

Digitalization of African Diplomacy: Disclosure, Challenges and Potential Implication in Transnational Affairs

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ABSTRACT

The invention of the internet and technological tools was revolutionary to the mankind, since, tasks that previously took years to complete, now with the use of AI and technologies, everything can be solved within seconds. From this perspective, multiple disciplines began to take advantage of ICTs and move to the digital sphere. Diplomacy was one of these sub-disciplines. Hence, digital diplomacy has been adopted by most of the world's leaders and Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs), to foster public diplomacy, stakeholder engagement, crisis response, and international perceptions. In this context, Western digital diplomacy path of evolvement had significant attention by scholars and authors alike. Whereas, we notice that in this field, Africa did not benefit of such privilege. Nevertheless, the African countries made noteworthy efforts and dedicated time and research to overcome the digital divide and other infrastructure obstacles that it suffers from.

Kenya was one of the mentioned African countries that dedicated time, implemented policies and strategies to improve the use of information and communication technologies in government's workflow and foreign affairs.

Therefore, this thesis aims to examine how the Kenyan MFA is implemented on different digital platforms by comparing it to one of the digital diplomacy leaders in Western countries, the United States (U.S.).

This choice of reference is due to the undeniable leadership of the U.S. in the field of digital diplomacy. With millions followers on its diplomatic accounts and ability to

engage on digital networking, the United States has become a key actor of world digital diplomacy.

This research thesis argues that the presence of Kenyan MFA and Kenyan leaders on social media had made a huge difference in the conduction of traditional diplomacy, and it is evident to state that Kenya has a remarkable presence on different social media platforms, worthy of scholar' attention.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Kenya, MFA, AI, Invention, Internet

ÖZ

İnternetin ve teknolojik araçların icadı insanlık için devrim niteliğindeydi, çünkü daha önce tamamlanması yıllar alan görevler, şimdi yapay zeka ve teknolojilerin kullanımıyla her şey saniyeler içinde çözülebiliyor. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, birden çok disiplin BİT'ten yararlanmaya ve dijital alana geçmeye başladı. Diplomasi de bu alt disiplinlerden biriydi. Bu nedenle, dijital diplomasi, kamu diplomasisini, paydaş katılımını, kriz müdahalesini ve uluslararası algıları geliştirmek için dünya liderlerinin çoğu ve Dışişleri Bakanlıkları (Dışişleri Bakanlıkları) tarafından benimsenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Batı dijital diplomasisinin gelişim yolu, hem akademisyenler hem de yazarlar tarafından büyük ilgi gördü. Oysa Afrika'nın bu alanda böyle bir ayrıcalıktan yararlanmadığını görüyoruz. Bununla birlikte, Afrika ülkeleri, maruz kaldıkları dijital uçurum ve diğer altyapı engellerinin üstesinden gelmek için kayda değer çabalar sarf etti ve zaman ve araştırma ayırdı.

Kenya, hükümetin iş akışında ve dış ilişkilerinde bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin kullanımını iyileştirmek için zaman ayıran, politikalar ve stratejiler uygulayan söz konusu Afrika ülkelerinden biriydi.

Bu nedenle, bu tez, Kenya MFA'nın farklı dijital platformlarda nasıl uygulandığını, Batı ülkelerindeki dijital diplomasi liderlerinden biri olan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD) ile karşılaştırarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu referans seçimi, ABD'nin Dijital Diplomasi alanındaki yadsınamaz liderliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Diplomatik hesaplarında milyonlarca takipçisi olan ABD, dünya dijital diplomasisinde önemli bir oyuncu haline geldi.

Bu araştırma tezi, Kenyalı Dışışleri Bakanlıđı ve Kenyalı liderlerin sosyal medyadaki varlıđının geleneksel diplomasinin yürütölmesinde büyük bir fark yarattıđını savunuyor ve Kenya'nın farklı sosyal medya platformlarında dikkate değeri bir varlıđa sahip olduđunu belirtmek açık.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Diplomasi, Kenya, MFA, AI, Buluş, İnternet

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to all my friends and family that had believed in me, and provided me constantly with encouraging words and motivation to finalize my thesis statement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AFCTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AUFT	African Union Financial Institution
AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FMP	Free Movement of Persons
IR	International Relations
ITCU	International Tele-Communication Union
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
MFA	Free Movement of Persons
SAAM	Single African Air Transport Market
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States of America
USIA	The United States Information Agency
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital diplomacy has become increasingly popular in the political sphere and in the IR field in particular. The employment of ICTs and innovations in various sectors of life has become a necessity. In fact, we have seen instances of digital diplomacy being used at multiple world major events. Notably, the recent covid-19 crisis, which has imposed the use of these ICTs tools on countries, governments, and foreign ministries. Not forgetting also the 2011 crisis, namely the Arab Spring that has had major effect on the emphasis of the importance of digital diplomacy in the world as well as in Africa.

Therefore, this thesis statement will emphasize the enhanced use of ICTs and innovation in the conduction of diplomacy in an African context. Consequently, although the African continent has started efforts and conducted multiple strategies on the behalf of digital transformation, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the latter. Most, if not all the literature that was conducted in this regard was characterized by their “Western-centric” theme. And while there is a surplus of Western literature that examines the digitalization of diplomacy, the African continent still lacks the fundamental literature and clarifications of its use of digital diplomacy. Thus, my thesis statement will examine the implementation of African MFAs, choosing Kenya as a case study for the examination of its use of different digital platforms in the conduction of diplomacy, since Kenya is considered one of

the main active states in enhancing digital tools and the direction of an effective digital diplomacy.

In fact, According to the Twipolomacy survey conducted in 2022, the current president of Kenya William Ruto is 13th of rank worldwide in term of twitter usage, and the 1st in Africa. Also considering that, Kenya had made considerable efforts to enhance digital tools and develop digital diplomacy. The Kenyan government, as evidenced by its policies and strategies, has invested in ICT capacities and essential infrastructure by purchasing items such as video conferencing facilities, cloud storage tools, and hard drive-saving tools. Additionally, the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) , in contrast to many other countries on the African continent, has been taught about the mendacity of training and the development of ICTs and technologies.

This study will be in the form of a comparative analysis of Kenyan MFA's presence of social media in reference to the U.S. MFA. This choice of reference is due to the undeniable leadership of the U.S. in field of digital diplomacy. With an average of 20.9 million followers on its diplomatic accounts, the United States has become a key actor of world digital diplomacy. Since its first digital diplomacy programs that date back to 2002 with the Bush Administration, the United States has developed its network and reach while using social media as a daily tool of foreign policy, with an average of 63.1K tweets written every month. Apart from its place of leader in the diplomatic world that contributes to the development of its digital diplomatic practices, the United States also benefits from the presence of ICT companies and GAFAM on its soil.

Hence, comparing one of the Africa's leader in digital diplomacy with one of the world's significant leader in digital diplomacy, will allow the measurement of the implementation of the said diplomacy in the African continent, in a sense that it will help trace the depth of its implementation in the use of different digital tools and social media platforms, as well as to confirm or refute whether Kenya is following the right steps in the enhancement ICT and the full implementation in digital diplomacy.

In this thesis research, two theoretical frameworks will be emphasized. The first framework is liberal institutionalism since the majority of digital strategies being implemented on the African continent are generally promoted by different organizations and institutions. Taking the example of the African Union, which has been working on multiple strategies to bridge the digital divide and drag its population into the digital sphere. Hence, develop their digital literacy and communication tools. Further, the second theoretical framework will be "track two diplomacy", which emphasizes communication between unofficial, non-state actors and groups, on different platforms. Thus, with the use of multiple informal tools , and open discussion and negotiations, effective results and smooth interaction can take place.

The thesis fundamental question is: **How deep is the implementation of Kenyan** the thesis will be elaborating on the challenges and opportunities of digital diplomacy on the African continent, as well as answering the fundamental assumptions and bases of the research statement.

The purpose of this study is to present an exclusive research on the digitalization of diplomacy in the African continent, as the subject has not been thoroughly studied, evaluated, or examined in African scholarly literature. Furthermore, the study's purpose is to identify the potential growth points of African digital diplomacy, as well as to show its constraints and alternatives solutions for them. Furthermore, the heart of this thesis statement is the Kenyan MFA, which will be employed as a case study and will be carefully examined from multiple angles and levels. Thus, concluding the level of the implementation of Kenyan MFA in digital platforms and proposing an innovative research that will serve the African literature in this filed.

The research in this thesis was initiated with general terminologies and conceptualizations, which were later applied to a more specific case study. This structure demonstrates the deductive nature of the thesis research methodology. Accordingly, the first chapter of this thesis statement presents the theoretical framework chosen for this research, in which it we will be linking the use of liberal institutionalism and 'Track Two Diplomacy' to the use of digital tools in the conduct of diplomacy. While the second fundamental chapter will be highlighting the general terminologies about diplomacy, ICT tools, and digital diplomacy on the African continent. Thirdly, the thesis will examine the challenges and potential growth of African digital diplomacy in a broader sense. Then it will get more specific by looking at the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs' implementation of digital platforms for public diplomacy promotion and management. Finally, we will analyze the findings and conclude the thesis argument.

Accordingly, it is evident to highlight some of the limitations that had hindered the conduction of this thesis research. One limitation of researching on digital diplomacy

in Africa is the limited availability and quality of data and information on the topic. Many African countries have limited infrastructure for internet and digital technologies, making it difficult to access reliable data on the use and impact of digital diplomacy. In addition, a second limitation is showcased in the data collection methods available for studying digital diplomacy. In the sense that, the use of digital technologies is constantly evolving and may not be accurately captured through traditional research methods. Additionally, one other limitation is the limited understanding and utilization of digital diplomacy in many African countries. Despite the increasing importance of digital technologies in global diplomacy, many African countries still lag behind in terms of digital capabilities and their use in diplomatic activities. This can limit the generalizability of research findings and the ability to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of digital diplomacy in the whole continent.

Moreover, the focus on examination of the Kenyan MFA presence on social media can be hard, due to the changing nature of social media platforms and algorithms. The ways in which social media is used, and the ways in which users interact with it, can change rapidly, making it difficult to study the MFA's presence in a consistent manner over time.

One more limitation is the potential for self-selection bias among social media users. The people who choose to follow the MFA's accounts on social media may not be representative of the general population or target audience, leading to a skewed understanding of the impact and reach of the MFA's presence. Additionally, the limited availability and quality of data on the MFA's social media presence can also present a challenge. The MFA may not have complete and accurate data on their

social media activity, and the data that is available may be limited in scope or not provide a comprehensive understanding of the MFA's presence. Finally, cultural and linguistic differences across social media platforms can also be seen as a limitation to the comparability of research findings and the ability to make generalizations about the MFA's presence. The ways in which social media is used may vary greatly across platforms, making it difficult to draw broad conclusions about the MFA's presence on social media.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Digital transformation had nearly relocated most, if not all, human activity to the digital sphere. Considering that digital technologies have revolutionized the practice of international relations and diplomacy, the use of ICT tools and social media has become crucial for all foreign ministries, embassies, and in most diplomatic missions. Furthermore, as more institutions devote time and effort to the deployment of ICT tools and technologies to pursue diplomatic and socio-economic goals, this digital transformation has the potential to reinvigorate Africa's continental diplomacy.

As a consequence, the theoretical framework of this thesis statement will concentrate on liberal institutionalism as well as track II diplomacy, seeing as the plurality of digital transformation strategies and the process of digitizing diplomacy in the African continent are mainly enhanced and moved by the core assumptions of the liberal paradigms, and also giving that the concept of track diplomacy which is derived from the science and technology theory, helps to theorize the informal interaction that may occur on digital sphere between unofficial and non-state actors to promote diplomacy and facilitated interactions .

2.1 Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism¹ surmises that domestic and international institutions play a

¹ Mearshiemer, J. J. (2009) .The False Promise of International Institutions. London: Roudlege.

vital role in enhancing cooperation and peace amongst states and nations. This IR theory gained prominence after World War II, as well as after the establishment of the United Nations as an institution to advocate peace and cooperation, whichever increased its implementations. In African scholastics, institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States ²(ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) are regarded as significant models of liberal institutionalism. Moreover, the AU has been a strong actor in encouraging the utilization of ICT tools and new technologies, along with the promotion of new digital transformation strategies, which then would enable a digital transformation of the entire continent.

