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From Talons to Tweets:

Analyzing the Influence of Information and Communication Technology on Diplomacy

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Abstract

As countries embrace innovative technologies, thus increasing the speed of interstate communication, the overall nature of interactions between states is changing. Consequently, core diplomatic structures are shifting from the private realm to the public sphere. I argue that Information Communication Technology (ICT) is the major agent of this shift. Less distance between electorates and diplomatic agents due to ICT allows the public to more directly influence international diplomacy. By studying the impact of the telegraph, telephone, Internet, etc., this study examines ICT’s influence on diplomacy, contending that the trend toward an increased dependence on technology will mark another pivotal moment in diplomatic history.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), diplomacy, international relations
Since the immense technology boom in the late 1990’s, the world has rapidly entered a new era of communication on an unprecedented scale. Interpersonal connections have clearly shifted thanks to innovative channels like personal cellphones and social media, and now countries on the global stage are also incorporating fresh, increasingly complex layers of contact in their conversations. World leaders brandish their own personal Twitter accounts and interact in ways previously unheard of ten years ago, providing society a window into the world of diplomacy.

This mixture of international communication and public interaction brings novel challenges to interstate correspondence while also introducing significant changes into the way diplomacy occurs. As more world leaders take to social media sites like Twitter, we are witnessing intriguing and often absurd interactions among them. If this trend continues, we must ask ourselves this question: how does Information and Communication Technology (ICT) like Twitter influence diplomacy? I argue that because of a rapid influx in Information and Communication Technology, the size and qualities of diplomacy are changing, and thanks to these technological developments, we are witnessing the private and public spheres of society melding within the institution of diplomacy.

By analyzing the impact of Information and Communication Technology, my study will evaluate the relationship between ICT and diplomacy, outlining the consequences of this association and future implications of their close association. First, I will provide a literature review, noting key historical developments that allowed for this shift and relevant notable events. Next, I will outline my argument in the Theory section. Here, I propose two hypotheses: first, as ICT increases, then the size of the American Diplomatic Corps will decrease, and second, as ICT increases, then the nature of diplomacy will also shift. Subsequently, I will explain my data
collection approach and justifications made while creating an original data set that codes information based off data from the Office of the Historian with the U.S. State Department. Here, I coded information on more than 23,000 positions, including concurrent positions, and seven distinct, global regions. Then, I will explain my data collection approach and methodology to demonstrate my research. Afterwards, my Findings will describe the information uncovered through data collection and analysis before I close the paper with my Conclusions, which frame considerations and suggestions for future research.

**Literature Review**

To begin, it is crucial to understand the terms at hand. For the purposes of this study, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is defined as technologies which allow for information transfer via telecommunications and communications technologies, such as the telegraph, telephone, radio, computers, the Internet, social media, etc. (Christensson, 2010). Next, consider diplomacy. The Bureau of Public Affairs of the U.S. State Department explains diplomacy as the management of relationships with foreign governments, international organizations, and foreign populations to advance the national interests of one’s own country while also pursuing peace (Bureau of Public Affairs, 2008). Henry Kissinger noted that in diplomacy, acting out of self-interest was perceived to contribute to global progress by allowing free choice for all states (Kissinger 1994).

According to Bruce Gregory (2008), public diplomacy describes “ways and means by which states, associations of states, and nonstate actors understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; build and manage relationships; and influence opinions and actions to advance their interests and values (p. 276).” Comparatively, Keller (1956) noted that diplomats are responsible for representing their countries abroad, negotiating interstate agreements, and keeping their
mother countries informed about conditions in the receiving country (p. 176). While these responsibilities dictate the way interstate communication occurs, most people still consider diplomacy as “as arcane art practiced by a professional guild whose expertise derives entirely from its dealings with foreign governments (Lord 2003, p. 151).”

But how did diplomacy begin and what developments led to the current structure? Modern diplomacy was born in the Renaissance; however, infantile diplomatic structures existed before then. In the Middle ages, Christendom saw itself as united in common identity but torn by interior conflicts and religious cleavages (Mattingly 1955, p. 18). To comprehend diplomacy from a wholistic approach, we must consider a brief history of the institution. After Christendom’s split, a body of common law emerged, represented now in modern international law (Mattingly 1955, p. 20-21). However, our modern structures did not appear immediately. During the Middle Ages, diplomacy sought peace for Christendom; however, during the Renaissance, diplomacy’s goal reflected the interests of individual countries (Carter 1971, p. 19). Still, political entities called states, each defined by equality, sovereignty, and independence, would have seemed like “a repulsive anarchy (Mattingly 1955, p. 26).” Renaissance-era interaction was hierarchical, following the vassal system (Mattingly 1955, p. 26). Near the end of the fifteenth century, most of the emerging European powers were distracted by their own respective issues, allowing the smaller Italian city-states to develop diplomacy (p. 62-63). The Italian League in 1455, often viewed as the genesis of maintaining peaceful international relations through alliances, is evidence of this Italian advantage (p. 63). However, a growing need for diplomacy was felt throughout Europe (Mallet 2001, p. 63-64). In the fifteenth century, diplomacy matured, fortifying juvenile structures of interstate communication and laying the foundation for modern constructions. During the 1450’s, the Italian city-states recognized the
importance of resident ambassadors abroad, and by the 1470’s, Venice and Milan sponsored permanent diplomats at the greater courts in Europe (Mallett 2001, p. 64). Despite this early implementation, most of the diplomatic activity then consisted of dynastic politics that excluded these new resident ambassadors (Mallett 2001, p. 64).

