In contrast, the former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi argues that the phenomena of Twiplomacy is the product of political stability concerns among the leaders. According to him, Twitter has two major beneficial consequences on diplomacy and foreign policy: it enhances the interchange of useful ideas between politicians and civil society, and it improves diplomats' abilities to receive information, anticipate, analyse, and respond to events.

Similarly, Michael Oren, the former ambassador to the US, reveals why he joined Twitter, by saying that “We face great challenges in getting our message across. Today there are few alternatives as far-reaching and effective, with very wide audiences and young audiences, as Twitter. Twitter is another tool that enables me to communicate with other diplomats and journalists, while also allowing me to add a personal touch” (Tracy, 2012). Hence, the statement confirms that Twiplomacy allows diplomats the option to comment on issues without the scrutiny of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is a significant communication benefit. Twiplomacy helps break down barriers between politicians and individuals affiliated with politics. However, its greatest quality is its ability to create discourse and communication with the foreign public, while altering the genes of diplomatic activity, just as Twitter alters the traditional and official means of diplomatic communication. This study, therefore, will aim at filling in this gap by bringing a closer overview on how such practice of diplomacy (tweets posted by the government officials in this case) is carried out among the selected actors, while assisting in evolving the nature of diplomacy and whether it preemptively creates obstacles in the essences of conducting diplomacy defined by Bull as “negotiation, communication, symbolism and information gathering and dissemination” (1977, p. 177). The objectives of this research within its aim will zoom in several selected tweets posted by the government officials during particular events to find out the influence social media causes on the evolution of digital diplomacy, while discovering the ways Twitter plays a key role in altering the essence of conducting diplomacy in a digital environment.

SECTION TWO

UNDERSTANDING DIPLOMACY AND ITS ESSENCES

1. Defining Diplomacy

In addition to Hedley Bull's well-acknowledged definition of diplomacy as "conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means" (1977, p. 156), Adam Watson, who worked along with Bull as one of the founding members of the English school of international relations theory, identified diplomacy as a means of "negotiation between political entities which acknowledge each other's independence" (Watson, 1991, p. 33). However, this brings up one controversial argument, noted by Bull, that "in the global international system... states are more numerous, more deeply divided and less unambiguously participants in a common culture" (Bull, 1977, p. 176). His approach towards diplomacy signals the variety of interests of the states and a potential negotiation process that needs to be preemptively outlined in conducting diplomacy. Alternatively, Satow characterised diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent States." (Honig, 1957, p. 199). Despite its fundamentally flexible tendency in interpretation as evident from the definitions by many researchers, diplomacy serves as a means of political engagement and a crucial component of international relations. The main principle of diplomacy is to procure the state interests by means of eliminating the factors of propaganda and violence. It is not only the activity intended for diplomatically assigned persons, but also state officials. As this thesis will highlight, diplomacy is being established and implemented in various forms of communication channels, largely incorporated into social media nowadays, opting out of the conventional ways of carrying out diplomacy. Equipped with its major essences, diplomacy remains to be the most crucial set of mechanisms utilised by the states.

1.1 Conventional/Old Diplomacy

Despite the fact that initial evidence of diplomacy could be traced back to the 25th century BC when the first document of a diplomatic letter was passed from the Elba Kingdom to the Amazi Kingdom (Berridge, 2010, p. 2), back then the communication methods were severely limited.. Thanks to the initiative taken by the Congress of Vienna of 1814 and 1815 that enabled the diplomatic profession to be officialized, conventional diplomacy had begun to assume its formal

shape. The Congress had allowed the presentation of diplomatic agents, titling them officials in such professions in the civic duties under the international law (Roberts, 2009, p. 10).

Conventional or old diplomacy is generally attributed to the way diplomacy had been carried out till the First World War. It was the period, in which the diplomatically assigned agents and officials intended to fulfil their own interest instead of the public one. The alliance established by England, France and Russia to eliminate the German military advancement, hence, indicates the manifestation of old diplomacy. Due to such unity against one country, diplomacy was conceptualised in a way the word alliance was comprehended. Additionally, conventional diplomacy was characterised by an utmost effort of keeping the secrecy. It was also based on bias and the actors' private interests over the state (Drinkwater, 2005, p.62). This way, the negotiation was kept at a bilateral level as a result of limitations imposed by the diplomats on dialogues. The dialogues and process of negotiation, namely, were heavily concentrated on the agenda of expanding territory. The United Nation (UN), ultimately, has led conventional diplomacy to merge into a more collective and constructive series of talks by means of the UN's enforcement on the centralization of states and obligation to conduct the talks with international organisations and the UN. As such, the process of negotiations has turned into a bilateral level as a result of the addition of international organisations, which have led the talks in a transparent way. In the light of such improvements, Ammon concludes that international organisations and democracy were the main actors that had led to the evolution of diplomacy for the sake of international security (2001, p.45). Thus, it is safe to say that conventional diplomacy was rather private and autonomous in its unique nature.

1.2 New Diplomacy

Internationalist values like open, multilateral coordination and government transparency were credited for defining the arrival of new diplomacy by scholars (Mayer, 1995). In 1982, Watson regarded the League of Nations as being a "significant new advancement" in diplomacy insofar as a permanent common defence structure was deemed necessary (2013, p. 118). However, the pursuit of new areas in diplomacy did not end there. Additionally, it was proposed by a number of social scientists that new diplomacy should be examined in a fast-shifting connection between governments and foreign publics, while recommending that foreign public opinion be incorporated into foreign policies (Murrow et al., 1968). With the introduction of the League of Nations in 1920 by the Paris Peace Conference, new diplomacy emerged as a public matter, while old diplomacy

appeared to be rather exclusive and secretive. The arrival of the non-state actors has also resulted in the emergence of new agents in diplomacy. The importance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was proven to be contributing to the aspect of new diplomacy that has prioritised public opinion (Murray et al., 2011). Alternatively, civil society organisations (CSO), while developing the capacity to address global concerns, began to assume a function in new diplomacy. More importantly, they draw attention to critical concerns that transcend the realm of the nation's interests. Jennifer Dodge (2014), for instance, notes that CSOs have become effective in environmental policy. These organisations have an impact on environmental policies by setting an agenda for resolving environmental problems. Additionally, they educate the public about environmental challenges, hence increasing public demand for environmental change.

On the other hand, international engagement in diplomacy has shifted in a different format thanks to the arrival of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Diplomatic actors in prior generations encountered technological breakthroughs by means of telephone and telegraph. Then came the new technology such as satellites and computers that enabled the information to pass on in a drastic phase. Addressed by Secretary of State in 1987, Shultz foresaw the upcoming influence of ICT in diplomacy by highlighting that ‘‘It is just as important for us to understand and to shape public attitudes abroad and at home as it is to receive and interpret the latest computer-generated statistics or esoteric intelligence reports’’ (Department of State, 1987, p. 117). As technology has progressed from telegraphs to today's Internet, information has become faster and more diverse as well as more widely available to the public. The way such tools were used intertwined with where the innovations took place. Communication, for instance, has a key role in political figures' ability to persuade voters. Non-state political actors are demonstrating their power to influence, and in doing so, they are stepping into areas that were previously designated for diplomats only. CSOs and NGOs, as previously argued, already appear to be assuming this role in many areas of diplomacy.

2. The Essences of Diplomacy

Foreign diplomats must adhere to a set of rules established by the 1961 of Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) that was produced to provide a structure for the sovereign states and their engagement with other states (Kai, 2014). It forms the traditional norm of diplomatic immunity, which grants diplomatic missions protections that allow ambassadors to carry out their

duties without fear of pressure or influence or harassment by the host country. As one of the most effective legal documents produced by the United Nations, the Vienna Convention is a cornerstone of contemporary international relations and law. It, in particular, assures ‘protection for the diplomat and his or her family from any form of arrest or detention; rules for the appointment of foreign representatives; protection of all forms of diplomatic communication; immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction, with limited exceptions; and that diplomats must respect the laws of the host state.’ (Global Affairs Canada, 2013).

Article 3 of VCDR outlines the essences of diplomacy in a meaningful way as ‘representing the sending State in the receiving State, protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law, negotiating with the Government of the receiving State; ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the receiving State and promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State’ (UN Treaty Collection, p. 2 and 3).

As evident from the Convention, the rules are meant to promote good relations among states, regardless of their differences in constitutional and social systems.

2.1 Representing the State

In the international environment of nation-states, diplomatic representation plays a critical role as outlined in VCDR in detail. Barston defines the representation in simple terms as ‘the management of relations between states and between states and other actors’ (2019, p.1). States use diplomatic representation to advance their political and economic interests, negotiate, resolve problems, gather information that would otherwise be unavailable to the public, protect their own citizens and communicate information to their foreign representatives. The Ambassador's official representation role entails serving as the personal representative of his/her Head of State of the host country. Likewise, diplomats serving in the host nation under the direction of the Head of Mission are regarded to be their government's representatives.

The advancements in the field of ICT might facilitate the communication and information gathering to a great extent, which questions the existence of foreign embassies in a country. Nonetheless, it is evident that states still value its significance. Indeed, it was found out that states do not terminate relations of diplomacy with another country or shut down their embassies or reduce them to consulates even following a change of regime in their government (Hamilton and Langhorne, 2010, p. 233).

2.2 Process of Negotiating

Kissinger's definition of negotiation as the "process of combining conflicting positions into a common position, under a decision rule of unanimity, a phenomenon in which the outcome is determined by the process" (1969, p. 212) remains up until now to capture the significance of the term as a major diplomatic essence. Negotiations between two representatives are critical to diplomacy, as they enable the representatives to discover a shared interest. Developing a shared interest enables representatives to design a solution that benefits both parties. In line with this argument, Berridge points out that process of negotiation can allow both sides to "produce the advantages obtainable from the cooperative pursuit of common interests; and it is only this activity that can prevent violence from being employed to settle remaining arguments over conflicting ones" (2001, p. 1). We can see from this definition that the author recognizes two factors necessary for negotiation to occur: common interest and disagreement over this interest. Without one of the two, we have nothing to negotiate for.

In his book, Fred Charles Ikle (1987) provides what steps in the negotiating process lead to a certain agreement. For each party, there are only three basic options:

- a) accepting an agreement at terms we can reasonably expect our opponent to settle on;
- b) ceasing negotiations without agreement and having no intention of continuing them;
- c) trying to improve the «available» conditions through further negotiation.

Additionally; warning, threatening and bluffing can be used to persuade or dissuade the other side. The bargaining skills of the actors, their personalities and the clarity of the other party's objectives influence how negotiation will emerge itself during the process. In fact, these factors determine how an actor can manipulate the other's decisions, while also shaping the actor's own course of action. Negotiation, being one of the most significant essences of diplomacy, thus can be considered a process equipped with its own methodology to resolving a conflict or finding a common interest.