Being firmly ingrained in the history of liberal institutionalism, this IR theory encourages cooperation and trade as a means for creating unity among states and enhancing diplomatic relations, rather than going to war as a means of dispute settlement. Contradictory to many realist approaches, liberal institutionalism tends to discourage the narrow advancement of individual self-interests and would instead encourage cooperation and call for universal membership in international institutions, since the interests would then go beyond the self/state interests, to a more broad view that incorporates mutual interests and universal goods.

As previously stated, one the key assumptions of liberal institutionalism is that trade ³among states should be encouraged. And in order to have successful economic relations among states, an effective, facilitated diplomacy would be necessary. In this context, Several African institutions dedicate huge budgets and conduct scientific

² Kenechukwu, M. (2015) 'The Impact of liberal institutionalism on the activities of ECOWAS', International Journal of Politics and Good Governance. 6(3). P.1-9.

³ Kenechukwu .M. Ibid p.7

research in order to facilitate digital integration - the digitalization of diplomacy- to achieve smooth economic operations on the continent and abroad.

In addition to that, liberal institutionalism also emphasizes the use of technology and innovative tools that facilitate cooperation and clear communication; however, formal institutions should monitor and promote these operations, thereby establishing treaties, summits, conventions, as well as sanctions to mitigate the workflows. According to Joshua S_ Goldstein and Jon, liberalism is a subset of international relations⁴ that regards law in and international organization as a solid base for setting norms and relations among states; cooperation is entirely feasible if states begin to act as a community rather than autonomous units.

Taking a look on the historical overview of the theory, in the lines of international relations filed, neo-liberalism was a novel critique that emerged in 1980 to disprove the realist view. The realist paradigms were developed on the assumptions that nation-states are the primary actors and that the international system is anarchical by nature, additionally, states must pursue their self-interests. Whilst neoliberal's paradigms highlighted the significance of international organizations and institutions as a medium and tool for preventing wars and state conflict; According to neoliberals, it is more rational to seek a permanent gain with minimal damages rather than a quick gain with long-term damages that are resolved from wars; and latter on, this perspective was known as "**liberal institutionalism.**" J.S Goldstein and J. I Pevehouse.

⁴ Goldstein .S (2008) . International Relations. .Jon C. Pevehouse, pp.101.

Furthermore, liberal institutionalism sees high prospects for sustained cooperation. By forming linked-minded groups and building themselves through domestic and international institutions, states can avoid competition, conflict, and war.

This liberal perspective can indeed be traced back to Immanuel Kant's ⁵ thesis on perpetual peace, in which he offers three interconnected prescriptions:

1. Each state should pursue a republican form of government with separate legislative and executive powers.
2. These republics should form a Pacific federation whose members are willing to cede power at any moment;
3. "World citizens" can comport themselves peacefully and must be free to travel and carry business in countries apart from their own.

Due to the separation of executive power and legislative power, war is difficult to wage, since the citizen who suffers the most damage and bloodshed must approve it first. Furthermore, the federation that Immanuel Kant referred to is similar to institutions and organizations in that it facilitates trade and encourages diplomatic and economic relations, thereby making war secondary. In addition, if the state is assembled by institutions and organizations at both the domestic and international levels, its citizens will be more inclined to respect the rights of other in the same circulating environment of institutions. Since they will be sharing many things in common, as witnessed in the case of the European Union. Leading to fewer inter-state conflicts. Hence, the Kantian system includes political institutions as a means to prevent war and maintain peace. Additionally, Robert Axelrod and Robert. O

⁵ Kant, I. (1991). *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. In H. Reiss (Ed.), *Kant: Political Writings* (2nd ed., pp. 93-130). Cambridge University Press.

Keohane⁶, perceive that, it is really difficult to achieve cooperation in a world where politics are difficult. However, with similar values and norms, cooperation is possible when actors behave based on the performance of others. Anarchy occurs when interests arise, however, cooperation is also possible when values and norms are shared. Furthermore, among the main objectives of liberal institutionalism is to challenge the realist understandings of the international system. In which, liberal institutionalism asserts that relations among states can be smooth and facilitated with the help of both international and domestic institutions.

In Davide Mitrany's book, "The Progress of International Government", ⁷the tenets of realists were challenged with the advent of the functionalist notion in the early 1930s. As a result of the functional theory, authority is not necessarily monopolized by nation-states. Instead, the governments must be conducted on the basis of a set of functions that should be carried out by a mix of state and non-state actors who specialize in a variety of tasks across national borders. Throughout the years, the tenets of functionalism became self-perpetuating; as states and entities, in a wide variety of functional areas, they have developed expertise and collaborated effectively. Similarly to liberalism cores, these sorts of acts discourage war, as even nation-states ceded more authority to international institutions. Likewise, in liberal institutionalism, states are collaborators with the ultimate objective of ensuring citizens' well-being.

⁶ Axelrod, R., & Keohane, R. O. (1985). Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions. *World Politics*, 38(1), 226-254.

⁷ Mitrany, D. (1933). *The Progress of International Government*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Additionally, liberalism had the opportunity to influence international politics after World War I, with the League of Nations ⁸ that was created by the United States President, Woodrow Wilson. In his argument, he called for a remarkable manifestation of Kantian thought, in which states had to share values and connect economies. In spite of this, the outbreak of WWII and the incompetence of this organization in preventing the selfish interests of state leaders had opened a wide door for realists to critique liberal institutions and to raise questions concerning their effectiveness and incapability. Conversely, the establishment of the United Nations Organization, coupled with the formation of the European Economic Integration and the African and European Unions, underscored the importance of institutional development. Institutions and organization are becoming day after day implemented in international politics.

According to James L. Richardson, domestic and international institutions ⁹play an essential role in promoting peace, and although the League of Nations did fail, it remained a vital attempt to avert war. It is the first organization with universal membership, and it did considerable efforts to cultivate peace and cooperation.

The expansion of institutionalism and organization was first witnessed in Western countries, although we cannot overlook the strong presence and impressive achievements of African institutions. As a consequence, organizations, such as the AU and ECOWAS and smart Africa initiative and many others, have carefully followed the pattern of liberal institutionalism, with concrete objectives which

⁸ Keohane, R. O. (2012). Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism. *International Organization*, 26(2), 125-245. SAGE Publications.

⁹ Richardson, J.L. (2008). The Ethics of Neoliberal Institutionalism. *International Affairs*, 84(4), 829-845.

include continental integration and the digital transformation of services and communication tools, hence facilitating diplomatic relations and fostering economical deals.

2.2 Track Two Diplomacy

Track II diplomacy refers to dialogues between former senior officials, religious leaders, NGO functionaries, and academics that build innovative ties and ideas essential to fostering international understanding and settlement. Moreover, unofficial channel enable as well as guide Track II ¹⁰levels discussion. As a result, the dialogues are more genuine and open, allowing participants to find common ground that would be difficult to reach through official negotiations. In other words, track II is primarily required when government-level negotiations fail or do not reach what was required. Moreover, track II debates can promote understanding, unity, and peace by resolving issues and overcoming divisions.

A strong Track II advancement can also result innovative perspectives and ideas, as well as unity within institutions, civil society leaders, and academia. However, in order to ensure the legitimacy of the conversations, creating an effective track II dialogue requires a variety of components. Knowing that, it is usually an underappreciated aspect of diplomacy. It is crucial to comprehend the more casual character of doing diplomacy on social media. Track two diplomacy can be employed to conceptualize digital diplomacy.

Whereas traditional diplomacy is referred to as Track One diplomacy, more informal discussions on digital platforms combining former and current policymakers are

¹⁰ Bohmelt, T. (2010). The Effectiveness of Tracks of Diplomacy Strategies in Third-Party Interventions. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 27(1), 3-25.

referred¹¹ to as Track Two diplomacy. The interactions we engage in, as well as the social arrangements that evolve around these technological innovations and human practices, comprise an ensemble "marked by dynamic linkages and interdependencies". This method ¹²of analyzing networks, their interacting processes, and their outcomes allows for a more multidisciplinary strategy that takes into account all aspects that influence the digital sphere.

¹¹ Kwa Chong, G. (2017) Track Two Diplomacy: The Untiring Relevance of CSCAP in Alan, C. (Ed.), *Forward Engagement; RSIS as a Think Tank of International Studies and Security in the Asia-Pacific*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. pp. 81-87.

¹² Bohmelt. Ibid .pp 11

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The Evolution of Diplomacy

Diplomacy is mainly a way for states to achieve their foreign policy goals without using force, propaganda, or laws. Instead of that, it should be smooth, and just with use of communication between officials, agreements or the make adjustments/settlements can be achieved.

Moreover, negotiating has been around since long before Edmund Burke gave it the label of "diplomacy" in 1796. Before then, it was known as negotiation, or "négociation continuelle"¹³ which was a type of permanent diplomacy, no matter if the relationship between the two groups was friendly or not. Nevertheless, diplomacy isn't just about what professional diplomatic agents execute. Taking a look back in the middle Ages, these roles were usually given to a "nuncios" and a plenipotentiary. The nuncio was just like a walking letter, and the plenipotentiary had full power to negotiate on behalf of someone else. However, in the second half of the 15th century, this was all replaced with general rules. Furthermore, Britain eventually made their Foreign Office in 1782, and the US State Department was created a few years later. China, Japan, and Turkey followed in the mid-1800s.

¹³ G.R. Berridge (2002), *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 1, 5-6, 105-12

Moreover, one of the main differences with the French system was that they always kept their negotiations secretive. They also believed that trickery parties had no place in diplomacy, and that agreements should be based on what was best for each side. Diplomacy also became more professional, with people having to be trained and given ranks and payments. Basically, it became more monitories as leaders and state nation wanted it to be done by experts and not amateurs.

3.2 The ICT as A Strong Tool

In this day and age, power in the global informational society is less about territory and military, but more about “how” and “when” you can access to information. We're now living in a highly unpredictable and turbulent world, where knowledge, beliefs, and ideas allow political actors to achieve their goals without physical confrontations. Networks are waging wars, and even small players can outwit huge opponents using asymmetrical strategies. However, we don't really understand the complicated dynamics of these conflicts. States used to be the only ones in charge, but the rise of technology and the internet has opened the door for nongovernmental organizations and social movements to have an influence on the globe¹⁴.

Accordingly, this has changed the nature of security; it's no longer just about a state's territorial integrity, but also about protecting the efficient national and transnational information infrastructures that are so important for developed countries. There are now plenty of threats from hostile non-state actors on land and in cyberspace that still needs to be regulated and well protected.

¹⁴ Amir D. (2005). *The Information Age and Diplomacy: An Emerging Strategic Vision in World Affairs*, Boca Raton Publishers, Florida, USA. p. 85

3.3 Conceptual Understanding of Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy is one of the topics that have gained the attention of international disciplinary analysis. Nowadays, ICT tools have become a powerful instrument in a multitude of areas, as evidenced by the advent of the covid-19 crisis as well as the Arab spring. These crises proved that ICT tools and technologies are the most practical approaches to the salvation of the mankind isolation and solo guarantee for the life workflow continuation. As a consequence, most societies across the globe have begun to realize the importance of digitalization in most, if not all, aspects of their lives.

Unfortunately, African countries have long been famous for their technological lag and digital gap. However, now these governments are also dedicating time and effort to narrow this digital gap and fix their weak digital infrastructures that had kept them for years lagging behind.

Furthermore, digitalization has the potential to transform all aspects of life (e-commerce, online education, and online services). However, the scope of this study will be narrowed to the digitalization of diplomacy in the “African” context.

Accordingly, Holmes defines digital diplomacy ¹⁵as “the use of digital information and communication technologies (such as the internet and social media) for diplomatic purposes”. The digitalization of diplomacy is also inter-disciplinary

¹⁵ Bjola, C., & Holmes, M. (2015). *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. Routledge.

¹⁶term in the sense that it integrates communication tools with international disciplines with their technologically digitalized subfields.

Often, the term digital diplomacy refers to the use of ICTs and technologies to manage and accomplish diplomatic goals. Furthermore, this latter entails the use of modern elements of information and communication such as Twitter, Instagram, Zoom, WhatsApp, artificial intelligence, as well as cyber-security.

In addition to that, the term "digital diplomacy" also includes statecraft, Ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs), as well as embassies and governments. Besides technological tools, these foreign affairs ministries also require international communication, soft power, international relations, and public diplomacy.