Nevertheless, Europe diplomacy continued to evolve in the Italian example. Soon, official ambassadors acted similarly to our own system. Before departing, ambassadors received the necessary documents for their mission, including instructions, credentials, and powers (Mattingly 1955, p. 36). This burgeoning emphasis on interstate affairs created an obsession with secrecy, a fixation that pervaded not only messages from and instructions to diplomats abroad but also discussions at home (Mallett 2001, p. 65). In addition, a growing elitist class of diplomats contributed to this fascination with privacy (Mallett 2001, p. 65). This is an intriguing development in diplomatic history, revealing diplomats’ commitment to the private realm even from the institution’s conception. This skeletal structure of diplomacy remained largely the same for a couple centuries, but soon, a key treaty would outline the modern nation-state.

One of the touchstone moments in diplomatic history is the Peace of Westphalia. According to Croxton (1999), this peace is the common name given to the treaties of Münster and Osnabrück signed in 1648 which ended the Thirty Years War (p. 569). This treaty is often credited with creating the idea of sovereignty, but Croxton (1999) concludes that a treaty alone could not establish sovereignty. Rather, the administrative actions of the country define sovereignty (Croxton 1999, p. 570). Sovereignty outlined the state as the ultimate political authority (Hinsley 1986, p. 26). In this model, each state recognizes the ultimate jurisdiction of every other state within their respective territories, with states as predominant international actors (Croxton 1999, p. 570). This structure allowed for a new operation of diplomacy, leading
to our current system of interaction among equal states. Next, global congresses would provide structure to diplomacy.

In 1814, the great powers of Europe gathered in Vienna, Austria to determine the future of Europe following Napoleon’s defeat (Vick 2014, p. 1). Leaders wanted to create a sharp vision going forward, codifying diplomacy to promote international relations (Vick 2014, p. 321). The Final Act of the Congress was signed on June 9th, 1815, and it provided three hierarchical titles for diplomatic agents, including Ambassadors, Envoys, and Chargés d’Affaires (Lesaffer, n.d.; Vick 2014, p. 321). This congress organized permanent diplomacy, one that has lasted over two hundred years (Lesaffer, n.d.). Europe’s Vienna Congress prevailed, its novel ideas remaining untouched by time. When the European powers met at Aix-la-Chapelle, France in 1818, they placed Ministers Resident as an intermediate class between Envoys and Chargés d’Affaires (Lesaffer, n.d.). Even in 1961, when the world convened for the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the ideas were again codified and upheld (United Nations 1961). All these important congresses rectified the insufficiencies of the haphazard diplomacy that governed the West and then applied them to the world. Even today, we operate along this model.

With the history of diplomacy clearly outlined, we must consider significant developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Considering the legal history of diplomacy, how did these indispensable innovations also alter the course of diplomacy? One of the first developments came covered in feathers, and today, we largely consider these creatures nothing more than nuisances: pigeons.

Despite their innocently ignorant demeanor, pigeons were the first birds domesticated by humans (Jerolmack 2007, p. 78). Throughout history, they served as messengers. First, Greeks used pigeons to relay the names of Olympic Games victors, but later, Romans utilized the
pigeons to send war intelligence from the front back home during Caesar’s conquest of Gaul (Jerolmack 2007, p. 82). Soon, pigeons crept into modern European diplomacy. In England, pigeons traveled from Ascot to London with the Ascot Cup winner’s name in just fifteen minutes, and at the Ascot Races in 1840, Queen Victoria herself asked for a demonstration of a carrier-pigeon (Amelia 1841, 222). Soon, the pigeon climbed to prominence during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-1871, the “coming-of-age of the pigeon as a modern instrument of war (Jerolmack 2007, p. 83). As the Prussians sieged Paris, French citizens released pigeon-laden balloons into the air (Jerolmack 2007, p. 83). Curiously, some of the pigeons did reach London, and over the course of the war, the birds communicated over one million messages across Prussian lines (Jerolmack 2007, p. 83.) Jerolmack contributes this intense level of success to most European states creating Pigeon Service divisions after the war (p. 83). In this way, pigeons swooped into distinction in interstate communication in Europe.