2.3 Protecting the Interests and Citizens

As highlighted in VCDR, one of the key responsibilities of a diplomat is to protect the interests of his/her home country's nationals, who may be residents in the host country. Providing protection for its nationals while they are in a different country is a universally recognized principle of international law. The Consulate employees are, in this sense, the first person of contact in such scenarios when an emergency situation takes place in the host country. On February 28, 2022, the

United States Embassy in Ukraine, for instance, warned its citizens not to travel to Ukraine due to armed conflict with Russia, while arranging evacuations for its citizens that were already located in Ukraine (US Embassy, 2022).

2.4 Information Gathering

Collecting information and consecutively reporting it back to the home has historically been known as one of the embassy's most critical functions. Berridge notes that their agenda often has included the economical status, influence of the opposition party, foreign policy, military morale, the leader's health, the power balance within the government or the expected outcome of upcoming election (2010, p. 41). Although the exchange of vast amounts of information helped title the diplomats as ‘honourable spies’ (Blum, 1972, p. 274), the Vienna Convention emphasises the information gathering ‘by all lawful means’ (UN Treaty Collection, 1964, p. 3).

2.5 Promoting Friendly Relations

Diplomats' responsibilities include promoting positive relations with the host country in all fields. This will necessitate active engagement with not only the state officials but also all segments of the local public. Diplomats are required to entertain guests on a frequent basis, necessitating a thorough understanding of both universal and local protocol standards, as well as an ability to communicate effectively across cultures. In particular, promotion of friendly relations will entail diplomatic actions aimed at strengthening economic, scientific and cultural ties between nations.

SECTION THREE

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

1. Understanding Information and Communication Technologies

The term "Information and Communication Technology" (ICT) encompasses a wide range of technologies and features related to the management and processing of enormous amounts of data over long distances. ICT is the practice of utilising electronic devices and software to store, process, send, and retrieve data. As a result, the term ICT now encompasses a wide range of communication mediums and procedures such as e-mail, text messages, and mobile phones. When it comes to today's telecommunications, it isn't just phone calls and printed messages that may be transmitted, but also video conferencing -such as Zoom which has had over 300 million video meetings by April 2020 during the spike of COVID-19 (Karl et al, 2021, p. 1)- where participants can hear and see each other simultaneously in an interactive session. Videotext is a newer form of text-to-speech communication. Within this framework, Ayo (2001) regarded ICT as the utilisation of a computer system and telecommunications equipment to handle information, mainly entailing processing, transmission and dissemination of information through ICT. It was also noted that with the help of ICT, organisations can increase their ability to respond quickly and effectively to their customers (López et al, 2009).

Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook allow for more casual but dynamic relationships. Messages of less than 280 characters, known as "tweets," are the primary mode of communication for users. As a means of conveying a sense of one's state of mind or thoughts, tweets can also include links to internet resources, or news articles or rumours. By the end of 2020, it was reported that 330 million people had been actively using Twitter (Statista, 2022). To this day, the concept of tweets will continue to play a vital role in today's fast-paced culture while ICT advancements have had a significant impact on diplomacy, as well as the world system at large.

2. Information and Communication Technologies and Diplomacy

Accessibility and taking charge of information contribute to the dominance of soft power in contemporary politics and strengthen non-state players in international relations. Apart from being confronted with expanded roles, decreasing resources, modern diplomacy is also confronted with a multistakeholder and multidisciplinary international arena. A well-planned and well-organised use of ICT may empower diplomatic services, particularly in developing countries, and assist them in coping with rising issues and performing at their best.

Being at the centre of such a dynamic, ICT brings in a new global climate, in which international relations and diplomacy have been simmering for more than four decades. The new environment that has evolved plainly is the result of three interconnected and ongoing revolutions.

As the Cold War vanished, the world of politics had restored some rationality to a balanced political arena that previously threatened to wipe humanity off the earth. The rival between the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States of America gradually decreased. A new political climate has emerged as a result of shifts in political values. This revolution did not eliminate the nation-state or the major role of state actors, but it did significantly cause an increase in the number of significant institutions and participants on the international stage. State actors rose in the 1960s, as colonial governments in Africa and Asia gained independence and were admitted to the international system as independent states. However, it was not only government agents that have emerged out of this political order; but also the growing number of NGOs, Transnational Media Corporations (TMC) has contributed to international relations (Willis, 2005), ultimately forming the actors of new diplomacy. Non-state entities have grown their diplomatic representation.

The emergence of an economic breakthrough, secondly, fueled by privatisation, and globalisation has caused a necessity for information and transparency in political procedures. This breakthrough has also increased the number of diplomatic actors on the global stage, while shaping the world economy, thus impacting the course of diplomacy in the first degree. Diplomats, in such cases, are required to interact with from non-state organisations to business individuals.

	Functions	Roles
State Actors	Economic diplomacy Commercial diplomacy	Economic diplomats Commercial diplomats
Non-State Actors	Corporate diplomacy Business diplomacy National NGOs Transnational NGOs	Corporate diplomats Business diplomats National NGO diplomats Transnational NGO diplomats

Table taken from Yui, L., & Saner, R. (2003, p. 12). International economic diplomacy: Mutations in post-modern times. Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

As evident from Table (Yui and Saner, 2003, p. 12), the new functions of diplomacy are categorised in its business framework as Economic, Commercial, Corporate and Business. This

demonstrates how globalisation has had a significant impact on diplomacy by transforming its duties into business-like functions.

The information revolutions, thirdly, are the driving force behind all the other components. Advanced information technologies have created new communication capabilities that have reshaped global actors' existing hierarchies and power connections. Apart from these beneficial impacts, the information revolution and the new international stage as a result of the emergence of all the non-state diplomatic agents have elevated information to a critical source of national influence.

The three points, as highlighted, have a major influence on diplomacy, influencing the implementation of the diplomatic efforts that are required to reshape the international arena. Additionally, they promise a better security environment when compared with the more perilous era of the Cold War. While it might be argued that these three points bring about mostly promising outcomes, the new area of international relations is far more dynamic, complicated, and difficult to comprehend.

3. Digital Diplomacy

There have been many terms coined in recent years to relate to the impact of ICT on diplomacy. Certain terms place a greater emphasis on the idea of diplomacy in the digital age such as "networked diplomacy". Other terms refer to the aspects of digital technologies such as "public diplomacy 2.0", which is derived from the concept of web 2.0. The term "net diplomacy" refers to the internet more broadly. Certain terms specifically refer to the characteristics of the digital society such as "selfie diplomacy" or "real time diplomacy". Terms like "cyber diplomacy" refer to emerging diplomatic functions within certain departments of the government. Secretary of State, John Kerry, on the other hand, argued that diplomacy and digital diplomacy have no difference at all by claiming "The term digital diplomacy is almost redundant. It is just diplomacy, period." (Bjola and Holmes, 2015, p. 14). Digital diplomacy is commonly defined as "the use of the Web, ICTs, and social media tools to engage in diplomatic activities and carry out foreign policy objectives" (Sandre, 2013, p. 9). Digital diplomacy is carried out using digital platforms and tools like mobile phones, websites, blogs, social media. Facebook and Twitter have become particularly popular platforms for communication between politicians and officials and the general public, as well as the public. As a result, the terms "Facebook diplomacy" and "Twiplomacy" (Chhabra 2020) have been coined.

Scholars state that digital diplomacy originated in the United States. More precisely, they recognize the ways in which then-Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton was able to modify the State Department's foreign policy goals in order to take advantage of the new technology. Clinton incorporated social media into a number of the Department of State's (DOS) projects, attempting to leverage this popular new trend as an instrument for international diplomacy. Her aim, essentially, was to ‘‘reach beyond traditional government-to-government relations and engage directly with people around the world’’ (Bjola and Holmes, 2015). Sandre applauds her efforts highlighting that DOS runs many registered offices dedicated for functioning digital diplomacy as more than a thousand of staff workers are employed in the area (2013). Ever since the United States pioneered digital diplomacy, other countries have followed likewise. Embassies have frequently opened online websites, while various state departments maintain Facebook and Twitter accounts. States have since established an official Office of Digital Diplomacy within their designated government bodies. Countries like Poland and Sweden have been credited for their efforts to incorporate digital tools into their diplomatic actions.

The scholars often find themselves discussing if digital diplomacy is meant to employ the technological advancements to actually carry out public diplomacy or if it essentially changes how public diplomacy is carried out (Manor, 2016). Gilboa (2016) argues that digital diplomacy is frequently made equal with public diplomacy since public diplomacy intends to engage with a wide audience. The latter originated in the beginning of the twentieth century, when the radio was invented and became popular as a form of communication (Melissen, 2013). While public diplomacy can be an effective diplomatic instrument, it can be challenging to implement in the field. Despite their efforts to engage their foreign publics, diplomats frequently find themselves cut off from them, unable to engage. This is largely because embassies, particularly those of the United States, are constructed like complexes, enclosed by enormous barriers. Digital diplomacy along with its technological benefits surpasses such obstacles, enabling the diplomats to communicate with the public in the first place, while drawing the sharp distinction between digital diplomacy and public diplomacy.

Essentially, since public diplomacy is a major component of diplomacy along with foreign policy, associating digital diplomacy exclusively with public diplomacy might lead to confusion in understanding both of the terms, meaning that digital diplomacy assists other critical aspects of diplomacy. Associating digital diplomacy with diplomacy is also inaccurate, as diplomacy occurs

in various fields where ICTs do not exist, such as debates and formal meetings with state officials and non-state actors.

4. Social Media

Social media, broadly, is described as a website service provider that allows users to create a personal profile inside a limited system and select a desired list of persons with whom they want to exchange information (Ying and Liu, 2010). Despite their distinctive meanings, the term "social media" is often equated with the term "social networking" (Burke, 2013). The definitions of these terms highlight the visible contrasts between both terms: while social media is a means of communication in which users can build their own digital space for sharing any sort of information, personal opinions, and messages, social networking can be defined as the practice of establishing and maintaining personal or corporate ties through digital means or in-person engagements (Schauer, 2015).