Thus, we can perhaps perceive the interconnectedness of the subfields under the term "digital diplomacy" and maybe understand its importance and why it deserves scholarly attention since it differs greatly from the traditional diplomacy term. As diplomacy is a broad term that incorporates multiple forms of practicing this latter, the application of these innovations was never something "strange" to the field of IR; the study of international relations, including diplomacy, has always viewed technological tools as an exogenous driver. According to Daniel W Drezres ,
¹⁷technology and international relations have a 2-way relationship, which basically means that, as much as technology changes IR and societies, the reverse is also true, since domestic imperatives accelerate innovation, as we witnessed with the arrival of

¹⁶ Fatima, R.(ed.) (2021) *The Artificial Intelligence and Digital Diplomacy : Challenges and Opportunities*. 1st edn. New York : Spring Cham.

¹⁷ Daniel, D.(2019) 'Technological Change and International Relations', *International Relations*,33(2), pp. 286 - 303. doi: 10.1177/0047117819834629

the covid-19 pandemic; many platforms were urgently created in a matter of weeks or less to alleviate the situation that was about to occur.

If we were to give a conceptual identification to our topic of study, the digital age in which we live has altered the term diplomacy. Some scholars such as Holmes argue that the term "digitalization of diplomacy" emphasizes the use of ICT tools or technological elements in diplomacy more conveniently, but there are other terms that refer to the digitalization of diplomacy, such as E-diplomacy, Digipolimacy, Twiplomacy, Networked Diplomacy, and Virtual Diplomacy. However, digital terms have also been fused with traditional diplomatic terms such as consular diplomacy, bilateral digital diplomacy, and corporate digital diplomacy.

However, according to (Hockin and Millisen):¹⁸

[the adoption of “digital” habits] takes time, and for technological enthusiasts to simply proclaim the arrival of a ‘new statecraft’ in the form of what is variously termed e-diplomacy, digital diplomacy, cyber diplomacy and ‘twiplomacy’ is too simplistic. Paradoxically, greater complexity encourages Nescafé-school analyses and the search for simple explanations about what is happening to diplomacy as the regulating mechanism of the society of states. As in other epochs of fast technological change, the lure of quick fixes addressing multifaceted processes of change in diplomacy appears almost irresistible at the opening of the ‘digital age’. [1, p.9].

¹⁸ Hocking B. and Mellisen, J. (2015). Digital Diplomacy in the Digital Age. *The Hague: Clingendael Institute*. Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendae

In addition, these scholars argue that the term digital diplomacy is only a human tendency to simplify a complex and encompassing phenomenon. Thus, these terms created by scholars and researchers ensure that these multiple complex changes that work together to create one unique concept - digital diplomacy - can be clearly understood.

In light of this, literature surveys have shown that a "fractured terminology" of digital diplomacy poses definitional and conceptual challenges. Since most of the definitions that have been associated with the term refer to the use of social media and digital tools by foreign policy officials and diplomats. As was stated before, the term "Digital"- "Diplomacy" incorporates multiple terms and areas that are interconnected.

In 2016, Bukola Adesina¹⁹, in an attempt to come up with a more broad definition of digital diplomacy, argues that digital diplomacy includes not only digital platforms but also a range of elements that are involved in foreign policy practices, such as knowledge management within governments, public diplomacy and policy planning, consular communication and responses, disaster management, internet governance, mobilization of internal and external resources, etc.

Further, if we examine the term in a more 'macro' way, we have to distinguish between private digital diplomacy and public digital diplomacy. In the former case, digital diplomacy refers to confidential practices that take place behind closed doors (administration, inter-ministerial liaison, trade negotiations, political negotiations,

¹⁹ Turianskyi, Y., & Wekes, B. (2021). African Digital Diplomacy: Emergence, Evolution, and the Future. *South African journal of international affairs*, 28(3), 341-359.

etc.), while public diplomacy refers to the promotion of a country's image, preventing war, and enhancing economic relations.

3.4 The Arab Spring's Role in the Emergence of Digital Diplomacy

In order to understand the digitalization of diplomacy it may be beneficial to identify some of the events and processes that led the MFAs to adopt digital tools. One such event can be the Arab Spring²⁰. The Arab Spring, as series of protests and uprisings across the Arab world in 2011, had a significant impact on digital diplomacy. According to Professor Phillip Seib of the University of Southern California has argued²¹, MFAs were taken by surprise by these democratic Arab revolts as they were not monitoring the environment in which these revolts took shape- that of Facebook. Knowing that Facebook did not cause the Arab Spring, however it did serve as a modern day town square in which digital citizens came together to openly criticize their governments, an occurrence that could never have happened offline²². Thus following the Arab Spring, MFAs began to migrate online so as to better anticipate events in foreign countries.

Moreover, the events of the Arab Spring demonstrated the power of social media in mobilizing citizens and coordinating protests. The use of platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube was instrumental in disseminating information and organizing demonstrations. This increased the importance of digital diplomacy, as governments recognized the need to engage with citizens through digital channels to manage public opinion and build trust.

²⁰ Ilan, M.(2020) 'How External Shocks Alter Digital Diplomacy's Trajectory' , 4(3), pp.56-70.

²¹ Seib, P. (2014). New Media and Public Diplomacy in the New Arab World. In: Hudson, L., Iskandar, A., Kirk, M. (eds) Media Evolution on the Eve of the Arab Spring. Palgrave Macmillan .

²² Ilan Manor .Ibid, pp.19

The Arab Spring also highlighted the role of digital diplomacy in shaping international perceptions of events. Governments and media outlets used digital platforms to promote their narratives and influence international opinion. The conflicting narratives and information that emerged online during the Arab Spring demonstrated the need for digital diplomacy strategies that can manage and shape online discourse. This led to an increased focus on digital diplomacy as a tool for promoting national interests and shaping international perceptions.

In addition, the 2011 event also brought attention to the need for digital diplomacy in crisis response. In a sense that, the speed and scale of the events of the Arab Spring, had put pressure on governments to respond quickly and effectively. Moreover, the role of digital diplomacy in crisis response is becoming a key consideration for governments and international organizations, as they sought to understand how to effectively use digital channels to respond to rapidly evolving event. The Arab Spring demonstrated the need for digital diplomacy strategies that can respond quickly to crisis situations, manage online discourse, and shape international perceptions.

3.5 The Evolution of Digital Diplomacy

Nowadays, many of us perceive digital diplomacy as a new concept. With the advent of covid-19 and the enhancement of ICT tools, many MFAs and organizations, -including the African Union-, have started meeting more online and emphasizing the use of telecommunication tools. Nevertheless, this impression should be moderated, since digital diplomacy -like other fields and sectors that use and cooperate with digital technologies-, has existed for nearly three decades (since early 1980), and has kept on evolving ever since.

As reported ²³by the Madrid-based website "Diplomacy data", the United States Information Agency (USIA) published a book titled "Public diplomacy in the computer age" in 1984. This can be seen as the first indication that ICT tools and digital devices were employed for diplomatic purposes at that time. Moreover, some scholars trace this pioneering moment in the advancement of digital technology back to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. During this summit, a group of green activists used e-mail to mobilize and communicate with each other.

In addition, activists also used online technologies to create an effective network of international organizations and enhance social media, which eventually led to the signing of the land mine ban treaty by 140 countries.

Furthermore, the first unit for computer applications in diplomacy was also established at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomacy in Malta. We have seen the use of digital diplomacy in handling matters from the very early stages of the process. For example²⁴, in 1994 there was an exchange of emails on economic diplomacy between former US president Bill Clinton and his Swedish counterpart, former Prime Minister Carl Bildt. This was because it was then a more convenient and quicker way to communicate interests and goods.

In the late 1990s, the expansion of the internet was so rapid that more than 100 million people had access to this revolutionary tool; and diplomatic practices, like many other sectors, benefited from the industrial revolution tools and technology, with MFAs and governments, as well as diplomats, becoming more regularly employ

²³ Turianskyi, Y., & Wekes, B. Ibid, pp.18

²⁴ Turianskyi, Y., & Wekes, B. Ibid, pp.18

it, this was more noticeable in Western countries than the rest of the world. By the 2000s, the internet had gained widespread public use, and hundreds of digital tools had become more accessible. Several platforms and social networking sites appeared in quick succession, including blogging (in the early 2000s), Wikipedia in 2001, YouTube, and Facebook, among others.

People used these types of platforms as well as politicians and diplomats; nowadays, diplomats frequently communicate news, personal beliefs, and public opinions through social media platforms with thousands of followers.

3.6 Non-State Actors' Role in Enhancing Digital Diplomacy in Africa

In recent years, non-state actors, including civil society organizations, media outlets, and technology companies, have emerged as important players in promoting digital diplomacy²⁵ in Africa.

These actors are playing a crucial role in promoting digital diplomacy by providing alternative narratives, shaping international perceptions, and facilitating stakeholder engagement.

One of the key ways in which non-state actors promote digital diplomacy in Africa is by **providing alternative narratives**. Non-state actors are often independent of government control, which allows them to promote alternative perspectives and narratives that challenge dominant perspectives. This can help to create a more diverse and nuanced understanding of events and issues, and can contribute to

²⁵ Melissen, J. (2005). *The New Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice*. In Melissen Jan (ed), *The New Public Diplomacy*. Soft Power in International Relations, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

shaping the said international perceptions.

For example, civil society organizations can use social media to promote their perspectives on human rights and social justice issues, while media outlets can use digital platforms to report on events from a different perspective.

Another important way in which non-state actors promote digital diplomacy in Africa is by **facilitating stakeholder engagement**. In a sense, that non-state actors are often well-connected to communities and stakeholders, and can play an important role in bringing these groups together and facilitating dialogue. For example, civil society organizations can use digital platforms to organize virtual consultations with communities and stakeholders, while media outlets can use digital channels to engage with audiences and promote public discourse. This type of stakeholder engagement can help to build trust, increase transparency, and promote accountability, all of which are important elements of effective digital diplomacy.

Finally, non-state actors play a crucial role in promoting digital diplomacy by **shaping international perceptions** of Africa. Through their use of digital platforms and channels, non-state actors can help to shape the way that events and issues are perceived by audiences around the world. For example, media outlets can use digital platforms to report on events in real-time, while civil society organizations can use digital channels to promote their perspectives on issues such as human rights and social justice.

In conclusion, non-state actors are playing a crucial role in promoting digital diplomacy in Africa. These actors are helping to promote transparency,

accountability, and stakeholder engagement, and are playing an important role in shaping the way that digital diplomacy is practiced and perceived in Africa. As digital diplomacy continues to evolve, non-state actors will likely play an even more important role in promoting digital diplomacy in Africa and around the world.

- **Examples of non-state actors that enhance digital diplomacy in Africa include**

Civil society organizations: These organizations promote digital diplomacy by using digital platforms to advocate for human rights and social justice issues, and by organizing virtual consultations with communities and stakeholders.

Media outlets: Media outlets play a crucial role in promoting digital diplomacy by reporting on events and issues from a different perspective, and by engaging with audiences through digital channels.

Technology companies: Technology companies can enhance digital diplomacy by providing innovative solutions for stakeholder engagement, such as online forums and virtual consultations.

Activists and influencers: Activists and influencers can promote digital diplomacy by using social media to advocate for causes and by shaping public discourse on important issues.

Academic institutions: Academic institutions can enhance digital diplomacy by conducting research on the impact of digital technologies on diplomacy, and by offering training and education programs on digital diplomacy.

Religious organizations: Religious organizations can play a role in promoting digital diplomacy by using digital platforms to promote interfaith dialogue and to advocate for peace and reconciliation.

These are just a few examples of the non-state actors that can enhance digital diplomacy in Africa. It is important to note that these actors play different roles and have different levels of influence, but all contribute to the development and practice of digital diplomacy in Africa.

3.7 The Evolution of African Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy became increasingly popular, and the use of social media and digital tools began to be implemented in almost every sector of our lives. Politicians, international relations pundits, and scholars from a range of disciplines began to devote time and research to finding new ways to make digital diplomacy more effective.

However, the existing scholarship is primarily rooted in a western perspective, and it is mostly characterized by a Eurocentric orientation, which lends the phenomenon a distinctly occidental context; Aside also from the fact that most of the industrial revolutions were witnessed in western societies, in addition to the digital gap that exists in most African nations, it had made it a little bit complicated to link this phenomenon - digitalization of diplomacy- to African countries. Yet, there is, however, a degree of veracity and penetration to this myth.

World statistics and internet usage indicate that most African countries are behind. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that from the mid-2000s, the continent started to devote time and effort to the adoption of updated technologies, thereby

enhancing its digital diplomacy. Several African countries have taken action in this regard in recent years. For instance, Kenya used Twitter to evacuate its citizens from South Sudan in 2013. This was in conjunction with South Africa, which is regarded as one of the most proficient technology adapters in the world, as well as Namibia, Mali, and Rwanda. Therefore, the idea is not new to the continent or governments.