The amazing speed of these birds also reframed military intelligence during the World Wars. When communication lines were sabotaged, pigeons filled the gap, and consequently, the birds became so valuable that the invading Germans also targeted Allied pigeon forces (Jerolmack 2007, p. 83). By the end of World War I, Britain employed 22,000 active pigeons and 400 pigeoneers for diplomatic communication over enemy lines (Jerolmack 2007, p. 83). Jerolmack argues that pigeons aided the British during World War II, as British air drops of pigeons into occupied Belgium and France hoped to communicate with civilians (p. 84). American pigeon G. I. Joe received the Dickens Medal for notifying Allied bombers that the site they planned to bomb had already been secured by Allied forces (Jerolmack 2007, p. 84). While pigeons bridged a gap in communication speed, they fell short when considering communication distance. Some pigeons could fly hundreds of miles, but they could not feasibly constitute an
efficient, continuous system of global information transfers. This momentous shift to international communication came with the use of machines rather than animals, and soon wires crisscrossed the world, buzzing alive with the invention of the telegraph.

“Ah! these little ‘clicks’ of the telegraph—Though they breathe not a word/ Their voices are heard/ At a distance no voice could reach,” a poem in an 1848 issue of Scientific American reads (Telegraph 1848, p. 129). Just eight years after Samuel F. B. Morse obtained a patent for the telegraph, his miraculous invention already received admiration from poets, and this example reveals the shock the telegraph had on wider society (John 2010, p. 416). In 1843, Morse received $30,000 from Congress to demonstrate a telegraph line between Baltimore and Washington, and the next year, the iconic message “What Hath God Wrought” zipped between the two cities (John 2010, p. 416). With the application of telegraph wires between states and nations, the invention “established new conventions of simultaneity (John 2010, p. 6). However, Western Union would not reform telegraphy for mass market consumption until 1910, and before then, telegram services remained highly exclusive (John 2010, p. 6-7). Still, Morse’s legacy lives on in the pivotal role that telegraph access, or the lack thereof, played in notable world events (John 2010, p. 2). And interestingly, the interactions granted by the telegraph during these key affairs express ICT’s increasing influence on diplomacy.

To European delight, telegraph communication lines could cohesively tie empires together (Headrick 2010, p. 51). For the British, telegraph lines to China and India were vitally important to their imperial aspirations (Headrick 2010, p. 51; Kneusel 2007, p. 517). Headrick notes that construction of lines between major Indian cities began in 1853, and by 1854, it took less than a day to transmit a message that previously took an entire month (p. 53). This exponential increase in communication speed allowed Britain to squander the Indian Munity of
1857 (Headrick 2010, p. 53). In China, British diplomats tried to avoid implementation of telegraphy, as they feared it would bolster the Foreign Office, and reduce their own diplomatic strength (Kneusel 2007, p. 517). Notice that the diplomats wanted to protect their own agency in China, but the telegraph reduced the distance the mother country’s power had to breach. In this way, technology strengthened the central government while weakening the diplomats’ voices.

Submarine telegraph cables entered the scene in the 1850’s and 1860’s (Headrick 2010, p. 55). In 1870, the Eastern Telegraph Company successfully laid a cable connecting Suez and Bombay, thereby allowing Britain a connection to India that belonged entirely to the empire (Headrick 2010, p. 56). However, empire itself allowed the British success in such an endeavor: these submarine cables consisted of copper and gutta-percha, a latex gathered from trees in Malay (Kneusel 2007, p. 519). Because states feared cable vulnerability in war, the international community agreed to leave submarine cables in private hands to allow for neutrality (Müller 2016, p. 190). And such fears were well grounded. At the beginning of both the Spanish-American War and World War I, strategically placed cables were sabotaged, making telecommunications valid targets in conflict (Müller 2016, p. 189). These examples place Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at the forefront of the later period of British imperialism and show us that these communication avenues allowed unparalleled success in empire building and maintenance. However, two more essential examples require examination: the War of 1812 and the Ems Dispatch of 1870.

The War of 1812 serves as a useful example to highlight ICT’s impact on diplomacy because the telegraph did not yet exist. However, if the United States and Britain had the telegraph, they might have avoided two months of conflict. Americans perceived Britain as hostile toward their maritime commerce, but without agreeable terms, James Madison addressed
Congress and recommended war in May 1812 (Hickey 2012, p. 40). Congress voted for war, and the conflict began on June 18th, 1812 (Hickey 2012, p. 43). After two years and eight months, the two nations made peace on December 24th, 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent. (Hickey 2012, p. 297). Despite the peace treaty, the Battle of New Orleans occurred on January 8th, 1815, nearly three weeks later (Hickey 2012, p. 221). Why? The telegraph did not exist. News of the Battle of New Orleans arrived at Washington on February 4th, ten days before news of the peace treaty and more than a month after the treaty was signed (Hickey 2012, p. 316). Information moved too slow, and as a result, the all-important news of the war’s end could not fizzle heated tension between American and British forces in the Gulf. Here, we see how an ICT like the telegraph might have altered the course of history, while this example also shows us just how impactful the telegraph can be in diplomacy.

