

## Mapping the Discourse of Power: Diplomatic Actors on X (Formerly Twitter)

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of power dynamics on digital diplomacy by analyzing the Twitter usage of three diplomatic actors (the Chinese, UK, and US Embassies in Kenya). The research aimed to answer questions about who the diplomats prioritized for engagement, how they used Twitter in crisis communication, and how they became media actors by adopting media logic in their digital diplomacy practices. The results of the study showed that Twitter was utilized by diplomats to control the daily agenda, express opinions, and influence followers and media outlets. The Chinese and UK Embassies made use of the platform for formal communication and to communicate with their diaspora. The US ambassador followed online influencers to set the online conversations and expand their online presence. Meanwhile, the UK ambassador leveraged the media to drive foreign policy and tailor messages to the Kenyan audience. The findings also indicated that all embassies had adopted a media logic by following various media sources. The study also found that the Chinese embassy was quick to respond to any tweet that mentioned human rights issues in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, and used Twitter as a tool to correct misinformation. In conclusion, diplomats use Twitter as a tool to engage with different audiences and achieve their diplomatic goals through interactive strategies such as two-way communication, storytelling, influencer engagement, hashtag campaigns, and media amplification. However, diplomats need to constructively engage with the digital public to accomplish their goals, while avoiding the risk of their messages being misconstrued.

**Keywords:** *crisis communication, digital diplomacy, diplomatic engagement, interactive strategies, power dynamics.*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper examined the discourse of power influence on X (formerly Twitter) in the context of digital diplomacy by analyzing the performance of three diplomatic actors in Kenya on X (formerly Twitter). X (formerly Twitter) has become an increasingly popular tool for digital diplomacy (Ongonga, 2020), as it provides a quick and easy platform for government officials and diplomats to communicate with the public as well as with each other (Chhabra, 2020). It has become an effective tool for public diplomacy, which is the use of communication to influence and build relationships with foreign public (Duncombe, 2018).

Therefore, X (formerly Twitter) allows government officials and diplomats to share their opinions, policies, and updates with a large audience in real-time (Summa, 2020). This helps to build trust and credibility with the public, as well as shape public opinion on various issues (Kuncoro et al., 2024). For example, the U.S. State Department uses X (formerly Twitter) to communicate with the public about its policies and initiatives as well as to respond to questions and concerns from the public (Hikari Ishido et al., 2018).

In addition to public diplomacy, X (formerly Twitter) is used for crisis communication (Çerçi, 2024). During natural disasters, political upheavals, and other emergencies, X (formerly Twitter) has provided real-time updates and information to the public, helping to dispel rumors and misinformation (Manor & Segev, 2020). This is particularly important in countries where traditional media is censored or inaccessible.

Furthermore, X (formerly Twitter) for digital diplomacy can facilitate two-way communication. Diplomats use X (formerly Twitter) to listen to the public's opinions and respond in real-time, which helps to build better relationships and foster greater understanding between countries (Valencia & Moscato, 2020). This type of interaction helps to dispel stereotypes and reduce misunderstandings between different cultures and communities (Oloo, 2022). It has also provided a platform for governments and diplomats to engage in multilateral diplomacy (Schuster & Kolley, 2020). This means that they use Twitter to engage in discussions and negotiations with other governments and organizations on a global scale (Bjola, 2016).

For example, the United Nations uses X (formerly Twitter) to engage with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders on a range of international issues, including peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development (Ratner, 2020). Moreover, X (formerly Twitter) also helps to increase transparency and accountability in diplomacy (Odjo, 2024). Governments and diplomats use Twitter to share information and updates on their activities and decisions, allowing the public to hold them accountable (Ifrañ, et al., 2023). This helps to build trust and credibility with the public and increase transparency in the decision-making process.

Twitter in global politics is not a new subject, as different countries use it to their advantage. For example, in the US, Twitter has been used as a tool for public diplomacy, where the government and other official entities communicate directly with the public (Tsvetkova et al., 2020; Alper, 2024). The U.S. government agencies and officials, including the State Department and the White House, regularly use Twitter to release official statements, share news and updates, and engage with the public (Odabaş, 2023). In the United Kingdom, Twitter has been adopted as a key tool for digital diplomacy, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office using the platform to communicate with people around the world and to promote the UK's foreign policy priorities (Gavrilina & Surma, 2020).

British ambassadors and diplomats also use Twitter to share their perspectives on international events and to engage with local communities. While in China, the use of Twitter in digital diplomacy is more limited due to government censorship and

restrictions on access to the platform (Huang & Wang, 2020). Nevertheless, some Chinese diplomats and government officials have used Twitter to engage with the international community and promote the country's perspectives on global issues (Zhang & Ong'ong'a, 2021).