Ilan Manor²⁶, in his research on digital diplomacy, titled "Traitors to Savors", asserts that many African MFAs have migrated online and they are active as their western counterparts. Thereby, this is a strong evidence that the digital divide is particularly narrowing.

Accordingly, Manor, Kampf, and Sergy also conducted a study that sought to clarify that, despite Africa's low internet penetration; its MFAs operates on websites and social media as good as their counterparts elsewhere.

Moreover, the study revealed that at the time of investigation, Ethiopia's MFAs had 34.6k followers on Twitter, Kenya's MFAs had more than 52.8 K followers, and Rwanda's MFAs had 16K.

Taking this results from a comparative approach, taking theses three countries in a comparison with their counterparts , from , France , UK , Germany , Finland ,Poland ; in terms of the use of social networking sites for diplomatic purposes , the African countries may seems to be lagging in terms of infrastructure and internet penetration

²⁶ Ilan.M, (2021) 'From 'traitors' to 'savior's: A longitudinal analysis of Ethiopian, Kenyan and Rwandan embassies' practice of digital Diaspora diplomacy', *South African Journal of International Affairs* , 28(3), pp. 403-427.

, however , they are as active as their western counterparts ²⁷, if not more . (as seen in figure 1).

Rank	Name	Handle	Country	Followers
13	WILLIAM RUTTO	@WILLIAMSRUTO	Kenya	5,6M
18	CYRIL RAMAPHOSA	@CYRILRAMAPHOSA	South Africa	2,5M
29	YOWERI MUSEVINI	@KAGUTAMUSEVENI	Uganda	2,9M
33	ANDREW HOLNESS	@ANDREWHOLNESSJM	Jamaica	311K
35	ABIY AHMED	@ABIYAHMEDALI	Ethiopia	1,4M
36	NANA AKUFO-ADDO	@NAKUFOADD	Ghana	2,5M
39	HAKAINDE HICHILEMA	@HHICHILEMA	Zambia	620K
41	MACKY SALL	@MACKY_SALL	Senegal	2,3M

Figure 1: Top 50 worldwide African leaders

Source:https://www.twiplomacy.com/_files/ugd/39473c_796ddb90bdd6484484476fdbb98927e2.pdf

Nonetheless, Illan Manor's research was seen as a positive addition to the academic study of digital diplomacy in Africa, however, it is worth to mention that , there are still many countries and regions of Africa that are totally absent in the digital sphere ; despite the penetration of the internet and social media, African digital diplomacy has yet to catch up. But keeping it positive and shedding the light on the prosperity points, the continent has been the fastest-growing region in terms of mobile use since 2013. Additionally, the use of ICT tools for diplomatic purposes has grown among MFAs on the continent.

Twiplomacy led a survey in 2019 which reported that African leaders, including

²⁷ Twiplomacy survey 2022 : World Leader Power Ranking.https://www.twiplomacy.com/_files/ugd/39473c_796ddb90bdd6484484476fdbb98927e2.pdf

Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta, Ghana's Nana Akufo-Ado, and Rwanda's Paul Kagame, are heavily using social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for diplomatic purposes. While the Kenyan president has a very large following on Twitter (7 million followers), Rwanda's Paul Kagame is among the most conversational. Combined with , Kagame that has 2.5 million followers on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. According to the same study, Ghana's Akufo-Ado has 421k Instagram followers. Yet, despite the fact that these leaders mentioned above represent a class of African leaders who are digital diplomacy enthusiasts, many of their counterparts continue to lag behind in their use of the most basic forms of digital diplomacy. For instance, Facebook is not used by the leaders of Eritrea, Mauritania, and Swaziland, according to the Twiplomacy report.

A related unpleasant aspect is that many other African countries' MFAs use social media in a fairly ordinary and non-exclusive approach to foreign policy and bilateral ties. In most cases, messages intended for civilian readership are used for diplomatic reasons only when the necessity arises. However, in accordance with a more comprehensive study of African diplomacy, the advent of covid19 has been a boon to digital diplomacy across the continent. Moreover, the pandemic's tribulations, prohibitions, and social distancing models appeared to have prompted the movement of all African MFAs, embassies, and diplomats to the digital sphere. Even the countries we mentioned before that were absent or "phobic"²⁸ about the use of ICT tools and innovative technology in the conduct of their diplomacy did not find another way out , but to enhance these electronic tools and start to develop knowledge about it . Hence , African presidents, diplomats, and MFAs have learned

²⁸ Endong . C,P,F (2020). Digitization of African Public Diplomacy: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities. International Journal of Digital Society, 11(2).DOI: 10.20533/ijds.2040.2570.2020.020.

and still learning , to use digital tools into their current duties In the past two years, for example, the majority of them have been compelled to design their bilateral or multilateral meetings in a virtual format.

Therefore , and as a result of the unanticipated constraints of the Corona outbreak, concepts including virtual conferences, virtual meetings and teleconferencing have "up over night" become more typical ways of organizing discussions and one of the most significant communication channels. Accordingly ,the Extraordinary Session of the ECOWAS ²⁹Heads of State and Government, scheduled on April 22 and 23, 2020, is a blatant example of this swift appeal to sophisticated forms of digitally assisted negotiation and communication platforms.

For instance, this conference was held via teleconference. Another noteworthy example is the East African Community's Heads of State Consultative Meeting, which was also held by teleconference on May 12, 2020. Additionally, the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, for example, attended the March 2020 session of the G20 Summit digitally rather than physically. Thus, the covid-19 pandemic compelled African presidents, diplomats, embassies, and MFAs to embrace the new era of digital diplomacy, integrating Internet-based habits (especially virtual meetings and virtual multilateral conferences) which had already been widespread in Western countries. As a consequence of the epidemic, African governments were able to swiftly conduct an assessment of their diplomacy and realize the critical imperative for further initiatives towards a more entrenched practice of digital diplomacy on the continent.

²⁹ Kenechukuwu. Ibid, p.8

Unfortunately, taking the fact that most African literature and diplomats described African MFAs and embassies' prompt use of paradigms such as: virtual multilateral and bilateral meetings and virtual conferences, as a novelty or an unprecedented change should indicate that African diplomacy has been stuck in the old paradigm-based use of conventional channels for years. Thus it is obvious that, despite the fact that the covid-19 pandemic appears to have "reformed" African countries into seeing the imperative to fully adapt ,and be at the forefront of the current digital revolution, all is not well with the whole African digital diplomacy , since , some of the continent states are still developing the first steps into this E-world (the case of Swaziland and Mauritania for instance) , therefore in upcoming chapters of this thesis statement we will led our focus on determining the point of potential growth for the African diplomacy as well as it challenges and issues .

3.8 Kenya's Efforts to Achieve National Goals via Digital Diplomacy

In Kenya, the foreign policy has been based upon their own national interest ever since they became independent. This interest can be split into three main parts: Security/Political, Geopolitical Factors and Kenya and Regional Integration. To meet these goals, Kenya has to use public diplomacy and communication to reach out to both mass audiences and specific target groups. In today's world, communication is more open and diplomacy is heavily influenced by public ³⁰debate, so it's important for the nation to use the most appropriate media to communicate foreign policy. It's also important to consider public opinion which is formed by subgroup sentiment, media policies, and government leadership.

³⁰ Proudly African (2013) Available from: <http://www.proudlyafrican.info/Proudly-African/Proudly-African Territories/Kenya/Ministries-Authorities/The-Ministry-of-Foreign-Affairs.aspx> 25 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kenya (2013) Available from: http://www.mfa.go.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=57

Public diplomacy is seen as a dialogue, collaboration, and an inclusion of many different voices. Social media helps facilitate two-way engagement with the general public. Nowadays, many governments are aware of the power of education and the media. People's opinions come from a variety of different sources, including sentiments shared between countries and their respective groups, the perception of a given situation, media outlets, and the leadership of a government. Gregory argues that policy isn't just the result of a handful of people making decisions, but rather it comes from the collective voices that are voiced through the media and various groups. The influence of public opinion has only grown stronger in recent years, which means that diplomacy must now include all kinds of people, not just those in leadership positions.

Chapter 4

CHALLENGES AND POINTS OF GROWTH OF THE AFRICAN DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

The digitalization of African diplomacy has passed through multiple stages. Additionally, the advent of the covid-19 crisis and the digital transformation of multiple sectors have taken this diplomacy to a new level. Nonetheless, it is evident that each country on the continent varies in terms of the enhancement of digital tools and technologies; for instance, Kenya is among the most active African countries on multiple social media platforms and even challenges the presence of some of its western counterparts.

However, if we look at Eritrea, for example, it is nearly absent from the virtual space, “according to world statistics”. In this regard, evaluating the implementation of these African countries as a whole will not be appropriate at this point. It is unfortunate to note that there are still some African countries that are just starting to take their first steps toward the enhancement of digital tools. Therefore, this following chapter will examine the potential growth point of digital diplomacy in African countries while highlighting the challenges and issues that hamper its implementation.

4.1 Challenges of African Diplomacy

4.1.1 The Fragile Policies and the Need for New Habits

We live in a technological ³¹age that demands a high level of flexibility and constant updating. In addition, technology is being developed at a very fast pace. As Hocking and Mellisen, Flanagan, Stanzel, and Beam describe digital diplomacy as "disruptive"³² innovation". This disruptive aspect is illustrated by the fact that successful digital diplomacy involves ongoing and unnoticed changes driven by innovation and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies. Furthermore, in this fast-changing age, what is common today may be obsolete tomorrow due to the development of a higher, more advanced version, as is the case with software, digital tools, and social media platforms. Therefore, the adaptation of digital diplomacy requires diplomats and MFAs to keep up with the new trends. According to Digital Diplomacy Reviews, E-Diplomacy is built on a collection of digital narratives, which requires constant dynamism and flexibility in the mindset of MFAs and embassies.

In light of this, in terms of the need for flexibility and adoption of digital culture, from an African scholarly perspective, we can perhaps say that it is regrettable that a number of African leaders and MFAs still lack the dynamics to catch up and adopt these updated habits, alas, most African leaders are very slow and sometimes delayed in enhancing these new digital habits in this area of "supersonic" digital changes. However, it is evident that no cultural Revolution or technological innovation is 100 percent problem free. Nevertheless, there are many African ministers of foreign

³¹ Endong . C,P,F. Ibid, pp.28.

³² Bjola, C. (2018). Digital Diplomacy 2.0: Trends and Counter-Trends. In *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy* (pp. 339-354). Oxford University Press.

affairs and diplomats who are regarded as among the most influential leaders and diplomats worldwide.

Nonetheless, Eritrea, Namibia, and Swaziland, according to a Twiplomacy ³³survey conducted in 2019, don't use Facebook, which was at a certain time considered to be one of the most used applications for information sharing and communication. Nevertheless, this absence can be justified by multiple causes that will be explored in the following point of this chapter such as the digital divide and the high prices for internet accessibility.

While there are many complexities and obstacles, we cannot ignore the brilliant presence of some African countries, including Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana, which are very active on social media platforms and have millions of followers (as indicated in the diplomacy survey) on multiple platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

³³ Twiplomacy survey 2022 : World Leader Power Ranking.https://www.twiplomacy.com/_files/ugd/39473c_796ddb90bdd6484484476fdbb98927e2.pdf

Most Liked Sub-Saharan African Leaders on Facebook

PAGE GROWTH / PAGE LIKES



Figure 2: Twiplomacy study ranks sub-Saharan African leaders Facebook activity 2019

Source : <https://economist.com.na/43313/special-focus/twiplomacy-study-ranks-sub-sahara-african-leaders-facebook-activity>



Figure 3: Most conversational world leaders 2015

Source : <http://digitaldiplomacy.ro/twiplomacy-2015-report-twitter-is-the-channel-of-choice-for-digital-diplomacy/?lang=en>

It appears that some African leaders do have an influence on a worldwide scale as presented in this figures; adding a big plus to the growing diplomacy of Africa. It remains, however, less likely for other diplomatic institutions and MFAs on the continent to adopt innovative and "sophisticated" forms of diplomacy.

Additionally, some of these "slow-to-change" MFAs and embassies do create profiles on some social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; however, they are less conversational. Likewise, some countries create websites, but they are poorly designed and need to be updated, making their use irrelevant.

Consequently, all this evidence shows that these African countries need to revise their habits, and open up more to innovative tools and technologies; diplomats and embassies need to start thinking about new training in this regard as well as, the leaders need to start providing their ministerial bodies and diplomats with useful training and practices in order to enhance ICT technologies. Hence, if we could add

the missing part of Africa to the active part of the continent, we could have an all-digitalized continent.