Another relevant example of the telegraph’s influence is the Ems Dispatch of 1870, an event following the telegraph’s creation. This diplomatic squabble caused by an edited telegram erupted into the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and it all began with Otto van Bismarck (Halperin 1973, p. 83). In 1870, he pressured Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to accept candidacy to the Spanish throne (Kamusella 2007, p. 56). Of course, the French were alarmed, unwilling to accept increased Prussian pressure so close to France (Kamusella 2007, p. 57; King 2013, p. 182). Even though Prince Leopold withdrew his candidacy, the French still asked Prussian King Wilhelm I to assure them of no future claims, a request that Wilhelm declined (Kamusella 2007, p. 57). That might have been the end of the discussion, but Bismarck had other plans. After receiving a telegram of the interaction between the French ambassador and the Prussian King, Bismarck edited the message, removing any mention of pleasantries while purposely adding language to exacerbate tension (Kamusella 2007, p. 57). When this edited
message dispersed across Europe and reached France, French media went berserk, the people demanded retribution, and in August of 1870, the war began (King 2013, p. 182). Bismarck used the immediacy and vulnerability of the telegraph to alter diplomatic communication to provoke war. Clearly, he succeeded. The Ems Dispatch is a fitting example of ICT not only creating channels of speedy communication, but also offering opportunities for deception with its use. At that point, ICT allowed for trickery that moved so quickly that it could not be intercepted, allowing a misrepresentation of reality to cloud society’s consciousness. In this way, Bismarck’s edited Ems Dispatch could be considered an early example of “fake news,” a term now popularized in political vernacular.

The next Information and Communications Technology to cause a shift in diplomacy was the telephone. In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell secured a patent for his new technology of electrically transmitting sound, and the next year, he received another patent for a telephone instrument (John 2010, p. 418). Later, in 1870, Bell creates his own company called National Bell to commercialize his patents, pushing the telephone into public use (John 2010, p. 418). However, while this commercialization occurred during the 1870’s, the telephone was not popularized until 1900, with naturalization coming during World War I (John 2010, p. 8). By 1915, the United States’ most prominent telephone network provider announced transcontinental service, hoping to make “a neighborhood out a nation (John 2010, p. 11). But what about making a neighborhood out of multiple nations? The first instance of transatlantic telephone communication came in 1915 with a call from Arlington, Virginia to Paris, France (Telecommunications History Group, n.d.).

Even though commercialization of intercontinental phone service came in 1927 with a line between New York and London, the world became a little smaller as the telephone emerged
as a viable channel of communication (Telecommunications History Group, n.d.). However, the telephone as a tool of diplomacy came with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. In July, the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles on Cuba, just ninety miles from the Floridian coast (The Cuban Missile Crisis, n.d.). After the United States learned of this move, the two superpowers clashed, but thanks to an agreement, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. averted total crisis (The Cuban Missile Crisis, n.d.). However, this issue resulted because of a lack of communication (The Cuban Missile Crisis, n.d.). Hoping to prevent future close calls, a direct telephone hotline was set up between Washington and Moscow, connecting the White House and the Kremlin in a way never done before (The Cuban Missile Crisis, n.d.). Here, we see direct communication lines between the two most powerful leaders of the time, and this immediate, clarifying channel existed solely due to the development of the telephone. In this way, telephone was a cornerstone of international diplomacy during the Cold War, thereby realigning diplomatic communication as well.

But the telephone was not the only ICT development to play a vital role in the Cold War. Transitioning out of World War II, the world witnessed the development of revolutionary computer technology. One of the earliest advances came with the creation of ENIAC, or the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (Levy 2013). During the early 1940’s, the U.S. Army needed a machine that could calculate munitions trajectories to assist with the war effort (Levy 2013). With the Moore School of Engineering, the U.S. government funded the creation of what specialists consider the first general-purpose, digital computer: ENIAC (Levy 2013). The New York Times heralded the computer as an “electronic speed marvel, “completing computing work almost 1,000 times faster than ever before (Kennedy 1946, p. 1). This computer represented such a huge leap forward in ICT development, like how the telegraph rapidly progressed communication from pigeons to electrical signal messaging systems. ENIAC was
completed after World War II, thereby missing its intended application; however, this
groundbreaking processing machine laid the groundwork for future computer development (Levy
2013). This included systems like Transit. In 1958, just as the Cold War truly intensified, the
Advanced Research Projects Agency funded this satellite system, and in 1960, the government-
funded program launched its first satellite (Transit Satellite, n.d.). The Navy took control through
the 1960’s, bringing the system to a total of 36 satellites by 1968 (Transit Satellite, n.d.).
Considering the power plays and posturing that characterized the Cold War, Transit was an
invaluable technology for the Navy, which used the network keep track of the nation’s ballistic
missile submarine force (Transit Satellite, n.d.). With these two ICT advances, computers
dominated the Cold War era, but they also started the Information Age (Levy 2013). And this
progress will seem more familiar to a 21st century audience, as it includes the rise of the Internet.