States have gradually adopted social media as a means of engaging with international publics in a more dynamic manner. Nonetheless, despite being 'often explicitly evident in many arguments' in the IR literature, state-to-state diplomatic contact via social media remains unexplored (Fritsch, 2011, p. 39). In line with this, scholars are paying increasing attention to social media's significance in global politics (Gould-Davies, 2017). Most of these studies concentrate on the impact of social media on public diplomacy procedures, in which policymakers strive to engage with foreign publics, while highlighting the combination of modern technologies that includes consumer-generated and content-based platforms and microblogging sites such as Twitter and Facebook (Costa, 2017). Social media is a significant technological tool fueled by its content-based tendency and how its users utilise it. Hence, they are involved not just in the individual's developing political representation, but also in the connection between policymakers and their international or local publics. These studies demonstrate that digital engagement by means of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook extends the reach of communication campaigns, yet the usefulness of this interaction remains debatable. Diplomacy has a variety of aspects and contains key symbolic features that some individuals present as part of their reputation outlook, which essentially leads to shifting power dynamics. These symbolic features, which allow individuals or even states to be acknowledged by other diplomatic actors, have grown in importance as a component of diplomatic engagement. Consider the contentious Twitter discussion in November 2015 between Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Turkish Prime Minister Davutolu during

the EU-Turkey refugee summit. Tsipras took the step of carrying the matter on Twitter to criticise Turkey for continuing to violate Greek airspace and its refusal to assist the hundreds of refugees crossing the Aegean Sea each day. Tsipras posted on his Twitter account that: ‘To Prime Minister Davutoğlu: Fortunately our pilots are not as mercurial as yours against the Russians #EUTurkey’ (Noack, 2015). In response, Davutoglu posted on Twitter that ‘Comments on pilots by @atsipras seem hardly in tune with the spirit of the day. Alexis: let us focus on our positive agenda.’ (Chadwick, 2015). Tsipras responded with a final tweet, despite his tweets being deleted from his English-language account (but remaining on his Greek-language account), that ‘We are in the same neighborhood and we have to talk honestly so we can reach solutions #EUTurkey’ (Noack, 2015). While it is difficult to measure the potential of Davutoglu and Tsipras meeting in person at the summit before or after this Twitter interaction, it is clear to see how policymakers or state officials are increasingly using Twitter in addition to formal meetings to communicate directly and openly with their colleagues. Diplomacy conducted through this exchange of tweets between the two state officials, thus, turns out to be a publicly available content in contrast to the conventional aspect of diplomacy of ‘behind closed doors’ (Cull, 2013, p. 136). Hence, social media provides an understanding into the image of presentation that demonstrates a specific type of state identity, which is again critical for recognition processes of these actors. The manner and means in which state officials represent, in this example through a tweet exchange, are critical for determining their objectives when in-person engagement is not possible or needed. This is where the representation, acknowledgement and reputation emerge through digital communication platforms.

5. Twitter Merged into Digital Diplomacy

Twitter is one of the social media networking platforms, in which ‘users follow others or are followed... the relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation... a user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back’ (Kwak et al, 2010, p. 591). Users, who are identified through ‘@’ post what it is called ‘tweets’ and respond or refer to another tweet using the function of ‘RT’ or ‘retweet’. Hashtags, on the other hand, are signified by the use of ‘#’, allowing users to categorise topics or expand their posts visibility. The character limit for each tweet is defined as 280, emphasising the readability and simplicity of the nature of posts. The retweet function allows users to share information beyond the followers of the original tweet.

Digital diplomacy, as discussed before, entails the use of social media, blogs, and other web-based channels for expression and communication to influence and engage with audiences. Diplomatic efforts on Twitter can also facilitate conventional bilateral talks, since research has shown that diplomats are more inclined to respond to a counterpart on social media when other modes of communication are not possible (Sande, 2013). The tweet exchange between Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Turkish Prime Minister Davutolu, exemplified above, proves this point as the dialogue in person could have taken place differently. Federica Morgherini, the former Vice-President of the European Commission, noted that “Twitter has proven to be a revolutionary social network even in politics. It is an extraordinary channel of diplomacy and of communication.” (Wright and Guerrina, 2020, 8), championing the potential of Twitter as social media in conducting diplomacy. Similarly, Thomas Fletcher, British Ambassador to Lebanon from 2011 to 2015, urged the attention of other diplomats on Twitter by boldly claiming that “Diplomacy at its best has always been about both interpreting and shaping the world. Diplomats who only do the former should be in academia. Those who only do the latter should be in politics. Those that want to do both should be on Twitter” (British Embassy Beirut, 2011). Twitter, reaching beyond the physical border, allows the actors of diplomacy to “to understand cultures, attitudes and behavior; to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values” (Bruce, 2011, p. 353). When the means of engagement with the foreign public is not available due to many factors, The United States Virtual Embassy in Iran, for instance, was launched in December 2011, despite the Iranian government's attempts to shut it down after 12 hours (Roumate, 2021, p. 174). The website and its linked Twitter account helped public diplomacy engage with the Iranian people in a country where the US did not have a physical embassy or diplomatic connections.

Diplomacy conducted on Twitter or ‘*Twiplomacy*’, embodiment of Twitter and diplomacy through social media networking, lends legitimacy to unofficial interactions between state officials and their counterparts or citizens. However, due to the availability of its time given to diplomats to perfect the information delivered, it also has the ability to delegitimize and reduce the credibility of official channels of communication such as meetings and in-person discussions. Briefly titled as “a new diplomatic order” or “naked diplomat” by the former British diplomat Fletcher (Rao, 2017), Twitter diplomacy has been gradually turning into a trend of statecraft in the 21st century,

when state or non-state diplomatic agents constantly exchange their posts in a continuous relationship.

SECTION FOUR

1. Tweets by the State Officials

This study will analyse 49 Twitter posts shared by the selected state officials. The tweets have been chosen with regards to the non-probability sampling ‘‘based on research purpose, availability of subjects, subjective judgement, or a variety of other non-statistical criteria’’ (Guo and Hussey, 2004, p. 2). To gain an in-depth understanding of the diplomatic function of Twitter by world leaders, this case study employs qualitative content analysis, which highlights themes, meaning and characteristics within their messages (Vaismoradi et al. 2016). The method enables not only to observe the language and characteristics of tweets, but also the context and its affiliation with the social and political framework. Tweets were categorised under 4 chosen events to refer to various occasions that have taken place due to their capacity of placing themselves beyond the region they took place and their distinctive nature: natural phenomena, global pandemic crisis, decentralised political and social movement, political and presidential transition: Australian bushfires from December 2019 to January 2020, ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matters protests following the killing of George Floyd in May 2020, Joe Biden becoming president-elect in January 2021.

Twitter posts will be placed under each event that they refer to by the selected state officials, who address to them: the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison; President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan; Former President of the United States, Donald Trump; British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, all of whom are representatives from different regions and have touched upon international matters.

This study will provide a brief context of each event in order to have a better understanding of tweets posted by the state officials. As tweets are limited to a certain number of characters, it is of great significance to be aware of where the events took place, their influence in their respective region or what prior conditions led them to take place. They will assist in examining the posted tweets and time and place they were shared on Twitter. Followingly, content analysis of the selected tweets will be provided within the objective, audience and effectiveness of the tweet contents. In doing so, this study will aim at finding out how the conduct of diplomacy on Twitter is changing the course of diplomacy in an increasingly popular and contemporary way, while touching upon its influence on diplomacy in future.

2. Event 1 - the Ongoing COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Ever since it first broke out in December 2019, the global outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has posed a significant threat to global public health. COVID-19 is the outcome of infection associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that was confirmed to emerge at a seafood market in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (Zhu et al., 2020). Since then it has challenged governments, health care systems and societies as a whole.

2.1 Tweets Posted and Analysis

On July 7th, 2020 in a tweet posted by Trump, he wrote that "'COVID-19 (China Virus) Death Rate PLUNGES From Peak In U.S.'" A Tenfold Decrease In Mortality..."(Trump, 2020). According to a well-known database website (Factbase, 2021), Trump referenced the term 'China Virus' in 58 tweets and has continued to refer to it as 'Wuhan virus', 'Asian virus' (Su et al., 2020). As a major component of content analysis, the use of language has an immense capacity to influence the audience. To avoid accusations regarding racism, he rejected his use of the term and its influence on the Asian Americans by claiming that 'It's not racist at all. No, it's not at all. It's from China. That's why. It comes from China. I want to be accurate.' (Forgey, 2020). However, the reports demonstrate that by the beginning of March, racist actions and harassment directed at Asians had increased significantly, and they continued to do so throughout March and April (Shyong, 2020). Despite World Health Organisation's (WOH) doctrine on naming the new infectious diseases to 'avoid causing offence to any cultural, social, national, regional, professional or ethnic groups' (WOH, 2015, p. 1), he continued to use the term in many other tweets and video calls. The term "Chinese virus" reflects the danger. The use of metaphor in this instance is personified, while its objective is to contribute to conceptualising something foreign and abstract such as the virus by the use of recognizable and embodied and concrete concepts such as an ethnicity or location. Barbara Lesz concluded that metaphors not only are placed in poetic literature, but also help us 'shape the world' (2011, p. 86). Associating the virus with an entire nation in his tweets also boosts his 'anti-immigrant rhetoric' (Quinonez, 2018) while appealing to his supporters' cognitive bias towards immigrants. Further studies related to Trump's discourse have pointed out the link between his anti-immigration rhetoric and political conservatism (Billingsley et al., 2018). Through each metaphor, a new meaning of his narrative has been constructed and passed on through his Twitter account.

In the continuation of the same tweet, Trump goes on saying that ‘‘The Fake News should be reporting these most important of facts, but they don’t!’’ (Trump, 2020). Trump is a keen user of the term ‘fake news’ as it has been reported that he mentioned the term more than ‘‘153 times between January and October in 2017 on Twitter and a series of interviews’’ (Holan, 2017). One study found out that due to Trump’s ambition of using of the term on social media, the perception of the public towards the media organisations in general has also shifted, while ‘‘liberals and conservatives freely associate traditionally left-wing (e.g. CNN) and right-wing.(e.g. Fox News) media sources with the term fake news.’’ (van der Linden, 2020). Such use of the word reveals the ideological clashes embedded in the diplomatic actor’s discourse. Another impact of his rhetoric use of the term was evident when a survey demonstrated that 42% of the Republicans associate news criticism of political figures with the term ‘fake news’ (Wemple, 2018). As such, it is evident Trump’s continued attempts to label a set of media outlets as ‘fake news’ through his Twitter account helps facilitate the term spread to a great extent among the internet users. Political posturing is the main theme here. Trump’s claim that the country had the lowest rates of mortality related to the Coronavirus is indeed all about trying to give the country the status of being a great country doing well even in the face of the pandemic (Zug, 2018).

Donald Trump tweeted regarding the pandemic situation in the US that ‘‘The Fake News is not talking about the fact that ‘‘Covid’’ is running wild all over the World, not just in the U.S. I was at the Virtual G-20 meeting early this morning and the biggest subject was Covid. We will be healing fast, especially with our vaccines!’’ (Trump, 2020). In his tweet, it is clear that Trump was discrediting what had been written and said about COVID-19 ravaging the USA. Strategic alliance forms the theme that came out through the mention of the virtual G20 summit. The fact the summit had met and one of the key issues that they had focused on was the pandemic was a clear show that, indeed, there was a need to appreciate the fact that the situation was to be discussed not only for the US but the rest of the world.