4.1.2 The Need for Training and the Absence of the Digital Culture

Every newly acquired tool requires immediate training about how to make use of it. This includes the introduction of terminology, the tools to use, workflow methods, as well as what to avoid and what to consider. Similarly, the digitalization of diplomacy is no different.

As Flanagan asserts, the I-Generation ³⁴has more opportunities to engage with and shape its world than any previous generation has. Thus, diplomats from the I-Generation will be able to reach their goals and use what they grew up using (the internet) to shape their world and engage with it. Additionally, these "diplomats" will be subjected to multiple forms of diplomatic training in which numerous technologies of information and communication which will automatically be incorporated.

It is relevant to note, however, that in many African countries, diplomats are not always taught to use ICT tools as part of their training. In fact, most African diplomats are not from the I-Generation, so they have only just started learning how to use these innovative tools.

Ilan Manor addressed this issue in a study that examines the digital divide ³⁵between African diplomats and Western diplomat's .Consequently, most African countries'

³⁴ Flanagan, M. (2015). 'Foreword'. In *Digital Diplomacy & the # G8*. (p.2-3), London: Portland.

³⁵ Ilan.M, (2021) 'From 'traitors' to 'saviours': A longitudinal analysis of Ethiopian, Kenyan and Rwandan embassies' practice of digital diaspora diplomacy', *South African Journal of International Affairs* , 28(3), pp. 403-427.

MFAs (especially those in poor countries) lack sufficient digital literacy due to the lack of familiarity with the online environment. Contrary to their western counterparts, most of the diplomats in western countries have been connected to the internet for at least more than two decades, and they have grown up in a digital environment and have used laptops and other Internet-based tools for research throughout their life, making them ideal candidates to conduct global digital diplomacy; while , on the other hand, several MFAs staffers in smaller and poorer African nations may still find it "difficult" to fully harness the potential of social media and use it as an effective tool for information gathering and policy-making.

4.1.3 The African Digital Divide

Africa has witnessed a remarkable increase in social media penetration over the past three years. Additionally, as we mentioned earlier in this research, a number of African MFAs and embassies have adopted social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to achieve foreign policy objectives.

Although, this growth could've been much higher if not for the digital divide ³⁶that the continent suffers from. (As seen in figure 4).

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS 2022 Year Estimates						
World Regions	Population (2022 Est.)	Population % of World	Internet Users 30 June 2022	Penetration Rate (% Pop.)	Growth 2000-2022	Internet World %
Africa	1,394,588,547	17.6 %	652,865,628	46.8 %	14,362 %	11.9 %
Asia	4,352,169,960	54.9 %	2,934,186,678	67.4 %	2,467 %	53.6 %
Europe	837,472,045	10.6 %	750,045,495	89.6 %	614 %	13.7 %
Latin America / Carib.	664,099,841	8.4 %	543,396,621	81.8 %	2,907 %	9.9 %
North America	374,226,482	4.7 %	349,572,583	93.4 %	223 %	6.4 %
Middle East	268,302,801	3.4 %	211,796,760	78.9 %	6,378 %	3.9 %
Oceania / Australia	43,602,955	0.5 %	31,191,971	71.5 %	309 %	0.6 %
WORLD TOTAL	7,934,462,631	100.0 %	5,473,055,736	69.0 %	1,416 %	100.0 %

Figure 4:World internet usage and population statistic 2022 year estimates

³⁶ World internet usage and population statistic 2022 year estimates:
<https://www.internetworldstats.com>

In its broadest sense, the digital divide describes the inequalities in the access to and/or the use of information and communication tools and technologies. Such divides can exist between people within a single national territory,” where some urban areas lack the necessary infrastructure “, or even just between just countries.

It is evident from the above statistics that the African continent is among the least internet-permeated continents; this gives credence to the myth that the internet has not spread globally. However, we must exclude countries like Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and a few other African nations that have been working hard to narrow this digital divide.

The latest world internet usage and population statistics show that most African countries are barely above 46% internet penetration, resulting that Africa have the lowest penetration in the world internet . Accordingly, the rate for Africa world usage of Internet African is estimated at 11.9%, compared with 89.6% in Europe and 93% in North America.

Additionally, if we were to explain this "tragic digital divide", we would probably point the poor infrastructure as well as the lack of electricity in some urban regions and poor nations. Furthermore, low internet affordability is one of the major reasons for this in both urban regions and the continent as a whole.

In fact, since the early 2000, internet affordability on the continent has remained low. Particularly in many developing countries, including Kenya, there's a trade-off between focusing on improving citizens' lives and taking on digital diplomacy initiatives. This could be expensive in terms of social, technical and economic costs,

which can be too much for some countries. One big issue when it comes to making the most out of tech in Africa is the unreliable ICT infrastructures. To get a digital diplomacy up and running in Kenya, it had to spend over 100 million for related costs like equipment, connectivity and training over the next five years. As well as training its civil servants, Kenya had to put in place a legal and regulatory environment that would allow it to handle government records and info electronically while keeping them secure.

However, as we are going to explore in the following section of this chapter (the points of growth of digital diplomacy), many efforts are being made to bridge this divide and ensure that in the near future most if not all of the continent will be online. As is the case with the African Union's digital transformation initiative 2020-2030, as well as a few upcoming projects that will connect Africa with other countries.

4.1.4 Misinformation, Disinformation “A Danger for Public Diplomacy”

It is imperative to recognize that the enhancement of digital diplomacy is hindered by two major causes : first, it require from MFAs and embassies to react on the fly to events and crisis , in order to reduce propaganda and citizens' concerns; and second, digital diplomacy is rife with uncertainties. With so many platforms and the freedom of expression that we live in this modern world , rumours and fake news are easily spread. Nevertheless, MFAs and embassies are the prime actors charged with informing and communicating news for their citizens inside and outside the country.

Foreign publics today expect embassies and governments to act quickly to debunk uncertainties among foreign and diasporas publics, while also working to repair

frustrations and meet the requests of this citizenry. This is indeed achievable if the government and MFAs adopt liberal policy-development approaches such as the "open policy creation"³⁷ described by Heinbecker and Palamar as follows: This strategy consciously attempts to involve citizens in the foreign policy-making process, recognizes that there are good ideas and smart people both inside and outside government, aims to tap into outside sources of expertise, and attempts to foster an innovative culture inside government.

However , Rather than making "open policy formation" the main part of their way of doing things, most African nations' Ministries of Foreign Affairs and embassies tend to go about public diplomacy in a top-down manner. In this system the government has the complete control of the nation's diplomatic messaging and doesn't let embassies or diplomats to speak on their own thoughts about the country or its foreign policy. Junior staffers are not allowed to communicate anything without authorization, and even senior staff has limited freedom to express views and opinions about their own nation and territory without an affirmation from higher authorities.

This generally leads to delayed responses from MFA and embassies, moreover when it comes to sensitive topics, governments are usually very cautious and it does not put out information that could be detrimental to their country's image.

Likewise , in 2015-2016, during the Ebola outbreak in Sierra , Leone and Liberia , their embassies –especially- in European countries were slow to reveal information about deaths and damages ; which had lead to the spreading of rumours and

³⁷ Turianskyi, Y., & Wekes, B. Ibid, pp. 18

conspiracies, the thing that had spread the fear among their diasporas . Additionally , the same thing had also happened in late 2016 when the Malawian president “Peter Mutharika” had mysteriously disappeared , and while his official communication team did not reveal his “where doubts” , people started using different has tags , such as #BringBackMutharika both in Malawi and among the diasporas, to express their distrust in the government.

This shows how public diplomacy can go wrong when there's no effort to break down hierarchies and silos.

4.2 Points of Growth of African Digital Diplomacy

4.2.1 Emergence of Smart Societies

The technological revolution and the recent developments that the world is noticing nowadays, namely the digitalization of most sectors of life and the development of ICT tools, were key factors in driving the myth of the smart society. This latter indicates that the world is becoming an "intelligent environment"³⁸ and that countries are becoming "smart societies".

Furthermore, this concept refers to the successful implementation of digital tools and technologies in all areas of our daily lives, which is particularly significant in today's modern world. The concept of smartness has taken on multiple meanings in our daily lives. This includes modern agriculture, online education, the use of technological tools in education, automated cars with options such as automatic parking, GBS, etc., and so forth .

³⁸ Porter, R. (2019). What is Smart City Development. Africa Housing News. Retrieved June 20, 2020 from <https://africahousingnews.com/2020/01/29/what-is-smartcity-development/>

As a result, many countries have developed this concept and have conducted large-scale projects in that regard, such as Saudi Arabia with the Giga project, the Smart Japan ICT strategy, and the Smart Thailand 2020 strategy.

Additionally, this concept imposes a novel vision and a new way to imagine urban regions. With the help of technologies and artificial intelligence, as well as data analytics, life in these areas will become more practical and efficient. For example, instead of traveling to attend a meeting in another country, through a click instead you can participate effectively and hear and see the meeting from your own home.

In addition, the Information and Telecom Union introduced the smart society concept, As a state in which the quality of citizen's life, efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness of society are significantly improved by the use of ICT tools.

Therefore, smartness in this context entails four major points:

The use of sensing technologies to enable autonomous operation; learning technologies; the provision of consumer-centered services through constant communication between providers and consumers; the delivery of ubiquitous services using smart phones and technology at any time and in any places.

In the same way, African countries have been trying to develop the concept of “smart cities”³⁹. Just like Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Japan, Africa has had some intriguing projects in this area, taking the “Smart Africa Initiative” as a major example of this progress. This initiative was born out of a summit in Rwanda in 2013 and was

³⁹ Mvai, C. (2019). Africa: Smart Cities to Drive Urbanization. *News Times*, Octobe 31 <https://smartafrica.org/>

adopted by seven heads of state (Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, Mali, Gabon, Burkina Faso). Later, in 2014, the rest of the African leaders in the AU General Assembly ratified it.

The smart Africa manifesto tells:

- Put ICTs in the middle of Member state's national economic and social growth plans.
- Boost access to ICTs,
- Use ICTs to make sure things are done right, efficiently and transparently and bring in more advanced tech for telecommunication.
- Use ICT to encourage sustainability.

Basically, this initiative puts the spotlight on a bunch of elements that would result in a wide range of tech and modern resources in different areas,- including diplomacy-. Rwanda is a shining example of this, being one of the first African nations to make Wi-Fi available on public transport and implement cashless payments and its own version of an e-government system, named 'iRembo'.

development was the highest priority. (African digital transformation strategy) and use of the latest ICT tools offer a great chance to shake up traditional sectors. African leaders are keen to embrace a full-on digital transformation to steer a unified, joint effort to really make the most of the 4th industrial revolution. The main goal of this plan is to bridge the digital divide and get more people involved in the digital economy. To achieve this, it proposes an annual investment of 20 billion dollars from 2020 to 2025. Additionally, the ultimate objective is to have 300 billion people connected by 2025. This strategy framework works with a collaboration of multiple organizations such as:

- a. the UN economic commission in Africa ,
- b. smart Africa , regional economic communities ,
- c. African development bank ,
- d. African tele-communication union for capacity building foundation,
- e. international tele-communication union ,
- f. World bank.

Moreover, this strategy will be built on the existing initiatives and frameworks such as:

- a. The policy and regulatory initiative for digital Africa ;
- b. The programme for infrastructure development in Africa
- c. The African continental free trade area (AFCFTA)
- d. The African Union Financial institution (AUFIs)
- e. The single African Air transport market (SAATM)
- f. The Free movement of persons (FMP)

The goal of this strategy is to make life better for African citizens and use tech and

innovation to revolutionize African societies and economies, helping to bring Africa together and create shared economic growth. This will also help to strengthen digital diplomacy and build better public diplomacy and economic ties on a national level.

4.2.3 Growing Penetration of the Internet and Social Media

For a long time, the digital divide between Africa and the west was interpreted primarily as evidence that Africa is lagging behind the west in terms of developing ICT tools and social media platforms. In a report presented by ITU, Africa was presented as the one who has the lowest internet penetration as well as the lowest phone usage and ownership. Hence, in comparison to the west and the rest of the world, the African continent still needs to do a great deal to catch up. These facts, however, do not negate the fact that the levels of internet penetration and social media usage have been rising for years and years. In recent years, Kemp⁴¹ reports that Africa has seen the fastest growth in Internet penetration.

Additionally, over the past year, the number of Internet users has increased by more than 20% across the continent. Approximately 522,809,480 Internet users were estimated to be in Africa by June 30, 2023, according to Internet World Statistics. Since 2000, the Internet has grown by 11.48% on the continent, equivalent to 39.6% penetration.