While the Internet began in the early 1960’s, this radical communication highway did not
come into its own until the 1990’s (Leiner et al, 1997). In fact, the term “Internet” was first
defined by the Federal Networking Council on October 24, 1995 (Leiner et al, 1997). While the
Internet was created to support resource sharing and file distribution, it also produced email and
audio and video streaming (Leiner et al, 1997). Yet the Internet then quite unlike the version that
pervades the globe today. In 1996, the twenty million Americans with Internet access browsed
only thirty minutes a month on average (Manjoo 2009). In 2016, however, more than 286 million
citizens in the United States used the Internet, with 88.5% of Americans accessing the Internet at
home (United States Internet, n.d.). Obviously, the Internet has consumed the world, with some
aspects so deeply imbedded in our culture that “it's hard to imagine any force killing them
outright” (Manjoo 2009). The arrival of social media sites like Facebook and Instagram
cemented the Internet in culture, as these digital playgrounds allow unprecedented degrees of
connectivity in both private and personal lives (Dijck 2013, p. 4). And the takeover was
amazingly fast. At the end of 2011, 82% of the world’s 1.2 billion Internet users logged onto at
least one social media site (Dijck 2013, p. 4). According to Dijck (2013), once casual speech acts
have become “formalized inscriptions” (p. 7). Of all social media sites, Twitter is perhaps one of
the more influential developments, especially considering its emerging role in diplomacy.

Created in 2006, Twitter was first envisioned as an SMS-based platform (MacArthur
2018). Original creator Jack Dorsey sent the first tweet, which read, “just setting up my twttr,”
on March 21, 2006 (MacArthur 2018). From there, the platform exploded in popularity. In just
six years, the number of Twitter users skyrocketed to more than two hundred million monthly
users (MacArthur 2018). But this surge has not been limited to general populations, as Twitter is
the social media of choice for world leaders (Lüfkens 2012). Users can find the entire
governments of Chile and Mexico on the site, and social media is closing the gap between world
leaders and their electorates (Lüfkens 2012). According to Twiplomacy (2018), United States
President Donald Trump is the most followed world leader with more than 52 million followers.
Despite having fewer followers, Saudi Arabian King Salman ranks as the world’s most
influential leader on Twitter with an average of 154,000 retweets per tweet (Twiplomacy 2018).
Yet Trump is first when considering his account’s interactions with the public, numbering at
over 264,000 in 2018 (Twiplomacy 2018). These Twiplomacy statistics show that world leaders
embrace Twitter as an influential channel of information with the public. In this way, Twitter
poses an intriguing question about the future of diplomacy.

Before postulating about the future, we must regard the past. How is ICT changing
diplomacy? With the invention of the telegraph in the 19th century, states could connect with not
only other foreign ministries but also the population of those foreign countries (Gregory 2008, p.
Lippman (1922) called this “a new departure” because “all the deciding elements of mankind” were able to confer for the first time (p. 133). Now, states as actors still relate to modern diplomacy but not in the same way as a century ago (Gregory 2008, p. 283). Rather, the world order has been transformed by globalism, digital technologies, and nonstate actors (Gregory 2008, p. 283). This shift became first realized after the World Wars, as the horrors of warfare urged the growth of the popular press (Lord 2003, p. 154). The end of a world dictated by secret treaties forced diplomacy “out of the palace” and into the wider public where it received a new purpose (Lord 2003, p. 154). This globally-minded, post-Cold War diplomacy focused more on shaping states from the inside by regarding civil conflict, human rights, and economic policies (Lord 2003, p. 154). Considering this sweeping historical background from pigeons to Twitter, I have placed my argument in its wider context. Now, my theory may be properly explained.

**Theory**

For my study, I consider two distinct hypotheses. The first considers the relationship between the size of the American Diplomatic Corps and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

**H1:** As Information and Communication Technology (ICT) increases, then the number of American diplomats will decrease.