The next tweet by Trump was, ‘‘We’ve done a GREAT job on Covid response, making all Governors look good, some fantastic (and that’s OK), but the Lamestream Media doesn’t want to go with that narrative, and the Do Nothing Dems talking point is to say only bad about Trump. I made everybody look good but me!’’ (Trump 2020). The tweet was to show the progress and state of the government’s efforts in handling the pandemic. He also acknowledged how ‘‘fantastic’’

some governors had handled the pandemic. The second theme is leadership and national posturing as he attempts to addressing the key issues, such as the divisions that had emerged on the issue of how the media portrays the situation.

The other tweet was, “Covid, Covid, Covid is the unified chant of the Fake News Lamestream Media. They will talk about nothing else until November 4th., when the Election will be (hopefully!) over. Then the talk will be how low the death rate is, plenty of hospital rooms, & many tests of young people.” (Trump 2020). The tweet was about the president’s view that there was a correlation between reporting the deaths and that the discussion about the pandemic was not merited. According to him, there were issues in that many people talked about the pandemic mainly because they did not want him around power; hence it was a political tool. The first theme was political propaganda. Trump was trying to turn COVID into a political issue and assume that it was only being talked about because of the politics and had nothing to do with health concerns. It is evident that there were challenges that needed to be addressed, but instead of addressing them, the president focused on blaming the media for the mass coverage of the pandemic (Rudolph, Ching & Tan, 2021). Instead of addressing the issue at hand, the president focused on his reelection campaign, believing that the talk of COVID-19 would end once the elections were over, which was wrong and misguided since many people ended up being affected in the process with the number of people dying per day surging up to today.

The next tweet by Trump was, “The number of cases and deaths of the China Virus is far exaggerated in the United States because of @CDCgov’s ridiculous method of determination compared to other countries, many of whom report, purposely, very inaccurately and low. “When in doubt, call it Covid.” Fake News!” (Trump 2020). Political propaganda was the main theme as his tweets regarding the pandemic showed a case where he was in attempt to divert the people’s attention from the ongoing outbreak to the allegedly major coverage of the outbreak by the mainstream media.

Scott Morrison on May 5, 2021 tweeted with clear indications of a friendly tone towards his counterpart Taur Matan Ruak from Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste by tagging his handle directly that “Great to chat with my friend Timor-Leste PM @TaurDe. Glad an initial delivery of 20,000 Australian-manufactured COVID vaccines from our national stocks arrived in Dili today,

and other medical supplies.” (Morrison, 2021). Being an island country in Southeast Asia, Timor-Leste is classified as one of the poorest countries in the world with a rank of 147 out of 187 countries according to the UN Human Development Index (AID - DFAT, 2011). The use of the word ‘friend’ by Morrison indicates his sincere and close relationship with his counterpart while demonstrating support in globally deteriorating times when COVID-19 was at its peak. In spite of the emphasis of support in the tweet, the relationship between the two countries has recently bogged down: The controversial scandal of The Australia–East Timor spying took place in 2004 when The Australian Secret Intelligence Service planted a listening device in the room of the Prime Minister of East Timor to obtain information regarding East Timor’s vast oil and gas reserves (Wardell, 2013). In contrast with the past conflicts between the two countries, Morrison ends his message saying that “...We will always stand with our Timorese friends.” (Morrison, 2021), highlighting the positive and promising relationships that deteriorated during the spying scandal, yet were fostered during COVID-19 pandemic. The use of the pronoun ‘we’ might not only refer to the Government of Australia but also the people of Australia since Morrison as the representative of his country utilises his position and speaks on the behalf of his entire nation. Despite uncertainty of the public opinion of the Australians towards Timor-Leste, it has been documented that the Australian government drafted a donation costing about A\$760 million to East Timor between 2010 and 2010 (Oakes, 2010). Additionally, both countries signed the Timor-Leste – Australia Strategic Planning Agreement for Development in 2011, under which they committed to working closely together to better the lives of all Timorese residents, hence contributing to empowering the relationship between the two countries (DFAT AU, 2011). In the light of the recent efforts by the two countries to better the relationship, Morrison’s choice of words in his tweet such as ‘stand with’ and calling the citizens of Timor-Leste ‘friends’ shape the recognition of the situation and highlight the need ‘to speak for the state in its international relations made a declaration... [and]... binding’ (Fairman, 1936, p. 432).

Another tweet by Morrison is “Thanks @sebastiankurz for hosting another catch up tonight with our Greek, Danish & Czech counterparts, a valuable opportunity to swap notes on COVID vaccine rollouts, testing, dealing with variants, green passports & opening up travel. Good to keep in touch on common challenges.” (Morrison 2021) shows the global cooperation between the four countries and their desires to discuss and swap strategies among Australia, Greece, Denmark & Czech Republic on how best to deal with vaccine rollouts and testing and dealing with the variants. Some

of the common themes in this tweet are strategic alliances and the creation of similar strategies in the fight against Covid-19. When it comes to the theme of strategic alliance, it is evident that the four countries are geographically located in different parts of the world, with Australia being the outlier. In contrast, the three other countries, Greece, Denmark & Czech Republic, are all found within the European Union. The strategic alliance is based on coming up with effective strategies that can be of the essence in the increased and effective role of vaccines and testing and management of the pandemic in their respective countries (He et al., 2021). It also gave them the chance to have some working solutions to their already existing problems.

The creation of similar strategies in the fight against Covid-19 was another theme from the onset of the conversations. It was clear that what they wanted to be addressed was the issue of having common solutions that would be key in fighting against the problems posed by the pandemic. It is key to highlight some of the start the common areas they were willing to get common strategies to apply.

The third tweet by Morrison is that "We're backing Australia's best minds in our universities and industry to work together to create new products & technologies that will help secure our economic recovery from COVID, with a \$242.7m investment in our new Trailblazers Universities initiative." (Morrison 2021). The PM had made sure that the country was ready to invest over \$242.7m in its new program named the new Trailblazers Universities initiative, which aimed at ensuring economic recovery. The focus of the recovery was supposed to be increased product and technology manufacturing. The themes are economic recovery and national posturing. It is evident that in the economic recovery theme, the PM had made it clear that they were ready to invest over \$242.7m in ensuring that there was increased production with regards to the normal products and technological products. The PM was trying to state that, unlike some countries that are worried about what will happen next in the phase of recovery, the Australian government had a plan and the funds to use in its economic recovery, while showing that Australia also had a plan of how its economic recovery was to happen, just like other major economies.

"Australia's comeback from #COVID19 continues with more good news on the jobs front today. 29,100 new jobs were created last month. That means 93% of jobs lost to COVID have now come back. Our Government continues to focus on driving our economic recovery from this pandemic." (Morrison 2021), tweeted Morrison with regards to the ongoing global pandemic. From the tweet,

it is evident that the PM was giving the assurance and an update on how effectively his country's economy had rebounded. The fact that 29,100 jobs had been created during the previous month showed the resilience of their economy since many countries were losing jobs then. He wanted to show how much things had changed and the progress attained. The first theme is economic recovery. It is evident that there were many challenges during the period, and many people were losing jobs, and that in the process of trying to achieve economic recovery, the country was doing well, and it had restored about 93% of the jobs that had been lost. The second theme is political and economic posturing. The PM's tweet is trying to show that Australia has a very resilient economy that no one can ignore the progress made in the recovery of the lost jobs and the creation of over 29,000 new jobs despite the pandemic's negative influence on the global economy. The third theme is resilience. Even though the pandemic had ravaged the whole world, the Australian economy had not given in; instead, it was still doing much better than some developed countries that were galloping with the effects of pandemic and the loss of jobs.

The next tweet by the PM on the subject is that "Delighted to join with @BorisJohnson to celebrate today's launch of negotiations on a free trade agreement between Australia and the UK. It will mean more jobs, more growth and more opportunities for both our citizens to live and work in each other's countries post COVID." (Morrison 2021). The meaning of the tweet is that the PM was talking about the measures and engagements that they had gotten into to ensure smooth recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic between the UK and Australia. The first theme is political and economic posturing. The country was positioning itself as one of the key players that were ready to take all the necessary measures that would have led to the recovery of the country's economy. By signing the deal with the UK, it showed the country's economic commitment to rely on its allies as part of its growth and development achievement. The second theme is strategic alliance. Signing the deal with the UK and making it public was simply a way of alerting the whole world that, indeed, the UK and Australia were in arrangement aimed at coming up with measures that would ensure progress and development in both countries. It also meant that there would be cooperation in areas of mutual interest between the two countries.

The next tweet by the PM was, "This is why social distancing is so important. Please listen and act so we can save lives and livelihoods. #coronavirusaustralia #Covid_19australia #COVID-19" (Morisson 2020), along with an image illustrating the importance of social distancing and its

impact on curbing the spread of the virus and a series of hashtags to improve the visibility in public. The tweet was a social appeal to people to the social distance that was backed up by functional appeal in that he was giving them reasons as to why it matters, and it should be done as opposed to a case where people would claim that it is not effective yet based on the justifications given it was fair. The first theme is the social and functional appeal of social distance as a measure of curbing the spread of covid-19. The tweet is based on logic and the need to justify why it is good for people to have a social distance of about 1.5 metres. The argument was that there would be 2.5 people infected in five days without social distance, which led to 406 people being infected in 30 days. The social distance reduces the infection from 2.5 to 1.5 in five days and from 406 people in 30 days to 15 people in a month, which is a huge reason why social distancing was a key motive in his tweet.