Basically, it looks like more and more people in Africa are getting online. The Digital 2020 Global Overview Report says that around 33% of the population is using the Internet. Plus, social media use is increasing and mobile connectivity is growing too.

⁴¹ Internet World Stats (2019). Internet Users Statistics for Africa. <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>. (Access date: March 5, 2020)

For instance, Facebook's penetration rate in the continent has gone up from 15.9% between June 2000 and June 2019. Even back in 2009, over 40% of people in sub-Saharan Africa had access to mobile devices. Moreover, Research has shown that there's been an increase in access to mobile phones in the continent, referred to as the 'Smartphone revolution'.

This revolution could lead to more e-cultures, such as mobile governance, citizen diplomacy and digital diplomacy. Mohindra Rajan, founder of Icon Capital Partners, said that the increasing mobile connectivity in sub-Saharan countries suggests more digital diplomacy, citizen diplomacy, e-participation and mobile governance in the future than E-Governance. He notes that: It looks like mobiles are going to be more popular than electronics because there weren't many landlines in Africa. Plus, smart phones are getting cheaper, so it's no surprise that mobile government is the future. Since the use of ICTs is important for digital diplomacy, the increasing use of smart phones in Africa is a great opportunity for it.

4.2.4 The 2Africa Project 2023

2Africa ⁴²is one of the most extensive upcoming undersea cable systems, connecting Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Furthermore, the initiative is spearheaded by some of the world's most prominent technical and telecommunications enterprises, including Facebook, China, Mobile International Vodafone, Orange, MTC, global connect STC, Telecom Egypt, and WIOCC (Economic impact of 2africa).

Furthermore, the 2africa will link up to 23 nations, including 16 in Africa, 2 in the Middle East, and 5 in Europe. The cable system will be around 37.000 kilometres

⁴² Anderson, B., & O'Connor, A. C. (2020). Economic Impact of 2Africa. RTI International. Working Paper 0214363.202.10

long, making a ring around the entire vast African continent.

Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal will all get connected to the cable. The line ⁴³also connects countries in Europe, including the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, and Italy, as well as Saudi Arabia and Oman in the Middle East.

As a result, the digital divide and low internet penetration that the African continent has experienced in the last year may be coming to an end; and with online connectivity, wealth will find its way through.



Figure 6 : 2Africa cable project linking map

Source: <https://engineering.fb.com/2021/09/28/connectivity/2africa-pearls>

⁴³ Anderson, B., & O'Connor, A. C. Ibid, pp.45

Chapter 5

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE KENYAN AND THE US MFAs PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The implementation of digital diplomacy in Africa varies from one state to another. The African continent was often known for its poor internet penetration and high cost of internet affordability due to multiple factors that had occurred over the years (Exploitation of resources by colonial powers, high level of corruption, poor policies and strategies, etc). Regardless, it is evident to state that overgeneralization is one of the most detrimental criteria that can hinder research from delivering valid results. Knowing that every country is different, it is only natural that the application of ICTs in diplomacy will similarly differ.

This chapter of my research, therefore, aims to analyze Kenya's efforts toward the enhancement of digital tools. In addition to that, I will also evaluate the various platforms used by the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, starting with the most frequently used digital platforms to the least frequently used ones; furthermore, I will compare its virtual presence on these platforms with some of its Western counterparts, by which I will be providing an estimate of its implementation based on the data analysis and the interviews conducted with some of the African digital diplomacy scholars.

5.1 The First Kenyan Steps Towards the Enhancement of ICT

Kenya has advocated the need for the enhancement of ICT tools since early 2004⁴⁴. It had strived to achieve an E-government structure that would help national development and promote the country's objectives, as well as the realization of wealth and employment creation. As noted by Kenya's MFA at the time "An effective and operational E-government would facilitate effective and efficient delivery of information and services to citizens, as well as encourage the participation of citizens in government dissections and empower all Kenyans".

Transparency, accountability, and effective governance were the main goals of the creation of what was referred to as E-government at the time. The 2004 objectives were also outlined in 7 points. These were significant indications that Kenya had long had a vision of transforming its government and its public diplomacy into a digital sphere.

Thus, this would allow and enable citizens to participate in societal matters more effectively. In the strategy, the first point was the improvement of collaboration between government agencies through the reduction of duplication of efforts and the enhancement of efficiency and resource usage. The second point was the improvement of Kenya's competitiveness by providing timely and rapid delivery of government services. The third point, however, was to reduce transaction costs incurred by the government, citizens, and other stakeholders through the electronic transmission of products and services. Fourth, including citizens was a priority since it would change the delivery and acquisition of information. In this regard, it was

⁴⁴ Francis K.M,(2004) Republic of Kenya ; E-government strategy : The strategic framework , administrative structure , Cabinet and head of public service .

noted that it is essential to provide a way for citizens to enable them to take a part in government activities, through opinions, and surveys, related to government policies and directions; the fifth and sixth points both stressed the importance of making the operational tools more effective as well as harmonizing all ministries' websites; and, finally, the need to conduct an effective training program for all bodies and corps of ministries in order to enhance technological tools.

Kenya has succeeded in improving these tools even before the expansion of the social media platform.

5.2 Current Kenyan Digital Diplomacy

Kenya⁴⁵ had made considerable efforts to enhance digital tools and develop digital diplomacy. The Kenyan government, as evidenced by its policies and strategies, has invested in ICT capacities and essential infrastructure by purchasing items such as video conferencing facilities, cloud storage tools, and hard drive-saving tools. Additionally, the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in contrast to many other countries on the African continent, has been tough about the mendacity of training and the development of ICTs and technologies. In response, the MFA's Foreign Service Institute noted that it would provide professional diplomatic training to all its staff and diplomats. And it will also be developing a course entitled "ICT and diplomacy".

This course is designed to enhance the understanding of the use of technology, in order to conduct modern diplomacy. As a result, the general public, embassies, and governments should recognize the importance of digital tools in conducting

⁴⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.d.). Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Government of Kenya <https://mfa.go.ke/>

diplomacy. In addition, it should also be acknowledged how easily it can serve to transform the reverberation of information into something more efficient and quick.

5.3 Kenyan Tactics and Strategies in Digital Diplomacy

There is no doubt that the implementation of digital diplomacy requires the employment of certain tactics⁴⁶ and strategies to maximize its impact and efficiency.

Moreover, in the social media sphere, if you are to target a large /massive audience and make them engage with you and also give feedback, it's necessary "to go viral".

A viral post needs to follow certain strategies and tactics, such as “Retweets” on Twitter, “Hashtags”, the use of a celebrity's name and tagging them in an event that is relevant to them, like tagging a doctor when communicating a health crisis, or mentioning a celebrity on a cultural day, and so on.

Kenya's Foreign Ministry is the most active on Twitter, as will be demonstrated in the following points of our research; the Foreign Ministry page in Kenya has over 411K followers, and even the president of Kenya has the most followers and presence on Twitter compared to multiple western counterparts, based on a Twitplomacy survey (that was conducted in 2019). Therefore, all of these factors demonstrate Kenya's robust networking ability and its potential for increased prosperity in digital diplomacy.

In examining the tactics of the Kenyan Foreign Ministry on Twitter, it appears the Ministry is careful with the pages that follow. This indicates that the page is well organized and the decisions are not just random or spontaneous as we might expect from a regular profile.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ibid, pp.50.

Consequently, all these factors show that digital diplomacy in Kenya is following the correct workflow, developing strategies and tactics, and collaborating with citizens both inside and outside the country.

5.4 The Kenyan Political System

The Republic of Kenya ⁴⁷has a unitary government. On December 12, 1963, Kenya declared independence from British colonial administration. The country has a multi-party political system with parliamentary democracy as its trademark. Kenya's Parliament is a bicameral body comprised of the National Assembly and the Senate. Kenya's Parliament is a bicameral body comprised of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly has 349 members in total, plus the Speaker, who serves as an ex-officio member.

According to Article 95 of the Constitution, the National Assembly shall be composed of the following members: - two hundred and ninety (290) members, each elected by registered voters of single member constituencies; forty-seven (47) women, each elected by registered voters of counties, each county constituting a single member constituency; twelve (12) members nominated by parliamentary political parties in accordance with Article 90, to represent special interests such as youth and people with disabilities.

The Senate has 67 members plus the Speaker, who serves as an ex-officio member. According to Article 98 of the Constitution, the Senate shall be composed of the following individuals: - Forty-seven (47) members elected by registered voters in the counties, with each county constituting a single member constituency; sixteen (16)

⁴⁷ Kenya Embassy Addis Ababa. (n.d). Government and Political System Kenya Embassy Addis Ababa <http://www.kenyaembassyaddis.org/about-kenya/government-and-political-system/>

women members nominated by political parties in proportion to their proportion of Senate members elected under clause (a) in accordance with Article 90; two (2) members, one man and one woman, representing youth; two (2) members, one man and one woman, representing persons with disabilities; and The Speaker, who shall be an ex officio member.

Members of the National Assembly are known as Members of Parliament (MP), whereas Senators are members of the Senate. MPs and Senators each serve 5-year terms.

The executive is made up of the President of the Republic of Kenya, the Deputy President, and the Cabinet Secretaries. With the National Assembly's assent, the President nominates and appoints Cabinet Secretaries. A Cabinet Secretary is not permitted to be a Member of Parliament. The President is directly elected for a five-year term. To win, a candidate must receive 50% plus 1 votes and 25% in half of the 47 counties.

Kenyan parliamentary politics is an open, free, fair, and competitive arena. Kenya has held all of its general elections - presidential, parliamentary, and local government - every five years, as mandated by the Constitution, since the country's independence in 1963. Kenya held its first general election on March 4, 2013, following the adoption of the new constitution in August 2010.

His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH is the current President of Kenya, having been sworn in as the fourth President of the Republic of Kenya on April 9, 2013. The Honorable William Samoei Ruto is the Deputy President.

5.5 The Implications of Digital Diplomacy in Kenya

In terms of soft power, digital media has the potential to provide Kenya⁴⁸, which has a Diaspora population of over four million people, with a significant boost to its economy through remittances. According to the Central Bank of Kenya, Diaspora remittances were KES 276.8 billion in June 2019. Kenyan embassies abroad can also simply use digital media to disseminate information about investment opportunities in Kenya. The Ministry of Tourism, which is implementing a digital campaign called “Brand Kenya”, can also use digital media to promote the country’s image.

Furthermore, non-state actors at the vanguard of campaigns for or against some state foreign or domestic policies might utilize their digital media power. Kenya must use her global reputation in sports, particularly sprints, to brand herself in this regard. Digital media can also be used to provide a clear policy message on global concerns such as industry, immigration, global warming, security, and terrorism. Kenya can essentially connect with anyone to address a condition of global concern, according to the plethora of communication technologies accessible. Furthermore, in this age of digital diplomacy, diplomatic conversation is no longer limited to foreign ministries. It is interministerial in nature and pervades all aspects of humanity. Every day, a new network layer emerges, and power shifts and is shared between states and non-state players.

In terms of sharp power, Kenya as well as the rest of Africa must work with news organizations - both mainstream and social media - to counteract conspiracies, misinformation, and disinformation that influence the African populace into

⁴⁸ Maluki, P. & Njagi, M. (2020). Integrating digital media as a diplomacy tool in advancing Kenya's national interests. *Diplomacy-Mass-Media-And-International-Relations*.

applauding the nefarious activities of sharp power wielders. Many large international corporations, such as “Cambridge Analytica⁴⁹”, which had been hired to distribute material to mislead and manipulate their target audience. To facilitate the process they develop dangerous content, deep fakes, bots, and millions of fake accounts. Therefore the Kenyan digital diplomacy must work on covering all this aspects.

5.6 A Comparative Analysis of the Kenyan and the U.S. MFAs Presence on Social Media

Knowing that most of industrial revolutions that we have lived through had firstly occurred in western countries, made the rest of the world always view them as an ideal example to follow its path .

One the other hand, Africa was among the most exploited continent by imperialist’s powers, this added also to the poverty that resulted after decolonization and other factors. Thus, all these aspects had caused hurdles in the development of the continent.

Nonetheless, the continent began to heal from the damages left by imperialism and found itself forced to start from the bottom and climb its way to the top.