I postulate that in this relationship, faster communication speeds would allow for more direct, efficient communication among state governments, thus changing the structures of diplomacy. I contend that this increased degree of rapid communication would decrease the need for as many agents in embassies abroad. Technology not only decreases the need for human labor at embassies but also renders existing human labor output more efficient by laying the
foundation for emerging changes in current communication methods. As a result, state governments may operate with fewer diplomats. Critics to this idea might argue that as global population surges, so too will the need for qualified diplomats. Or perhaps as the number of world powers increases or as more Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) wield additional influence, we might see a larger diplomatic corps simply because more capable people exist to fulfill the increasing need for skilled negotiators. However, I suggest that ICT remains a valid variable which impacts diplomacy by altering both the size and structure as society itself shifts due to these technologies. An increasing number of states does not necessarily mean a country would need to create new ambassadorships. In 2015, the United States sent one ambassador to represent simultaneously Tuvalu, Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, and Nauru (Office of the Historian). This example shows that more states does not necessarily create a need for more diplomats; rather, the relevant size and importance of states generates this requirement. We already observe new manufacturing technologies replacing human labor in the industrial sector, and automated services replace clerks in retail establishments and government agencies. As technology soars to innovative heights, the reality is ICT has the capability to decrease the need for human service in embassies around the world.

Additionally, my research explores the association between the structure of diplomacy and Information and Communication (ICT). I contemplate the effectiveness of such technologies in shifting the character of diplomacy’s operation.

H2: As ICT increases, then the structures and nature of diplomacy will shift.

Part of this shift would include increased interaction between heads of state as new communication avenues are now imbedded in interstate discussions. Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are now deeply ingrained social pillars, especially in Western
democracies, and even world leaders are entering the conversation. Twitter, as an example, has provided several examples of direct interaction between heads of state that were once unimaginable, and this newly emerging secondary aspect of diplomacy may continue to grow in a manner which also impacts officially sanctioned interaction between states. Consider Trump’s warning to Iranian President Rouhani on July 22nd, 2018 (realDonaldTrump, 2018d). With one tweet, Trump shocked the world, spurring international conversations about the possibility of even more conflict in the Middle East. With this emerging tool of diplomacy, world leaders are shaping foreign policy at home and abroad, and I posit that this method of diplomatic communication will only increase in the future.

As diplomacy continues to shift from the private realm to the public sphere, world leaders are rising to fill even larger diplomatic roles, and simultaneously, electorates are rising to join the diplomatic discussion via ICT avenues created by social media and the Internet. Of course, direct communication between world leaders existed before via telephone. However, the public was not made aware of these conversations until a press conference the next day or week. Now, with Twitter, the public is a part of the conversation, directly adding to the communication. Public opinion informs these diplomatic interactions via Twitter, and when conversations between leaders occur such as that between Trump and Rouhani, we can see it occur in real time. As such, an influx of ICT would permit fewer diplomatic agents to conduct the same amount of diplomacy present before such a rapid increase while allowing society to shape the structures of diplomacy to match societal expectations. As result, the nature of diplomacy would shift as well. This institution will become more inclusive in the future, and because of this intriguing change, I argue that we find ourselves in the preliminary stages of another pivotal moment in diplomatic history.
Data and Methodology

To test my hypotheses, I collected data about the size of the American Diplomatic Corps since the United States’ early beginnings to modern day and then compared those numbers with key dates of Information Communication Technology (ICT) development. Additionally, I performed a regional analysis to analyze the relationship of geographic assignment of American diplomats to key periods in American history. Then, I also conducted a Twitter analysis of three Western heads of state. As for data collection to monitor the changing size of the American Diplomatic Corps, I selected historical records available online from the Office of the Historian of the United States Department of State which list all the Principal Officers and Chiefs of Mission of the American Diplomatic Corps from 1778 until 2017. However, the records for 2018 are sparse, only including two Secretaries of State. Additionally, the entries for 2016 and 2017 were incomplete at the time of data collection; as such, I ended data collection at 2015 since the records are accurate when compared to additional records available at the United States Department of State website (US Ambassadors, n.d.).

The records that I used are arranged by year from 1778 until 2015, and for each year, all active Principal Officers and Chiefs of Mission are ordered by last name in alphabetical order. Each entry lists the diplomatic agent with his or her career resumé, noting the position relevant to the selected year in bold text. This structure allows me to sort through each year systematically, coding each position served in a given year into the respective categories. I selected my categories as follows: Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Minister Resident, Chargés d’Affaires (including Chargés d’Affaires ad interim), Representatives of the United States, Secretary of State (including Assistant Secretaries of State, Deputy Secretaries of State, Under Secretaries of State,
and Secretaries of State Ad Interim) and Other. Other includes all advisers, clerks, directors, and Ambassadors-at-large.