On May 4, 2020 Erdogan tweeted a video record of his speech on COVID-19, addressing the Coronavirus Global Response International Commitment Event (Erdogan, 2020). He started by saying that ‘This epidemic has reminded us that although our languages and religions are different, our destiny is common.’, emphasising the importance of unity of all countries and urging the state officials to join the forces against the pandemic threat. Such unified approach of his diplomacy is justified further as he refers to a series of initiatives Turkey has undertaken since the outbreak of pandemic such as ‘the supply of critical health supplies needed in this process, from masks to respirators... share our country's experience in combating the virus with our friends’. His claim that Turkey’s willingness to ship important medical materials to curb the spread of COVID-19 has been equated with the reports that Turkey has helped over 30 countries with sending crucial shipments of medical aid in fight against the pandemic ever since its outbreak (Paksoy, 2020). However, one study (Güngör, 2021) has revealed that there are various reasons behind the choice of countries Turkey offered to help based on their cultural, economic or historical relations with Turkey. The study’s empirical implications concluded that ‘‘Turkey has adopted a selective aid strategy for an indiscriminately damaging global crisis.’’ (2021, p. 348), after finding out countries with commonly shared Ottoman history have enjoyed greater aid from Turkey during the pandemic crisis (2021, p. 343). Erdogan’s speech embedded in his Twitter post, hence, prompted the scholars to reconsider its foreign aid policy in the event of an unexpected global crisis. His reputation strategy is revealed this way, while at the same time crediting Turkey’s image in global diplomacy. Subtitles in English included in the video prove this point of his effort to be heard and understood

globally that Turkey is achieving an utmost duty to lift up other countries during the pandemic. He urges the leaders of other countries to embrace the idea that 'The COVID-19 vaccine should be the common property of all humanity. In this respect, it is extremely important to ensure global access to the vaccine to be produced and to apply the principle of not leaving anyone behind'. At the time of the talks in committee, there have been many discussions of unfair distribution of the vaccines across the world, widening the inequality (Ngakhusi, 2021). Calling out his counterparts to unite the efforts to eliminate such inequality again allows the recognition of diplomacy through such digital means. Erdogan's video-conversation not only is seen as an attempt to be engaged with other countries, but it also raises a certain number of questions as to how Turkey's foreign policy is shaped through such interaction given that Turkey sent more aid packages to certain countries based on its own foreign policy and diplomatic agency. As such, the implications arising from the pandemic reach to a broader aspect of the conduct of diplomacy, essentially leading to the influence of a global pandemic on diplomatic relations.

He also tweeted that "I hope the G20 Leaders' Summit, which we held with the video conference method due to the coronavirus epidemic, will be beneficial. We believe that our troubles will be alleviated even more when we, as a whole humanity, cooperate hand in hand and heart to heart." (Erdogan, 2021). His tweet is concentrated on his hope that there will be a positive outcome from the G20 Leaders' Summit on COVID-19 that they held and he encouraged the state leaders to offer some ways of alleviating their suffering. The first theme is the international cooperation that was seen as G20 leaders coming together to try and come up with effective solutions that would have helped address the challenges that the people were facing. This was key for diplomacy to show that, indeed, Turkey was one of the G20 summits, and also it helped bring out the aspect that the G20 was concerned with enhancing the safety of the people and the management of the virus. The second theme is the strategic alliance. All the members of the G20 have opted to work to their advantage so that they can deliver a synchronised solution that will help them manage the pandemic. There is a need for the proper condition to be put in place that will work for the good of all the members of the summit, which his tweet highlights.

He went on tweeting further on the matter that "It is not possible for a country to survive safely on its own without all countries getting rid of the epidemic. We can only overcome Covid-19 with international cooperation and solidarity. #UNGA." (Erdogan, 2021). The meaning of the tweet was that he was trying to emphasise the need for countries to work together in combatting the

pandemic, knowing that they could not do it on their own. This was during the United Nations General Assembly meeting Turkey also attended. International corporation and strategic alliance are the key themes evident in this tweet. For the first theme, the fact that this was the UNGA meeting where the comments were being made shows the international aspect in that many countries had attended the UNGA meeting. The second theme, which is a strategic alliance, comes into the picture mainly because he was alluding that there was no way a single country would be able to survive; hence the rallying call was that people should unite. This was to ensure that they could come up with a strategic solution that they would share amongst member countries because they would be able to develop measures that would help improve the situation.

Erdogan further in a fractious manner tweeted that "Turkey provided medical aid to 161 countries and 12 international organizations during the epidemic process. The selfishness of countries that do not care about anything other than their own safety and welfare, in the face of threats to the whole of humanity, has been recorded in the shameful pages of history." (Erdogan, 2021). The tweet is meant to showcase the progress made by Turkey in the provision of support to other countries during the pandemic. It is on this basis that he mentioned about 161 countries as well as 12 intentional organizations. The first theme is political posturing as it was necessary for Erdogan to make public of the details on how many countries Turkey had helped, by highlighting a case of what was going on in the quest for Turkey to posture itself as one of the leading nations globally in fighting the pandemic. The second theme is strategic alliance as it is evident that so many strategic alliances were being created to address the effects of the pandemic, and that Turkey was a part of it. It is necessary to appreciate, according to Erdogan, the reality that most people that have been offered help in the 161 countries were given medical aid thanks to the strategic alliances that their countries had with Turkey. The message was also about the social appeal. The theme of social appeal is plausible since the Turkish president was trying to encourage the rest of the developed nations to share their vaccines. From the statement, "The selfishness of countries that do not care about anything other than their safety and welfare," it is evident that they tried to appeal to all parties involved to do the right thing and address the issue at hand.

The next quote by Erdogan was, "In a difficult pandemic climate, Turkey is closing this year with growth by positively differentiating itself from the world's leading countries. Exports reached an annual figure of \$221 billion as of the end of last month." (Erdogan, 2021). The tweet is trying to

posture Turkey as one of the countries that had done exceptionally well, amongst others, in economic growth. It is about stating how well economically, after the aftermath of the pandemic, the country, Turkey, was doing well, and there was a lot of revenue and financial growth that was being witnessed. Political and economic posturing has overcome the tweets as theme. His tweet aims at demonstrating the country's competency level globally as it is evident from his words that much progress and growth was being focused on. The second theme is economic progress and recovery. After all, economies were ravaged by the pandemic. It was hard for many to start their recovery journeys. On this basis, Turkey is justified in stating that they are progressing and doing well, and its economy is on the rebound, which is a key aspect of any form of economic recovery.

Another tweet analysed on the same event from Erdogan was, "After the United States and China, we are the third country that carries out the most vaccine projects on Covid-19." (Erdogan, 2021). The tweet meant to show the economic and advancement strengths and the coordination aspects that had pushed the country to a level whereby it had the third-largest vaccine projects. The first theme is political posturing. Based on this, the statement is purely anchored on projecting Turkey as one of the leading countries and those least affected by the pandemic; however, it helps create such optics in the global diplomatic arena. The second theme was economic progress. It is evident that many countries were struggling with vaccination, and many relied on the vaccines from other countries. For Turkey to have worked so hard and developed its vaccines was indeed a show of economic progress attained in this country. It also gives an account of how the country had managed to donate vaccines to many other countries or even private organizations to support the effort to sort out what that pandemic had created.

The last tweet by Erdogan is "In the epidemic period, when even developed countries left their citizens to their own devices, Turkey showed a truly virtuous stance inside and outside." (Erdogan, 2021), meaning that even though some developing countries did not take care of their citizens well during the pandemic, Turkey took the lead and took great care of its citizens and even supported people outside its own country. The main theme in this tweet is political posturing. This is based on the fact that it is focused on portraying the fact that Turkey was the one that was taking care of the citizens in the pandemic when the rest of the developed countries had been unable to do so. This is a way of trying to posture Turkey as a people-centric country whose focus is on assisting its citizens during the pandemic.

The tweet from the UK PM, Boris Johnson, is, “The Health and Social Care Levy will raise billions for our NHS to tackle the COVID backlogs, reduce waiting times and deliver millions more checks, scans and operations. It will also help recruit more fantastic nurses such as Bryony.” (Johnson, 2021). The UK PM was talking about the need to avail more resources so that the UK could deal with the remaining backlog of healthcare-related cases that had resulted from the issue of COVID-19. The tweet made sense of the fact that there was a need to address the challenges that existed due to the pandemic and how it had affected the resources of NHS, mostly the human resources. The theme is about strategic measures taken by the UK to take address the issues at hand. The financial measures that had been put in place to address the challenges that have been put in place. The PM has also given measures that will be taken to address the issues at hand.

The second tweet by Johnson read that “Over 30 million people across the UK have now received two doses of the vaccine – a hugely impressive achievement. I want to reiterate the importance of getting both doses to give you maximum protection against COVID. Please book your jabs when you are eligible to do so.” (Johnson, 2021). The tweet showed the situation about the vaccination rates in the UK. By the time the tweet was being made, many countries were grappling with vaccinations, and the decision was aimed at ensuring that each and everything was aimed at updating the state of the vaccination in the country. The main theme is political posturing. Most countries are struggling with the issue of vaccination across the globe. A huge number of people have addressed the issues at hand. The fact that it has started with about 30 million people had been vaccinated was indeed a huge show of the growth and the measures that had been taken in the country. It also notes the challenges that had taken place in other countries and the fact that it was not the same case on the other side. The second theme was the leadership aspect. The UK government was trying to show the progress made and how well the government had done so well under challenging conditions to vaccinate as many as possible, which was a signal of proper leadership from the PM and his health department teams. The final theme is social assurance. Many people were worried when these things were being done; hence, the idea that it is clear that there will be progress is a clear show that there will be progress. There were so many stories about the subject in question as many were worried that the measures may not have been properly conducted, and those affected were indeed encouraged with the information on the issue of vaccination.

The next tweet by Johnson is that “Today we are lifting the remaining testing requirements for fully vaccinated travelers entering the UK. Britain is open for business. Thank you to the millions of people who have come forward for their jabs and made this step possible.” (Johnson, 2022) . The tweet meant that the government of the UK was making adjustments in line with the measures that had been put in place about the management of the pandemic by lifting some of the measures that had remained about testing those visiting the UK. The first theme was national posturing. It is evident that by this time, there were governments that were still struggling with the updates on COVID-19. The idea that the country is opening up its borders by removing testing requirements was indeed an indication of national achievement in overcoming the outbreak. Since it was also about the theme of assurance, the PM ensured that the UK was open for business and that everything was almost back to normal and there was nothing to be worried about at all. It was fundamental to appreciate the progress made and what the said progress meant for the people.

3. Event 2 - Joe Biden Becoming President-Elect in January 2021

As the 46th President of the United States, Joe Biden's reign commenced on January 20, 2021, with his inauguration (Siders, 2020). Biden, the former Vice President within the Obama administration and a Democrat, assumed the presidential office after his triumph against the Republican Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. He was sworn in along with Kamala Harris, who is the first female, African American, and Asian American Vice President in the political history of the US (White House, 2021). Shortly after his inauguration, Biden inherited COVID-19 pandemic, an economic recession, and a growing political tension across the country (Hansen, 2021).

3.1 Tweets Posted and Analysis

Ever since opening his Twitter account in May 2009, Donald Trump's practice of social media has garnered worldwide notice. He tweeted over 57,000 times for almost twelve years including approximately 8,000 times during the 2016 presidential campaign and more than 25,000 times during his presidency (Tweet Binder, 2021). His rhetoric and method of using Twitter has been elucidated in the fields of semiotics, critical studies, diplomacy and media studies (Brookey et al., 2019; Wells et al., 2020; Tillmann, 2020).