Therefore, similarly to the digitalization of all sectors and the need for enhancement of the new tool across the globe. Africa also needed to start working accordingly to catch up on the bus that had left it behind in colonial times. Thus, in spite of all these obstacles and the digital divide that exists between the west and Africa; the continent has strived hard to be developed and digitalized to the same extent as others in the whole world, yet because of different external and internal factors,

⁴⁹ Maluki, P. & Njagi, M. Ibid, pp.52

the numerous countries in the continent still varies in terms of their digital transformation.

In spite of this, organizations like the AU have made significant efforts to be part of this digitalization. As they have made huge budgetary commitments to bring over 3M people online by the end of 2025, In addition to multiple projects that contribute to connecting Africa and reducing digital divides, such as 2Africa.

In light of all these efforts and novel strategies, it seems to be necessary to highlight all these magnificent efforts. It also seems to be necessary to shed light on the African side of the puzzle, because in simple words it needs it and it deserves it at this particular time.

Furthermore, in this part of my research, I have chosen to measure the implementation of the Kenyan MFA in terms of its social media presence. Accordingly, I have decided to conduct a comparative analysis by comparing this presence with the Western “role model” the United States of America. This “role model” is known for its leadership on social media and digital platforms when it comes to digital diplomacy and it would serve as a great reference to examine the Kenyan implantations. Hence, we can perhaps conclude to any extant it converses or diverges from the presence of other developed countries.

5.6.1 US Political System

The United States ⁵⁰has a federal system of government, with a written constitution as the supreme law of the land. The political system of the United States is divided into three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Legislative Branch: The legislative branch is responsible for making the country's laws. It is made up of two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate has 100 members, two from each state, and the House of Representatives has 435 members, apportioned according to the population of each state. The legislative branch is empowered to make laws, declare war, regulate commerce, and control the national budget. Executive Branch: The executive branch is responsible for carrying out the laws and managing the day-to-day operations of the government. It is headed by the President of the United States, who is the head of state and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

The President is elected to a four-year term and can serve up to two terms. The Vice President is also elected with the President and serves as the President of the Senate. The executive ⁵¹branch also includes the Cabinet, which is made up of the heads of the major departments of the federal government, such as the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defence, and the Attorney General. Judicial Branch: The judicial branch is responsible for interpreting the country's laws and resolving legal disputes. It is made up of a hierarchy of federal courts, starting with the district courts, which are the trial courts, and moving up through the appellate courts, which hear appeals from lower courts.

⁵⁰ Fabbrini, S. (2016). The American System of Separated Government: An Historical-Institutional Interpretation. *Sage Journal*, 20(1), 195-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512199201005>.

⁵¹ Fabbrini, S. (2016). *Ibid.* pp55.

The highest court in the land is the Supreme Court of the United States, which has the power to interpret the constitution and make decisions that can have a lasting impact on the country and its citizens. In addition to these three branches, the United States⁵² also has a system of checks and balances, which means that each branch has some control over the others. This helps to ensure that no one branch becomes too powerful and that the government remains accountable to the people. The US political system is also based on the principles of federalism, which means that powers are divided between the federal government and the states, and that both the federal and state governments have their own spheres of influence.

5.6.2 Most Utilized Tools by Every Each MFA

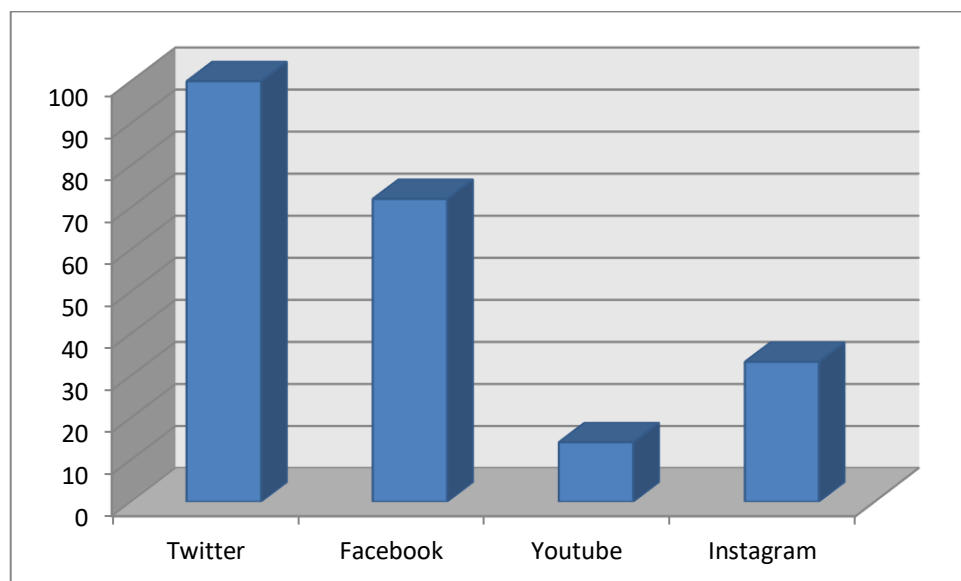


Figure 7: Most use social media platforms by U.S. MFA
Source: Data research.

Examining the presence of the U.S. state department or MFA on different social media platforms, it seemed that Facebook, was among the more active platforms of

⁵²Cavalli, C. D.(Ed.). (2013). Basics of American Government. Dahlonega, GA : University Press of North Georgia, University of North Georgia.

the MFA, with a total of 2.5 million followers and a 309 following list , the account was first created in 2012 , and since then it continued working on the promotion of the country's image , national and international affairs . In addition, Twitter comes as second place in term of usage , as the page contain over 1.8 million followers and over 3889 tweets as well as a list of 40 following accounts .thereby , Instagram , comes as the thirds most used social media platform by the US state department with a total of 832K and 4852 posts and a average of likes that ranges between 1000 to 2000 likes .

Lastly, we have YouTube platform which contain 354K subscribers and 391 video, and , as it illustrated in YouTube US department channel ,they post frequently on the channel , which chose that the channel is being used effectively .

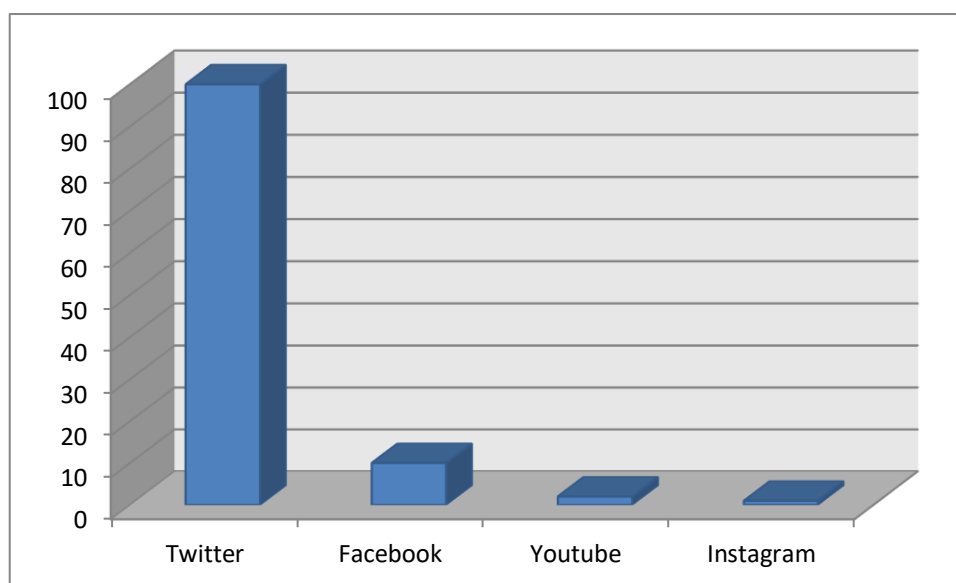


Figure 8: Most use social media platforms by Kenyan MFA
Source: Data research

The Kenyan MFA, is mostly active on Twitter, with a total of 411k followers and a list of 35 following, and over 185 tweets, as second platform in the case of Kenyan

MFA, Facebook has over 40k follower and list of 59 following, while YouTube comes as the third most utilized platform with a total of 1.22K subscribers and 103 videos on the channel, Instagram comes as the least utilized platform by the Kenyan MFA with only a total of 972 follower and 30 posts.

GRAPHS ANALYSIS:

Comparing the Kenyan most utilized digital platforms with the United States in the conduct of diplomacy, we notice that both Kenya and the US mostly use Twitter as well as Facebook. The number of followers in both MFAs is dissimilarly. However, we can explain the number of followers by emphasizing the population size and the audience targeted. The following points of this analysis will explore this further.

5.6.3 Population Size and Audience Targeted of MFAs

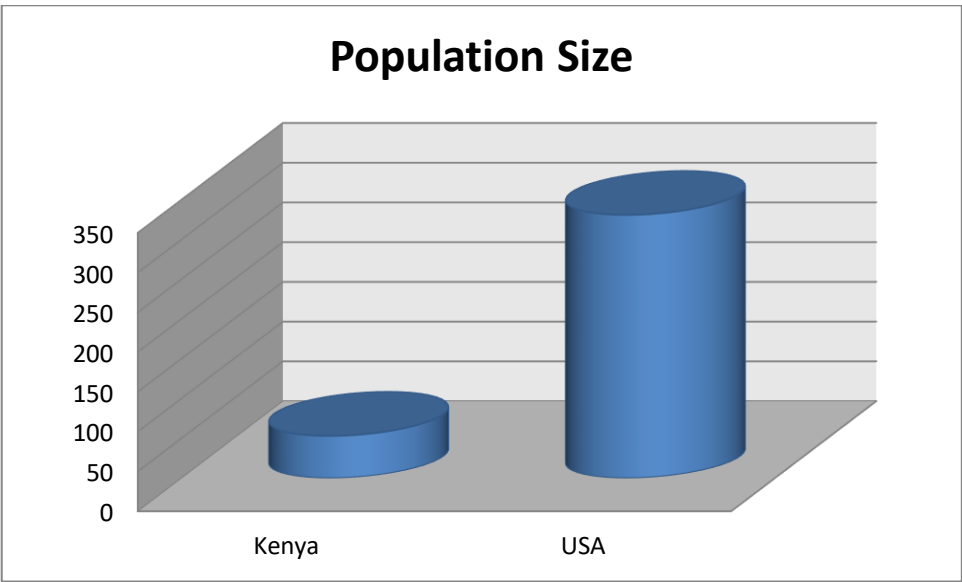


Figure 9: Population size of the U.S. and Kenya in Millions
Source: Data research

As it is demonstrated in the figure above the population of the united state of

America is largely more than the Kenyan population, with a 331.9 million ⁵³total of population, while Kenya as a smaller country has only 53.01 million total of population.

Therefore , the huge difference in terms of number of followers on digital platforms can perhaps be justified by the difference of the population number , hence , focus more on the quality not the quantity .

5.6.4 Level of Mention of MFAs in Different Digital Platforms

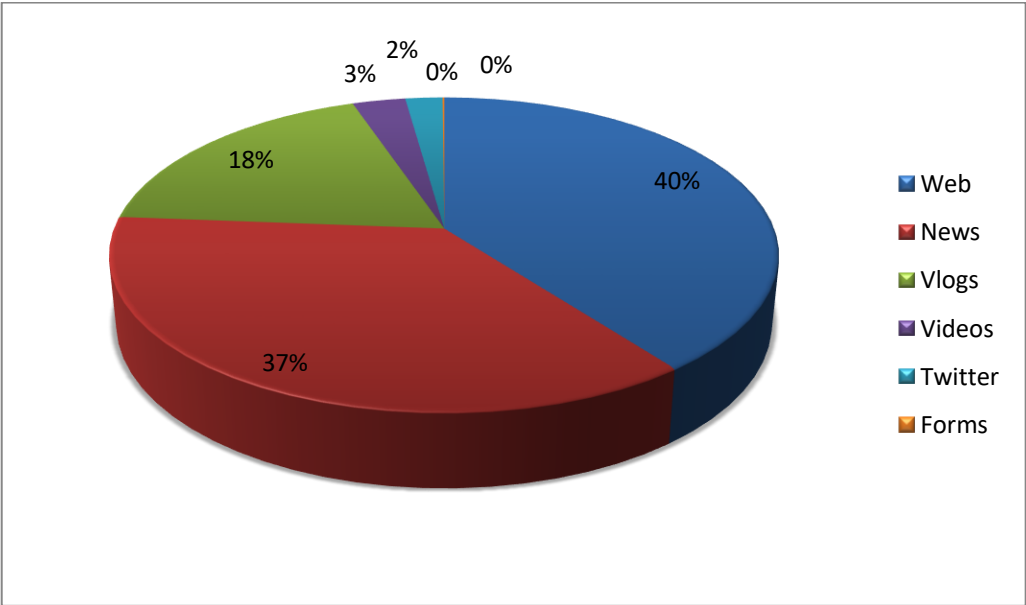


Figure 10: Level of mentions of Kenyan leader William Ruto on different digital platforms (In the last 30 days)
Source: Data research

In examining the level of mentions and the echoes of attention generated by the Kenyan president, we see that the web, in general, occupies a huge part of the mentions, followed by the news, vlogs, and videos, while Twitter, according to this

⁵³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022, January 4). U.S. Population Estimated at 331,915,073 on New Year's Day 2022. Census.gov. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/new-years-day-population.html>

analysis comes as the last with only a total of 2 percent of mentions focusing on the on Kenyan president.