While existing literature highlights the use of Twitter by diplomatic actors on the global stage, there remains a significant gap in understanding how this platform is utilized in developing countries, particularly Kenya, during crises. Investigating this context is crucial, as Twitter has become an essential tool for digital diplomacy (Özdemir, 2024), offering a quick and accessible medium for government officials and diplomats to engage with the public and interact with one another.

This study explores digital diplomacy dynamics during crisis communication by examining the activities of three key diplomatic actors—the United States, the United Kingdom, and China—on Twitter. It seeks to document how these actors leverage the platform to influence discourses of power and navigate crisis communication challenges.

Specifically, the research focuses on three key areas: identifying the audiences these diplomatic actors prioritize for engagement, analyzing how they utilize Twitter during crises, and examining their interactive strategies to adopt media logic and establish themselves as media actors. By addressing these dimensions, the study contributes to understanding the evolving role of digital diplomacy in shaping international relations and communication practices in Kenya.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

As Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) operations and programs become constantly entangled with digital media, the activities of MFA become more regular. The increase in foreign and diplomatic traditions that describe diplomatic culture and strategies is perhaps better symbolized by the growth in international affairs and ideas about how diplomats perceive and engage in diplomatic life. While theories aim to account for cultural perception and behavior, many diplomats see themselves more as amorphous than malleable and/or intangible; their true identities are lost in translation (Cercel & Săftescu, 2015).

It is becoming increasingly important to understand modern diplomacy as more and more ambassadors and institutions can focus on digital media to serve the public in the future (Frey, 2024). Technology is also important in shaping the "the art of the conceivable" in the field of diplomacy — not only through the amount of production but also by complex measurements and attempts to connect it to larger strategic goals (Cooper et al., 2013).

Digital diplomacy can reinterpret and extend the essence of the international institution by providing new avenues for influence in complex relations, new levels of participation in the digital forum, and alternative outlets for advocating diplomatic interests (Barman, 2024). Clarifying the principle of information sovereignty is important, in part, because historically diplomats have had the position of knowledge

guardians (Manor, 2019). One of the greatest hazards that diplomats face in the current information age is that newly empowered decision-makers often ignore their guidance and counsel because of an abundance of information and contact channels.

The area of geopolitical operation across digital channels – especially on social media – indicates that there is a more egalitarian space for engagement in foreign relations. Simply placed, more forms of participants, from individuals to collectives operating as lobbying platforms or terrorist organizations, practice a well-documented model of organization that has real impacts on international affairs. Since this operation is essentially anchored and allowed in interconnected contact (and innovations), it removes the conventional barriers that distinguish foreign policy bureaucrats from powerbrokers.

Technology-enabled potential for reform, through mediated politics and networked organization, poses real threats to the exclusive role of diplomats. If this kind of assertion is a thread that underscores many of the more expansive arguments regarding modern diplomacy as deeply disruptive. There is a point that foreign policy actors have a distinct place to draw on the position inside the MFA and embassy systems that cover the globe.

Diplomats act as a boundary-and networking role-fillers are used to connect different constituencies and stakeholders. Diplomats seek to align the needs of their governments with an increasing position in providing global public goods, problems like immigration and human trafficking, and patent protection. They also work closely with other international partners to bolster human rights and safety regulations. Diplomats serve to preserve the existing state of affairs in foreign relations.

Digital diplomacy remains to be seen whether it is a reflection of a threat or an adjustment of present circumstances. The application of digital diplomacy channels, as perceived through numerous nations and MFAs, tends to be: mainly based on engagement instead of strategy; implying that MFAs are likely to be more involved in whether or not they are seen to use their online profiles, as compared to whether or not they are active would use them to accomplish diplomatic objectives (Baykız & Açıklın, 2024).

The influence of public diplomacy is often challenging to measure due to the difficulty in linking efforts to changes in perception or behavior and the high costs of evaluation. However, digital technology has transformed public diplomacy evaluation by enabling alternative methods. For example, analyzing agenda-setting, presence expansion, and conversations on platforms like Twitter used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies can provide insights into mutual understanding, collaboration, and engagement. This approach offers a faster, cost-effective way to assess the impact of digital public diplomacy without relying on surveys or interviews (Rachmawati, et al., 2020).

There is undeniably an increasing number of cases of negotiators turning to ICTs to accomplish goals and to expand the limits of diplomatic creativity. For scholarships, there are still wider concerns regarding the importance of digital diplomacy to the

broader definition of diplomacy itself – beyond the "big picture" discussion on the spread of force and the macro threats that technology presents to the calculation of electronic security and information warfare. In reality, there are other cases where emerging media intersects with diplomacy and foreign affairs. The evolving and complex task of regulating the global governance of the Internet is mostly absent from this modern diplomatic dialogue. Therefore, the study on how diplomatic actors use X to communicate with the public offers us a new perspective on conducting digital diplomacy studies.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a multiple case study approach to address the research questions and explore the use of digital diplomacy on X (formerly Twitter) by the embassies of three global powers— the United States, the United Kingdom, and China—in Kenya from 2019 to 2020. These countries were purposefully selected as they represent key global rivals, each with distinct diplomatic strategies and communication styles. By focusing on these embassies, the study aimed to analyze how digital diplomacy is employed as a tool for influence and engagement in a Kenyan context.