Prior to Twitter’s decision to permanently suspend Trump on the grounds of “further incitement of violence” (Twitter Inc., 2021), he was resuming his controversial approach of conducting diplomacy in his own style, mostly referring to Biden and fraud presidential elections. After Joe

Biden was elected President of the United States of America in 2020, the former President Donald Trump launched an aggressive and unusual effort to reverse the election results, with the help of his campaign, political friends, and millions of his followers on Twitter (Gardner et al., 2020). On Jan 4, 2021 he took it to his Twitter audience, exclaiming that “Pleased to announce that @KLoeffler & @sendavidperdue have just joined our great #StopTheSteal group of Senators. They will fight the ridiculous Electoral College Certification of Biden.” (Trump, 2021). The use of the hashtag with the exclamation ‘stop the steal’ became a symbol of his reluctance on leaving the office to Biden. The power of his distinctive discourse was evident when a large group of his supporters, roughly 2.500, launched a collective attack on the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C on January 6, 2021 (Temple-Raston, 2021), as a result of which Trump was ruled to be impeached on the ground of incitement of insurrection (Gambino, 2021). His continuous efforts to label the elections ‘ridiculous’ or ‘rigid’ intensify his influence on constructing his own meaning and interpretation that elections held are not valid and that his supporters should follow the same path, even if the path resorts to violence as evident in the Capitol attacks. Similar to his emphasis on imperative sentences, he also urged his supporters to “fight like hell” and “walk down to the Capitol” (REV, 2021). From such statements posted on Twitter with his 88 million followers, Trump’s intention can be clarified as encouraging his supporters to take over the charge when other legal means are no longer applicable. His tweet also tagged two political figures: Kelly Loeffler, Former member of the United States Senate and U.S. Senator of Georgia David Perdue - with an intention to draw attention from the other diplomatic actors that he is still supported politically regardless of how the elections went on.

Following the official and final election results, Trump tweeted that "He did not win the elections. He lost all 6 Swing States by a lot. They then dumped hundreds of thousands of votes in each one and got caught. Now Republican politicians have to fight so that their great victory is not stolen. Don't be weak fools!". As evident, Trump was in denial, creating his own narrative of the elections, while including the Republican politicians in seeking further support in his statement and ending with an exclamation for the people not to be misguided by the election results. Political propaganda positions itself within the tweet as Trump incites the Republican leaders against the Democrats. He was using the populist manner in the quest to further his political course, aided by the use of propaganda that the votes had been simply stolen.

The next tweet by Trump was that "We have some big things happening in our various litigations on the Election Hoax. Everybody knows it was Rigged. They know Biden didn't get more votes from the Black community than Obama, & certainly didn't get 80,000,000 votes. Look what happened in Detroit, Philadelphia, plus!" (Trump, 2020) . The president was trying emphasize the progress on his election ligation despite the support in decline for his election campaign. The idea of citing Detroit and Philadelphia was to prove to the public that he was in a winning state throughout the elections. Political propaganda demonstrates itself once again as the theme in that Trump was in constant attempt to highlight that there was progress in his election litigation despite the outcome. It is eventually evident that he had lost the election; however, he was looking for every reason to comfort his supporters through Twitter that the elections are rigged and conducted improperly, while mentioning Detroit and Philadelphia.

The final tweet by Trump was that "Why does the Fake News Media continuously assume that Joe Biden will ascend to the Presidency, not even allowing our side to show, which we are just getting ready to do, how badly shattered and violated our great Constitution has been in the 2020 Election." (Trump, 2020). As seen in his discourse through tweets concerning the elections, Trump was in an attempt to create a situation where it would have been impossible for Biden to rule by claiming that Biden had violated the constitution and the media assisted in Biden's campaign for running for the presidency, all of which reinforces Trump's tweet a political propaganda. His actions and constant discourse to delegitimize the outcome of the elections through Twitter led to the Capitol attacks as explained before.

On the contrary to Trump's reaction to Biden becoming President-elect, Morrison did not wait long to tweet on November, 7 2020 that "Congratulations to @joebiden and @kamalaharris - Australia wishes you every success in office. The Australia-US Alliance is deep and enduring, and built on shared values..." (Morrison 2020). His acknowledgement of the new president of the US, in his tweet, is established upon the emphasis of the Australia and US alliance and their 'shared values'. The term 'alliance' is integrated as the main theme of Morrison's greeting of Biden in his presidential office: Having been British colonies, Australia and the US share a long historical unity in many areas. Both countries were allies in both WWI and WWII in addition to the Gulf War, Vietnam War and Korean War. The alliance has not been restricted to military operations as the relationship between the two countries is deepened by the formation of the AUKUS treaty,

announced in 2021 as a security agreement entailing cooperation in submarine technologies, artificial intelligence with the participation of the UK as well (PM of Australia, 2021). Additionally, the treaty of ANZUS (abbreviation of Australia, New Zealand and the US) secures the Pacific Ocean region against any other threat. The word choice of ‘enduring’ is evident when in 2021 Foreign Minister of China called the AUKUS treaty ‘‘extremely irresponsible’’ and ‘‘the obsolete Cold War mentality’’ (Davidson and Blair, 2021). The relationship did also endure disapproval of France, which is a loyal ally of both countries, when the Foreign Minister of France Jean-Yves Le Drian highlighted that ‘‘We had established a trusting relationship with Australia, and this trust was betrayed’’, denouncing the treaty as ‘‘stab in the back’’ (Darmanin and Sheftalovich, 2021). The alliance of France with both countries was previously strengthened by the French-Australian submarine deal, which was to be cancelled by Australia without further notice (Kelly and Trompiz, 2021). Such political manoeuvres and exchange of strong words -even among countries that are allied with- prove the observation that ‘‘diplomacy, in the traditional sense of the term, functions up to a certain degree between allies, but hardly any longer among enemies, or even between the blocs and the neutral nations’’ (Wylie, 2003, p. 19). Morrison tweet highlighting the ‘shared values’ is added along with ‘‘...I look forward to working with you closely as we face the world’s many challenges together.’’ (Morrison 2020), signalling what Biden inherited when he came to the office: COVID-19 pandemic, an economic recession, and a growing political tension across the country (Hansen, 2021). Morrison’s acknowledgement of the existing challenges and issues at the state level speaks on authority level, promising to keep up the relationships with the US under a new president not only in military level but also global issues such as climate change, economical downfall and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, @ mentions of Biden and Harris were added in his tweet to assure that the message is intended and received by the two actors. Morrison also tweeted that ‘‘Excellent discussions with PM @narendramodi, PM @ sugartitted, and @potus Joe Biden about our shared vision for a free, open, prosperous, and resilient Indo-Pacific region and how we can continue to contribute to that as like-minded liberal democracies.’’, demonstrating the readiness and the willingness of Scott Morrison to engage with Biden, and addressing a letter to the president showing his full commitment to creating a good partnership. The tweets' themes include the partnership between the Australian government and US. The Australian PM claims that their relationship would grow from strength to strength under the stewardship of the president-elect Joe Biden. The partnership was boosted by

the evidence of the Australian PM inviting Biden to the Australian 70th anniversary of the alliance the following year. The PM claims that his government would work closely regardless of the change of the president-elect. The partnership was based on creating and implementing the Australia and United Kingdom partnership (Biden Jr, 2020). Both leaders agreed to have a commitment to the free and open unity and respect for human rights.

“Today I met US President Joe Biden in New York to mark 70 years of our ANZUS alliance and reaffirm our AUKUS partnership announced last week with the UK. We’re committed to working together to secure a free, open and resilient Indo-Pacific and tackle shared challenges.” (Morrison, 2021) read Morrison while addressing to the President-elect Biden. The tweet was to show the strategic alliance between Australia, the US, and the UK that happened during the celebration of the 70 years since the ANZUS alliance was established. The first theme is strategic alliance as it concerns the three countries and the existing cooperation through the ANZUS. The second theme is political posturing when the Australian PM is trying to show that they have a concrete relationship with the UK and US, and this is happening after the Biden being elected President appeared as a way of acknowledging his approval of the disputed election results.

Following Biden inheriting the presidential office, Morrison tweeted that “Great to speak to US President Joe Biden again today. We discussed our many shared interests in the Indo-Pacific and agreed the importance of technology partnerships in reducing emissions towards net zero and driving economic growth, and keen to meet at an early opportunity.” (Morrison, 2021). The tweet explained that they had a conversation they had with the US president and the importance of the conversation was placed on the Indo-Pacific matters and economic partnership. The first theme focuses on strategic alliance. The post concerns the strategic alliance between the countries and the fact that the election of Biden was being perceived as a promising course of events in strengthening the ties between the two countries. The second theme was political posturing since the PM is seen attempting to show the fact that he is in touch with Biden constantly when discussing the matters that concern mutual partnership and challenges.

Unlike Morrison’s quick reaction and recognition of Biden as the president of the US, Erdogan waited longer than other state officials to recognize Biden’s triumph in the presidential elections. Erdogan’s delay in greeting Biden as the new president is not as staggering as the previous events

between Erdogan and Biden prove. In an interview in 2019, Biden called Erdogan ‘‘autocrat’’ due to Erdogan’s policy towards the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, while advocating the opposition party of Turkey against Erdogan (Associated Press, 2020). The delay of Erdogan’s diplomacy might also be explained by Biden’s previous criticism of Turkey’s involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems despite being a NATO country (RFEL, 2021). In the light of such incidents, there is an absence of Erdogan’s tweet to congratulate Biden for his presidential victory. However, Erdogan chose to recognize Biden through a simple phone call, stating his determination to ‘‘to work closely with the U.S. Administration’’ and ‘‘the strong cooperation and alliance’’ (Seddiq and Haltiwanger, 2020). Despite many state officials using Twitter in joining to congratulate Biden, Erdogan did not post any tweet concerning the matter, sticking to his own accord of diplomatic action.

The tweet by Johnson on Biden is that ‘‘Congratulations to @JoeBiden on being sworn in as President of the United States and @KamalaHarris on her historic inauguration. America’s leadership is vital on the issues that matter to us all, from climate change to COVID, and I look forward to working with President Biden.’’ (Johnson, 2021). The tweet was a congratulation to the US president Biden upon being sworn in and the fact that Boris appreciated the leadership aspect that such would bring to the table when dealing with COVID-19 and climate change, among other issues. The theme of leadership is well shown in that the UK PM celebrated the swearing of the US president, saying that it will be key to have such leadership when it comes to dealing with issues such as the pandemic and climate change. The theme of strategic alliance is also evident since he is focused on the fact that the two countries will be working together to achieve their set goals.

Johnson tweeted further following his invitation of the President-elect to the UK that ‘‘Fantastic to welcome @POTUS Joe Biden and @FLOTUS Jill Biden to Cornwall with @CarriellJohnson today. The UK-US partnership is more important than ever as we #BuildBackBetter and greener from the pandemic.’’ (Johnson, 2021). The tweet was aimed at welcoming the US president and the first lady to Cornwall and speaking of the nature of the strength of the relationship between the UK and the US. Strategic alliance is evident in that the US and UK relationship is displayed in the trip, and the message was aimed at showing that the cooperation between the two countries now holds a more significance.