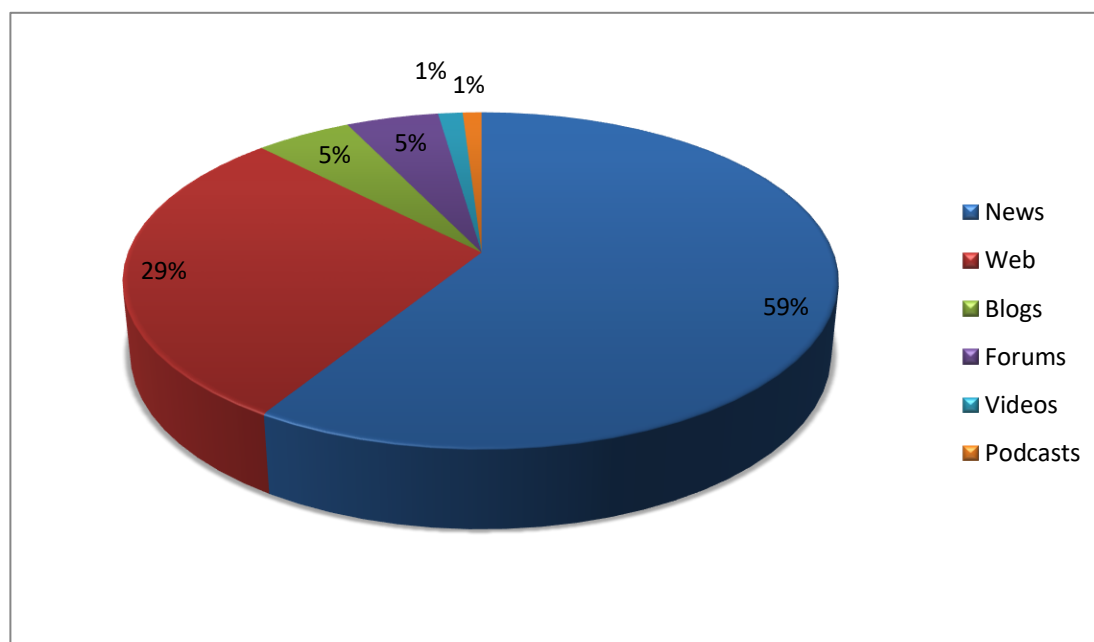


Figure 11:Level of Mentions of the U.S. president Joe Biden in different digital platforms (In the last 30
Source: Data Research

Examining the U.S. president's presence on digital platforms, we notice that the news occupies a huge percentage in mentioning the US president and elaborating on its matters and decisions, while the web comes second with 29 percent of the total mention. Blogs and forums come next, and videos and podcasts come as the last digital platforms that elaborate more on the US current president JOE BIDEN.

GRAPHS ANALYSIS:

The comparison of the presidents' levels of mention can perhaps offer a glimpse into the level of implementation of digital platforms in both countries. In the case of Kenyan president William Ruto, the Web occupies a large level of mention, which indicates the massive interaction through which the Web handles the information and

communication within the domestic and international affairs. While, looking at the highest level of mentions that the U.S. president generates, we see that news occupies the majority with 59 percent then followed by the web with a 29 percent of the level of mention. However, there is no doubt that the level of mentions changes from one period to another, and it is almost impossible to consider it as something constant. Nevertheless, the high level of mentions that the Kenyan president generates on the web can be viewed as a strong indication that the country is enhancing the ICTs tool and the digital sphere.



Looking at the most used terms of the Kenyan MFA on social media, we notice that Kenyan terms occupy the center of the discussion. We have multiple mentions of foreign affairs, President RUTO, and other national matters that mainly focus on the Kenyan Diasporas and state affairs.

talk united missile **washington** expect world president summit taliban new policy austin iran meet
 ukraine take speak year kyiv war official **china** work early country month week hayashi blinken
 yoshimasa aid american press administration **minister** include accord statement february japanese
 wednesday **biden** defense hold assistance time government follow come **attack** counterpart
 phone announce russian tell plan tuesday **foreign** issue system news friday people cleverly right sanction security
 states visit december **state** israel ambassador russia january day member deal **secretary** support joe
 meeting beijing woman **say** international provide need **military** conference continue urge chinese ban discuss joint
 share thursday qin call

Figure 13: Most utilized words in U.S. MFA page
 Source: Data research

The MFA discussion in the United States is primarily divided into numerous national and international terms. As gathered from its official pages, the words that have been most frequently repeated are those shown in large fonts, such as (Washington / China / State, and so on). Examining the dissection of the U.S. MFA, we may detect a transnational focus with a general concentration on significant world events and state.

MOST UTILIZED TERMS ANALYSIS:

As we review the terms the ministries of foreign affairs use most often on their social media and digital platforms, we find that Kenya's MFA focuses on its Diaspora and national affairs and is less engaged with world events unless it is in relation to its Diaspora. On the other hand, the U.S. MFA engages in a more diverse discussion regarding recent world events in addition to its national issues and matters.

5.6.6 Common Elements between Kenya and the U.S.

Both Kenya and the United States engage in digital diplomacy, using digital tools and platforms to advance their foreign policy objectives and communicate with audiences around the world. Perhaps we can highlight some of the common elements

between their digital diplomacy efforts as follow:

Social Media: Both Kenya and the US use social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to communicate directly with citizens and other audiences around the world. These platforms are used to share news, official statements, and other important information.

Websites: Both Kenya and the US have official government websites that provide information about their foreign policies, initiatives, and programs. These websites serve as a key resource for information about each country's priorities and interests.

Video and Multimedia Content: Both Kenya and the US use video and multimedia content to tell stories and share information about their countries, their people, and their culture. This content can be used to promote their policies and initiatives, as well as to showcase their values and interests. **Mobile Technology:** Both Kenya and the US are leveraging mobile technology to engage with audiences and advance their digital diplomacy efforts. This includes using mobile apps and text messaging to share information and receive feedback from audiences.]

Digital Outreach: Both Kenya and the US are using digital outreach to build relationships with audiences and engage in two-way communication. This can include digital events, such as virtual town halls and webinars, as well as online campaigns and initiatives that encourage audience engagement and feedback.

Overall, both Kenya and the US ⁵⁴are using digital diplomacy as a tool to communicate their foreign policy goals, build relationships with audiences around the world, and advance their interests in the digital age.

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce (n. d). Kenya – Information and Communications Technology. Country Commercial Guides Retrived from <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/kenya-information-communicataions-and-technology-ict>

Chapter 6

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings of the Comparative Analysis

The comparison of the Kenyan MFA presence on social media platforms with the U.S. MFA had perhaps given us an approximate glimpse of the deepening of their implementations of the digital sphere. Taking the U.S. as a reference for conducting the comparison allowed us to identify the most commonly used digital platforms to conduct digital diplomacy among the most influential western MFAs. Additionally, the United States of America MFA has millions of followers across various platforms; however, there is no doubt that the U.S. population and world interactions are considerably higher than Kenya's. Therefore, it would be unfair to conclude that Kenya's presence is low based only on this factor.

Kenya has been among the earliest adopters of ICT tools in numerous sectors and domains. Consequently, when comparing its implementation on different digital platforms, it is evident that Kenya uses the same digital tools and platforms as its western counterparts. It promotes the image and communication of diverse subjects that are related to Kenyan foreign affairs or the Diasporas, primarily on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Moreover, there is no necessity in taking the number of followers as a valid metric for comparison. As shown in the statistics above, the size of the targeted audience and population does not converge in the U.S. and Kenya.

Furthermore, the U.S. MFA communicates its dialogues and discusses its foreign ministry's subjects and matters through, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Moreover, Kenya's MFA uses the same digital tools and platforms as their western counterparts. Perhaps eco and the spreading are not the same, which is something we cannot complain about. Since the United States has a large population, in addition to the fact that it is also a major economic power. Nonetheless, Kenya meets the necessary standards for implementing its digital policy. While the echoes may be smaller and the influence is less, the efficacy and efficacy are still at a level that is worth considering. Furthermore, Kenya is among the most significant examples of African countries that put a lot of effort into training and updating their diplomats and strategies.

6.2 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the development of African digital diplomacy and its implementation on various digital platforms, using the Kenyan MFA as the main case of study. This examination was conducted also with a comparison with western countries' enhancement of ICT tools and technologies in the conduction of digital diplomacy. The exponential increase in the number of ICT tools and innovations being developed on the African continent was the main motif that had pushed the curiosity and development of this research statement.

This thesis statement was mainly divided into four main sections, in which every chapter elaborated on a different aspect of the research. The first main chapter focuses on defining the necessary terminologies and provides a conceptual understanding of digital diplomacy. Furthermore, digital diplomacy is considered to be among the newest terms that have transformed the field of IR in recent years. It has an interconnected nature and a multidimensional meaning. Digital diplomacy According to Holmes “is the use of digital information and communication technologies for diplomatic purposes”.

Moreover, we can sense the interconnectedness of digital diplomacy in the fact that it integrates communication tools with international disciplines with their technologically digitalized subfields. In addition to that, the term "digital diplomacy" also includes statecraft, Ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs), as well as embassies and governments. Asides from technological tools, these foreign affairs ministries also require international communication, soft power, international relations, and public diplomacy. As diplomacy is a broad term that incorporates multiple forms of practicing this latter, the application of these innovations was never something “strange” to the field of IR; the study of international relations, including diplomacy, has always viewed technological tools as an exogenous driver.

According to Daniel W Drezres, technology and international relations have a two-way relationship, which basically means that, as much as technology changes IR and societies, the reverse is also true, since domestic imperatives accelerate innovation.

In addition, this thesis research also sought to highlight the different challenges affecting the use of digital diplomacy in Africa. There is no doubt that the continent

has a lot of gaps that require more effort and time to overcome. A major challenge for African digital diplomacy has been the digital divide that has existed for a long time. In addition, the low affordability of the internet and the need for revised diplomatic practices. Nonetheless, it was only appropriate to emphasize the potential point of growth on which the continent is developing day after day. The emergence of smart societies, the digital transformation strategies of the AU, as well as the high internet and social media penetration on the continent, were seen as remarkable points of growth that were worth considering and they might shift the digital diplomacy of the continent.

The thesis's focus question was: **How deep is the implementation of Kenyan MFA in digital diplomacy in comparison with other developed countries?**

Therefore, to answer this question, it was only evident to take one case to study, hence, evaluating its presence and its implementation. While the countries on the African continent differ in terms of the use of digital tools, it would be unfair to conduct an overgeneralization and assume whether the level of implementation is high or low. Therefore Kenya was the focus of our thesis and it was the case that was examined and evaluated from multiple perspectives. As a reference, the United States of America was used to determine the level of the digital presence and penetration; since the US has always been known for its leadership and presence in digital diplomacy. Contentiously examining the Kenyan MFA's usage of digital platforms, revealed some significant findings. In fact , Kenya proved to be a significant example of a self-perpetuating state, attracting scholars and literature focus and attention. Kenya has proven to have a strong digital presence by enhancing its ICTs and developing strategies that will only help boost its workflow and framework.

In short, digital platforms are being used by African countries to conduct their diplomacy differently from one country to another. However, , knowing that the theoretical framework of this thesis statement concentrated on liberal institutionalism and track II diplomacy, seeing as the plurality of digital transformation strategies and the process of digitizing diplomacy in the African continent are mainly enhanced and moved by the core assumptions of the liberal paradigms, and also giving that the concept of track diplomacy which is derived from the science and technology theory, helps to theorize the informal interaction that may occur on digital sphere between unofficial and non-state actors to promote diplomacy and facilitated interactions , thus following these theoretical frameworks we can perhaps perceive that the upcoming projects and strategies that are being promoted by multiple organizations and institutions may take digitalization of African diplomacy to another level, perhaps overcoming all the limitations and challenges associated with it.

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