Currently, Ambassadors compose the clear majority of the American Diplomatic Corps, while Envoys constituted this majority prior to World War II and before the United States began using the rank of Ambassador in 1893. Ministers Resident were the predominant rank used by the U.S. before Envoys surpassed them in number in 1883, never again to fall lower than the number of Ministers Resident. As for Representatives of the United States, they receive their own section because of their unique purpose. These diplomatic agents typically serve the United States abroad by providing an American voice at the table of major international organizations, such as the United Nations.

Now a less important rank, Chargés d’Affaires eclipsed Envoys in number in 1827 and remained the highest numbered rank until 1854 when Ministers Resident replaced them, and I categorized Chargés d’Affaires separately with that consideration in mind. These significant periods of relevancy of these diplomatic ranks denotes their importance, thus why I counted each distinct rank in its own category. While Secretaries of State are domestic positions, they represent the necessary national framework upon which American international diplomacy is built. The Other category includes all other positions outside of my named categories, and these include advisers, chief clerks, directors of agencies, and Ambassadors-at-large. For this study, they lack respective relevance when compared higher ranking diplomats. For example, all these positions combined into one category remain largely insignificant data until post-World War II. As such, I proceeded with this category.

As for selecting which positions to account for, I used a systematic approach to count the positions for each year from year of appointment until the termination of the mission, and I
considered year of appointment regardless of the month of appointment. For example, for a diplomat appointed in December 1955 and actively serving from March 1956 to August 1959, I counted this agent in all five years named. Additionally, I counted the data including agents who did not proceed to post for a couple years. Despite the lag between date of appointment and arrival at the mission site, a diplomat may still act in the diplomatic interests of his or her country pertaining to the receiving host nation while in the United States. Moreover, I counted the number of positions served, including concurrent appointments, rather than the number of individuals serving as agents. This choice provides results for the size of American diplomacy abroad by fully expressing the presence of agents abroad acting in other countries for American interests. For this study, I charted diplomatic corps size over time, so I counted concurrent positions to express fully the shifting size of Americans serving in positions abroad. In some situations, certain diplomats received nomination for a position yet never traveled to post or died before arriving for service; in these rare instances, I did not code or count these positions in my data collection. However, omission of these occasional anomalies will not skew the data due to their infrequent appearance.

For my regional analysis of American Principal Officers and Chiefs of Mission, I categorized each agent into a category denoting geographical location. My selected categories are North America (defined as the entire North American continent, including Central America and the Caribbean), South America, Europe and Russia, Asia, Middle East, Africa, and Oceania. I grouped Russia with Europe due to the nation’s long history of involvement more with European events rather than Asian happenings. This claim is evidenced by Russia’s involvement in many Eurocentric conflicts, like the Napoleonic Wars, the Russo-Swedish War, and both World Wars. The Middle East is its own category because this region is a hotbed of international
affairs in the modern era, especially considering developed nations’ interests in the oil rich countries present there. Additionally, the United States’ involvement in the Middle East greatly increased with the beginning of World War II, with the creation of Israel backed by American support, and after the events of 9/11.

For my analysis of world leaders’ Twitter accounts, I used qualitative methods to complete my study. I surveyed the accounts of U.S. President Donald Trump, U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. While increased levels of conversations between these three Western democracies may result from shared cultural and historical experiences, I contend that my analysis still relevant due to the nature of Twitter diplomacy. For example, Donald Trump often interacts with further regimes like North Korea and Iran despite no shared cultural or historical events. By analyzing over a dozen tweets from each leader, I determined to what degree these leaders are interacting with their global peers. I selected tweets based on clear mentions of other world leaders. This could involve inclusion of the other leader’s username or just a broad mention with no direct use of a leader’s username. However, selecting tweets with these parameters is crucial to understand the exciting expansion of diplomacy via social media.

**Findings**

Following analysis of my data collection, Information and Communication Technology has not affected the size of the American Diplomatic Corps. The data does not provide evidence to support the idea of ICT directly causing a decrease in the number of acting diplomatic agents. Rather, my analysis of the data supports the opposite argument. According to Figure 2, as the number of American ambassadors increases from 1778 to 2015, the development of key Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) also increases and they are developed in
increasingly rapid succession. Note the huge ICT boom in the late 1990’s; at this time, American Ambassadors reached a new peak. Therefore, both ICT advances and the number of Ambassadors is increasing, thus showing that technology is not decreasing the size of the American Diplomatic Corps.

Rather, ICT changes the way diplomacy operates, not the number of individuals necessary to operate it. This finding is based on my Twitter analysis, which showed varied styles of communication among the three leaders. Trump uses Twitter in a more personal way, often openly expressing his opinions and attacking other heads of state on a variety of topics. Tweets from PM Theresa May and Justin Trudeau are more official while still providing enough personality to connect with their constituents. Consider Donald Trump’s insult toward Justin Trudeau, calling the Canadian Prime Minister “indignant” (realDonaldTrump, 2018a). Two days after that insult, Trump called Trudeau “meek and mild,” essentially labeling the PM a liar (realDonaldTrump, 2018b; realDonaldTrump, 2018c).