4. Event 3 - Black Lives Matters protests following the killing of George Floyd in May 2020

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is regarded as a decentralised political and social movement that strives to draw attention to the racism, discrimination, and inequality faced by black people. Following Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin murdering of George Floyd in 2020, the movement regained national and international recognition during the George Floyd protests held worldwide (Eligon et al 2021).

4.1 Tweets Posted and Analysis

Erdogan stated on his Twitter account that "The racist and fascist approach that led to the death of George Floyd in the US city of Minneapolis as a result of torture has not only deeply saddened all of us, but it has also become one of the most painful manifestations of the unjust order we stand against across the world." (Erdogan, 2020). The tweet highlights the bold words used by Erdogan to call out the injustice that led to the death of Floyd. He went on to state that he was sorrowful that this had happened. He also called out those in support of the world order that promoted racism and made it clear that there was a need to stand against such. Political posturing is seen in that he always tweets in Turkish, but for this very tweet, he tweeted in English so that many may see and know of his stand on the issue. The second theme is sorrow in that he was touched by what had happened, hence why he opted to call it out since it was an ‘unjust order’ against humanity. His second tweet was, "I believe that the perpetrators of this inhumane act shall receive the punishment they deserve. We will be monitoring the issue. I remember with respect George Floyd and extend my condolences to his family and loved ones." (Erdogan, 2020). Calling for justice for the perpetrators of Floyd's murder, showing keen interest in the issues, and sending condolences to the family and the loved ones of the individual from Erdogan are his main stance in this event.

Boris Johnson addressed to the murder of George Floyd by tweeting that “Let us work peacefully and lawfully to defeat racism and discrimination wherever we find it, and let us continue to work together as we put Britain back on its feet.”. The UK PM could be seen requesting law and order as well as restrain in dealing with the matters that had occurred following the murder of George Floyd as the tweet came after people in UK were rioting in support of the justice to be implemented on the case of George Floyd. The situation had started to evolve in the UK with the protests. Hence, the message from the PM was a good appeal to them to exercise restraint in how they handled the

situation and advocated for human rights and justice to be done (Kazemi & Ghaziani, 2021). The issue was a matter of human rights, while the PM's message gave much credence to the need for justice to prevent the demonstrations that have happened across the globe in line with the same issue. The theme is revolving around his political leadership as the PM's choice of words aims at alleviating the tense situation. The fact that he appealed to them and attempts to manage the riots to be dispersed assures his position as mediating and watching the events in the UK.

Another tweet by Johnson was that "People have a right to protest peacefully & while observing social distancing but they have no right to attack the police. These demonstrations have been subverted by thuggery - and they are a betrayal of the cause they purport to serve. Those responsible will be held to account." (Johnson, 2020). The PM through his tweet acknowledged the right to protest peacefully, but he was also warning against the cases of thuggery witnessed during the process. He was also telling the protesters about the need for civility and social distancing since it was against the measures put in place to deal with the pandemic at the same time. The first theme is leadership as the PM's choice of words emphasizing both the importance of the nature of protests and the pandemic situation was evident in his tweet. The second theme is the appeal to political strain since the PM was trying to ensure that the cases of thuggery will not be tolerated when it comes to assaulting the police enforcement, while exercising restraint in the manner in which they handled the situation.

Trump went on saying that "These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you!" (Trump, 2020). Trump was saying that he was ready to use the military to deal with those who were rioting following the death of George Floyd. He was advising the governor Tim Walz to use them if the need arises. The theme here is the use of threats. Trump's tweet was full of threats that he was ready to use the military force in dealing with the protests following the outbreak of riots in the country in line with the death of George Floyd. The second tweet was, "The professionally managed so-called "protesters" at the White House had little to do with the memory of George Floyd. They were just there to cause trouble. The @SecretService handled them easily. Tonight, I understand, is MAGA NIGHT AT THE WHITE HOUSE???" (Trump, 2020). He praises how the Secret Service had effectively dealt with protestors following the death of George

Floyd. This was after some of the protestors had marched to the White House. He casts aspersions on the identity and the motive of the protestors who had marched to the White House by calling them professionally organised protesters which made it appear as though there was some political inclination in the protestors.

The tweet by Trump read that “BLM Protesters harass elderly Pittsburgh diners, scaring them with loud taunts while taking their food right off their plate. These Anarchists, not protesters, are Biden voters, but he has no control and nothing to say. Disgraceful. Never seen anything like it. Thugs!” (Trump, 2020). He is seen trying to address to the protestors and went on to call them anarchists and thugs. Political propaganda was the main theme as Trump politicized the matter as a political propaganda by claiming that the people who joined the riots are simply Biden voters.

“Horrible BLM chant, “Pigs In A Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon.” Maybe our GREAT Police, who have been neutralized and scorned by a mayor who hates & disrespects them, won’t let this symbol of hate be affixed to New York’s greatest street. Spend this money fighting crime instead!” (Trump, 2020). From his tweet chanting for the police, it is evident that for dealing with the protestors, the use of violence was justified as long as they were contained. He was calling on the police to spend their resources to fight what he termed a crime. Political propaganda was the main theme as seen in the tweet that attempts to give another direction for the law enforcement in handling the protestors. In line with this, he informs his audience in another tweet that “The National Guard has arrived on the scene. They are in Minneapolis and fully prepared. George Floyd will not have died in vain. Respect his memory!”. He was elated that the national guard had arrived and the police department in Minneapolis was prepared to deal with those complaining and protesting. Political propaganda was the main theme as Trump showcases his empathy for George Floyd, while at the same time calling for strict measures to be taken against the rioters.

Boris Johnson addressed to the murder of George Floyd by tweeting that “Let us work peacefully and lawfully to defeat racism and discrimination wherever we find it, and let us continue to work together as we put Britain back on its feet.” (Johnson, 2020). The UK PM could be seen requesting law and order as well as restrain in dealing with the matters that had occurred following the murder of George Floyd as the tweet came after people in UK were rioting in support of the justice to be implemented on the case of George Floyd. The situation had started to evolve in the UK with the

protests. Hence, the message from the PM was a good appeal to them to exercise restraint in how they handled the situation and advocated for human rights and justice to be done (Kazemi & Ghaziani, 2021). The issue was a matter of human rights, while the PM's message gave much credence to the need for justice to prevent the demonstrations that have happened across the globe in line with the same issue. The theme is revolving around his political leadership as the PM's choice of words aims at alleviating the tense situation. The fact that he appealed to them and attempts to manage the riots to be dispersed assures his position as mediating and watching the events in the UK.

Another tweet by Johnson was that "People have a right to protest peacefully & while observing social distancing but they have no right to attack the police. These demonstrations have been subverted by thuggery - and they are a betrayal of the cause they purport to serve. Those responsible will be held to account." (Johnson, 2020). The PM through his tweet acknowledged the right to protest peacefully, but he was also warning against the cases of thuggery witnessed during the process. He was also telling the protesters about the need for civility and social distancing since it was against the measures put in place to deal with the pandemic at the same time. The first theme is leadership as the PM's choice of words emphasizing both the importance of the nature of protests and the pandemic situation was evident in his tweet. The second theme is the appeal to political strain since the PM was trying to ensure that the cases of thuggery will not be tolerated when it comes to assaulting the police enforcement, while exercising restraint in the manner in which they handled the situation.

The tweet by Boris Johnson read, "I was appalled by the death of George Floyd and welcome this verdict. My thoughts tonight are with George Floyd's family and friends." (Johnson, 2020), while it shows the sorrow of losing George Floyd's life and the relief when the officers charged with his death were found guilty. The themes that are evident here include justice fulfilled.

5. Event 4 - Australian bushfires from December 2019 to January 2020

Australian bushfire season that took place in 2019 and 2020, also known as Black Summer, was a period of bushfires in several parts of Australia that is regarded a megafire because of its unprecedented severity, magnitude, duration, and unmanageable scale across the country.

5.2 Tweets Posted and Analysis

The Australian PM tweeted through his Twitter handle, “Once again, our mobile teams are out in #bushfire areas in small towns today with social workers. And all recovery centers are staffed. We have a long way to go to recover from these terrible fires. We will be out there every day supporting these communities to do just that.” (Morrison, 2020). The tweet was pivotal in bringing assurance not only to the Australians but also to the rest of the world on the government’s preparedness to deal with the natural bushfire disaster that had threatened the country. The message brought about several key things. The meaning of the tweet was that the PM was acknowledging the challenges that have been experienced about the bush fires that had threatened the country and giving an update on the state of the situation as it was then. He also assured that those affected would be helped and supported. Several themes were evident in the tweet. One of them was that there were measures that had been put in place to mitigate the situation. Under mitigation, he talked of the social workers being in small towns that had experienced bush fires. The staffing of all the recovery centres was another vital sign of the mitigation that has been put in place. Hence it falls under the mitigation theme. The second theme is the theme of assurance. This was key to the rest of the world since many were worried that the situation was getting out of hand. So, stating that they had a long way to go, but the situation was being handled brought a sign of relief and acknowledged the fact that there was some progress and hope in the management of the situation. He pledged to support the communities affected by the bush fire when he said, “we will be out there every day supporting these communities to do just that.” This was key in allaying to the fears of many that were worried.

The second tweet was, “Thanks for the call, @realDonaldTrump, and for your strong messages of sympathy, support, and friendship for Australia during our terrible bushfire season. Thanks also to the American people for their many messages of support. Australia and the US are great mates.” (Morrison, 2020). The tweet acknowledges the call the PM had with the then US president, Donald Trump, whom he had called to encourage him on the issue of bushfires in the country then. He also showed his gratitude to the American people who had given Australia much support through their messages of support and goodwill. The first theme is appreciation. Even though the call was private between the two leaders, the Australian PM opted to bring it to the public through Twitter to appreciate that, indeed, the US, through their then-president, had called to give their message of

support. The appreciation was not only limited to the US president but also to all Americans. The basis of their appreciation was that they had sent a lot of messages of support to Australians during the period. This was key for his diplomatic message because it was a way of telling the world that the US was willing to support and stand with Australians. The two have been allies historically, and the fact that the US managed to get in touch at such a critical time and the message was posted on Twitter for the rest of the world to see. The second theme is the repetitive nature of the bushfires. This is well conveyed by using the words “terrible bushfire season.”. This meant that the idea of bushfires was a seasonal thing and how the US had supported Australia during the previous bushfire seasons. The third theme was the relationship between Australia and the US. It came out when the PM talked about how “Australia and the US are great mates.”, meaning that the relationship between the two countries was personal enough to the extent they could call each other ‘mates’. In the tweet, there is also much emphasis on the word friendship, demonstrating the nature of the relationship between the two countries.