UK Prime Minister Theresa May is much more friendly and diplomatic, still directly addressing leaders but with poise. She notes the “entente chaleureuse” between the UK and France in January 2018, directly mentioning French President Macron (theresa_may, 2018a). Later in April, May welcomed Indian PM Narendra Modi to 10 Downing Street via Twitter (therea_may, 2018b). This is interesting because it highlights interaction with a state in the Commonwealth, a group of countries resulting from decolonization. These states still maintain close relations due to shared history. Canadian PM Justin Trudeau also adds to this possibility. In April 2018, Trudeau thanked Theresa May for growing cooperation in trade between Canada and the UK (JustinTrudeau, 2018a). Later in July, Trudeau affirmed Canada’s commitment to
NATO, showing a level of “Twiplomacy” between a world leader and an intergovernmental organization (Justin Trudeau, 2018b).

Compared with my regional analysis, I find that there is a relationship between diplomatic presence and interaction and foreign policy goals. According to Figure 3, over time the United States sends more diplomats around the world, developing a global profile. Note the period “1914-1960,” when only 9.27% of diplomats operate in Africa. Yet in “1961-1990,” diplomats in Africa constitute 30.03% of American Chiefs of Mission. This reflects shifts in American foreign policy, as the U.S. sought representation in the newly decolonized Africa as well as the implementation of Cold War posturing. As for the UK, interactions on Twitter highlight continued, amiable relationships between former imperial possessions. As such, it appears that imperialism is also a factor in this shift of diplomacy. Upon completion of my analysis, I suggest that the hidden variables to explain a simultaneous increase in ICT progress and the size of the American Diplomatic Corps are wealth, globalization, and the overall increase in power of the United States over time. These variables will likely dictate the future progression of my considered qualities of diplomatic corps size and the speed of ICT development. Thus, a concise conclusion on ICT’s future impact on diplomacy is difficult.
Figure 2: Comparing Ambassadors and ICT Development

Figure 3: Regional Analysis
Nevertheless, I argue that while ICT has not impacted the size of the diplomatic corps thus far, this continuously developing area could cause a decrease in overall size as communication between states becomes more efficient and concise thanks to technological advances. Fewer diplomats will facilitate interstate communication as heads of state will likely assume larger roles, which may come to fruition with the use of social media and other similar communication avenues. In the American case, the president is titled as the Chief Diplomat of the American Diplomatic Corps, so I posit that as secondary diplomatic channels grow, so too will the relevant power of the president as the Chief Diplomat. Perhaps existing diplomatic structures, such as embassies and their supporting offices, will shift their utility to focus more on data collection for analysis by a close team of experts that reports directly to the president.

While diplomacy has warranted the creation of new technologies in the past, I argue that we find ourselves in a time in diplomatic history when society and technology are influencing the qualities of diplomacy. As noted in the literature review, the earliest ICT developments, like the telegraph and the telephone, impacted governments and thereby diplomacy in previously unthinkable ways. Then, with the creation of more modern technologies such as computers, like ENIAC, IAS, and Transit, we witness a relationship between diplomacy and technology where governments were directly funding the creation of new ICT creations to urge foreign policy goals forward. Yet now our world is in an era quite like the period of earlier ICT inventions where technology is influencing how diplomacy operates. However, the analysis of world leaders’ Twitter accounts supports the possibility of an active shift in the nature of diplomacy.

**Conclusions**

By combining both history and political science, this study contemplates the shifting nature of diplomacy due to ICT development with a holistic approach. I postulate that this shift is
diplomacy’s migration from private realms to the global public sphere due to ICTs, and no other study considered in my literature review argues this same position. In this way, my study has taken a unique approach to provide a fuller picture while trying to answer my stated research question. After completing this research, I conclude that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has not affected the size of the American Diplomatic Corps. However, there is evidence to support the idea that ICT is causing a shift in the nature of diplomacy and the way in which it operates. World leaders on Twitter are utilizing the medium as a tool to express, expand, and execute foreign policy goals. In the future, we will likely see a change in the size of the diplomatic corps because of these evolving qualities and uses of technology.

While my study considered the role of ICT as an influential variable on diplomacy, I did recognize the likely existence of latent variables, such as wealth, globalization, and the power of the state. With future research, I hope to explore these variables and their respective impacts on the characteristics of diplomacy. Additionally, I would like to research other social media sites like Facebook and Instagram to determine differences in diplomatic communication between these other channels and Twitter. With all aspects of this study in mind, from carrier pigeons to now a digital bird, Information and Communication Technology and diplomacy have clearly influenced each other. As technology only continues to progress and diplomacy becomes more imperative, it will be interesting to monitor what changes occur in the future.
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