Another tweet by Morrison read that “Thanks to our amazing police, emergency services and RFS volunteers who have been there to support them in their time of need. The local, state & Federal Governments will stand by these communities as they deal with the aftermath of these fires & eventually rebuild.” (Morrison, 2020). The tweet was about the appreciation for all the Australian personnel involved in the management of the bushfires, with a special mention to the police and emergency services and those who had volunteered under RFS. It was also meant to show that the Federal Government would support those affected as they attempted to recover from what had happened. The first theme is hope and restoration. The theme is well documented when the Government says that the victims of the bushfires will be helped by the state, federal, and state governments to deal with the aftermath of the fires. Such a tone was key in reaffirming the people the government's support. The second theme is appreciation. The PM has given much support to the individuals who contributed much to saving the already dire situation. It is necessary to appreciate that the situation was contained mainly because of police, emergency services, and RFS volunteers.

The next tweet by Morrison is that “I visited the Government’s Crisis Coordination Centre late today to get the latest update on the #bushfires. Thank you to all those responding to these fires for their courageous efforts. We’re not out of this yet so please remain vigilant and stay updated

on fires in your area.” (Morrison, 2020). The tweet states the progress that had been attained following the update given by the PM and the state of the situation upon his visit to the Government’s Crisis Coordination Centre and appreciation of the efforts that had been put in place in the management of the bushfires. The first theme is appreciation. The theme of appreciation is highlighted through the choice of words whereby the PM wanted to convey his appreciation for the progress and the efforts made based on the update he had been given at the crises center. The second theme is assurance, in which the whole idea of tweeting here was to assure the people that the situation had been contained and that the progress made was significant. This was key in bringing about the much-needed assurance on the subject.

The other tweet by Morrison in the same regard is “My Ministers & I, are in constant contact with our state & territory counterparts & fire chiefs & we stand ready to deliver whatever extra help they ask of us. We’ll do everything in our power to ensure our fireys have the resources & support they need.” (Morrison, 2020). The tweet sought to show the state of preparedness and the level of commitment that the government at local, state, and federal levels were willing to ensure that everything is done to ensure that they can deliver and manage the situation. The first theme is the state’s commitment to solving the problem. This is a theme that has been well profound in that everything said indicates the desire of the government to address the issues at hand by all means possible. It is key to appreciate that there is also a commitment from all stakeholders involved and their willingness to do more than what was expected. The second theme is the coordination, in which there was some sense of streamlined operations where people were going to be guided in ensuring that they were able to make things work more effectively and they met every objective in place to prevent the bushfires from spreading any further as well as put measures in place that could ensure there is efficiency and transparency since there was sharing of responsibility between the local and federal government in dealing with the disaster (Reid, Beilin & McLennan, 2018). The tweet highlighted the importance of the coordination and sharing of responsibility in dealing with the bushfires and how the problem was effectively addressed.

The 45th US President, Donald Trump in this regard, tweeted that “We love Australia.” (Trump, 2020). The tweet may be brief but profound as The US shows its appreciation and support for the Australian people during the natural disaster, while showing the comradery that existed between the two countries. It was a way of affirming their support and commitment to their ally. The theme

evident in this is the relationship between the two countries as a result of the relationship between the two nations that has blossomed from a regular friendship and partnership between nations to a more intimate extent. The relationship is formed through Trump's choice of simple words (Collins, DeWitt & LeFebvre, 2019). This shows that the US does not merely like Australia just as it does some of their allies, but in this case, it has gone beyond that, and the relationship was at the level of appreciating Australia as a means of how great and deep their ties had gotten entrenched. The result came before the Australian Premier had posted the tweet appreciating the US president and thanking Americans for their support.

From the tweet by Boris Johnson, "Our hearts go out to all those in Australia affected by these devastating fires. I have been in touch with PM @ScottMorrisonMP to offer any assistance we can provide. We stand with you at this very difficult time." (Johnson, 2020), it was clear that the UK was committed to giving any form of support to the Australian people and government. The UK Prime Minister was sending his words of encouragement on his behalf and behalf of the UK people. It was also a way of updating the entire world that they had been in touch with the Australian Prime Minister. It also showed his desire to be of any necessary help to the Australian Premier. The first theme is support and encouragement to the Australians. This is key in that his choice of words brings about the devastation they had experienced due to the bushfires ravaging Australia. There was also the idea of the willingness of the UK to support Australia in any way deemed necessary by the Australian Premier. The second theme is political posturing. The theme is key because many nations were sending their message of encouragement to the people. The idea of making it public results from the need for the rest of the world to see that, indeed, the UK is standing and supporting Australia, and it will be doing so in the long haul. The whole idea of stating that they had a conversation with the Australian Premier was meant to show the political circles that the two were good allies and were ready to support and work with each other in matters of mutual interest hence the reason they were ready to come to the aid of Australia when the bushfires afflicted it.

SECTION V

Conclusion

The content analysis has demonstrated a mixture of findings as a result of the interaction of the heads of the states under particular events with their counterparts and audience. The conduct of diplomacy on Twitter emerges as a result of a timely delivery of the intended message, making timing and content essential to measure whether it is efficient. This is due to Twitter's nature of necessitating instant interaction that places a greater emphasis on the message's delivery through mentions (@) and hashtags (#) than on its substance, while making the communication rapid. Politically allied states and actors tend to interact with each other more and intimately as shown in the tweet exchanges by the state leaders of Australia and US and Erdogan's delay in acknowledging Biden as the President-elect unlike Boris Johnson and Scott Morrison. Furthermore, the content of the message must be carefully crafted as heads of the state must ensure that the message reaches the intended target and that the content of their messages should not leave a space for misleading or provocation as shown in Trump's tweets in attempt to delegitimize the presidential elections and incite violence among its supporters through his Twitter account, which eventually led to the 2021 US Capitol attacks and permanent termination of his account. To ensure that the message would appear in the relevant group, they needed to employ @ and #, which necessitates an understanding of how the social networking operates. It was observed that during specific events the use of Twitter by the state leaders has changed, while Trump had accumulated over 1000 tweets featuring the presidential elections ever since the ballots were to be opened up, as a result of which 38% of his tweets had been flagged by Twitter for misleading about the electoral process (Conger, 2020). The pandemic related tweets by all actors have also increased largely and shown that the leaders turned to Twitter for political posturing and ensuring their citizens through COVID-19 facts and statistics that the measures must be in place for the well-being of the nation. The state leaders constitute the state's greatest degree of authority, meaning that their "declarations publicly made and manifesting the will to be bound may have the effect of creating legal obligations" (UN, 2006, p. 370). Therefore, when they announced their endorsement of Joe Biden as the president, they were cognizant of the significance of their tweets with regard to the "rigged elections" as Trump consistently referred to as. They granted him a degree of legitimacy that is typically conveyed by official diplomatic contact. The actors used Twitter as a

unique kind of digital diplomacy to offer foreign aid and support while binding to the state unilaterally. The attempt to keep some events as merely a regional issue was evident when absence of tweets was observed by Erdogan regarding the Australian bushfires. This study has demonstrated the significance of the Internet and ICTs in diplomacy by demonstrating the impact of technology on society. The analysis has also shown that tweets not only were posted for visibility in the Twitter environment but also for visibility and coverage in the media under the theme of political posturing. The manner in which these have revolutionized communication and interaction has implications for diplomacy, since communication is essential in all ways ICTs offer. In addition, the emergence of new social applications and technology is altering collective behaviour by transferring the social components of real-world practices, values, norms, and behaviours that constitute cultures to the online world, regardless of location.

The study also aimed to demonstrate that Twitter and other social media platforms have become essential channels of diplomatic communication, even among the state leaders. In this context, tweeting by heads of state and government is becoming the norm. Even while the investigation has revealed a certain propensity to tweet about regional issues, the requirement to respond to circumstances in real time has transformed the Tweet into a diplomatic tool, hence transforming diplomatic practice into an innovative digital diplomacy.

In spite of this, the necessity to reply in real time may necessitate that both public and diplomatic agents receive the information simultaneously, with the delivery of the message taking precedence above its correctness. This may also leave diplomats without sufficient information to reply to queries or take measures connected to the tweet's position. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the applications necessitate that states develop a comprehensive national and international Twitter policy. The delivery of a message that should be sent in real time to respond to a situation must be carefully analysed prior to posting in order to guarantee the message's efficacy, its aim, and its audience, and to be able to reply. The use of official accounts by heads of state and government, ministers, and other relevant authorities should be limited to the duration of their tenure in office.

The use of Twitter to send political messages prioritizes the delivery of the message over its content, which is contradictory to the primary diplomatic function of conveying short information quickly. This reduces the effectiveness of communication since there is more room for

interpretation of the message. It is also vital to note that the tweet's ability to reach a large audience depends on retweets and comments in the uploaded message, making it dependent on the number of followers and chain of distribution among followers who are political leaders, state authorities, and diplomatic organisations.

Contribution in Literature

Twiplomacy or the conduct of diplomacy on Twitter will keep breaking down barriers between politicians and individuals exposed to politics over time, while its greatest quality is its ability to create a discourse with the foreign public as discussed before. While this process bears many advantages thanks to the ICTs, it also changes the DNA of diplomatic theory, just as Twitter changes the conventional and formal forms of diplomatic communication. Email and Internet communication, for instance, have reconfigured diplomatic scenarios by cutting distances between countries and subverting the concept of protocol. It is the reality that Twitter has assumed a variety of diplomatic functions, linkages, and contacts between nations, which is further evidence that social networks are expanding their sphere of influence daily. Direct connection between users and foreign leaders in social networks is a new method of interaction for the development of joint policies, altering traditional diplomatic ties and pushing them into digital. In addition, politicians throughout the world are paying a growing amount of attention to social networks, which have become ideological battlegrounds, and this study suggests that this phenomenon will continue for a considerable time. Thus, the evolution of social networks will mandate new interaction norms, which may pave the way for more effective services than Twitter, which presently dominates diplomatic efforts on the virtual stage. Stationed in such a growing literature that changes over time through new trends, events and political and social transitions, this study has aimed at contributing to the digital diplomacy bolstered by the introduction of the ICTs and that the method can be applied in different timelines and different samples to reveal the impact of the ICTs on diplomacy and measure the effectiveness of the platforms that host diplomatic actions. Since the online collective norms and behaviour are subject to change constantly (Lin, 2015), further studies will need to adapt to those manners and explicate the increasing use of digital diplomacy in various periods to observe the scale of change – the period following the COVID-19 may reveal a set of distinctive results since the pandemic enforced the use of Twitter to a great extent (Dalili and Dastani, 2020).

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