The multiple case study method allowed the investigation of complex phenomena within varied contexts, making it particularly suitable for exploring digital platforms. As Coombs (2022) emphasized, case studies are effective in studies conducted in multifaceted settings because they help transcend simplistic cause-and-effect assumptions, facilitating a deeper understanding of nuanced interactions. This method was integral to dissecting the unique characteristics of each embassy's digital diplomacy strategies while identifying overarching patterns and differences.

This research was exploratory, enabling the integration of diverse data sources to uncover the study problem's deeper dimensions. Given the intricate nature of digital platform studies, this approach provided flexibility and depth, accommodating the dynamic nature of diplomatic communication on X. The analysis focused on specific key figures and their discussions, narratives, and interactions on the platform, providing insight into the extent and style of digital diplomacy practiced in Kenya.

The table below outlines the diplomatic actors whose X accounts were analyzed to understand their digital diplomacy efforts:

Table 1: Diplomatic Actor Engaged on X (Formerly Twitter)

No	Diplomatic Actor	Account Name on X
1	Jane Marriott (British High Commissioner)	@JaneMarriottUK
2	Kyle MC Cartner (Ambassador)	@USAmbKenya
3	China Embassy in Kenya (Ambassador)	@ChineseEmbKenya

Source: Data Collected by Author, 2024

The table identifies the specific individuals or institutions representing their countries on X. By examining their accounts, the study captured the narratives,

interactions, and strategies utilized by these actors to engage with Kenyan audiences, promote national interests, and manage diplomatic relations.

This methodological approach not only facilitated a comparative analysis of digital diplomacy practices but also provided insights into how each actor leveraged X to navigate their distinct diplomatic agendas within Kenya.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Crisis Communication and Digital Diplomacy*

The following section presents the findings of the cases on how the three diplomatic actors performed their diplomatic tasks during the three crisis occasions. Digital diplomacy performed well during the crisis, and hence, diplomatic actors adopted these tools for crisis communication.

Table 2. Cases and Diplomatic Actor Engaged on Twitter

<b>Cases</b>	<b>Diplomatic Actor Engaged</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Case	Jane Marriott
2 <sup>nd</sup> Case	Kyle MC Cartner)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Case	China Embassy in Kenya

Source: Data Collected by Author, 2024

The first case of COVID-19 impacted the world, in which Kenya is among the countries that have been hit hardest by the pandemic (Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020). Therefore, it is believed that the diplomatic actors would be more concerned and curated messages either to assist, support, or share their best practices on tackling the pandemic.

The second case is that during 2019-2020, Kenya campaigned to be elected to be a member of the UN non-permanent Security Council. This seat to Kenya is important since it would ensure that resources are allocated to support her effort in fighting insecurity issues in East Africa. For instance, Kenya's image abroad is tainted due to saddened and tactfully planned terrorist attacks in the capital city and other strategic areas by al-Shabaab, including the US army training camp in Kenya.

The third and final case is that the US prepared to have its presidential elections. Therefore, it was assumed that the US diplomatic actors in Kenya would take time to educate Kenyans on issues of democracy in the United States and fail to address issues that affected Kenya, like the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) process, which is aimed at amending Kenya's constitution. In doing so, the section interrogates how these diplomatic actors employed interactive strategies on Twitter.

### *Case-1-Communicating COVID-19 pandemic*

The US ambassador in Kenya focused on promoting the country's tourism industry after the partial lifting of the COVID-19 lockdown. He shared a video on Twitter of the wildebeest migration and encouraged people to visit tourist sites, which he argued would help restore the country's economy and provide jobs in the industry. This tweet received mixed reactions, with some followers agreeing while others criticized it, saying

Africa is more than just wild animals. Some politicians also used the opportunity to criticize US policies in Kenya, including Dr. Miguna Miguna who argued that foreign tourists were not helping Kenya's economy during the pandemic. The ambassador humorously responded to the criticism and attempted to bring light to the Kenyans facing problems like job losses.



Figure 1: Dialogic Trends on Twitter (Documented by Author, 2020).

### *The UK High Commissioner on Twitter*

On the other hand, the UK high commissioner in Kenya took a more formal approach on Twitter, announcing the UK's plans to send COVID-19 vaccines to support Kenya's vaccination programs. The commissioner used the platform to amplify information on the programs they were implementing in the country and shared details of meetings between UK and Kenyan officials.

The UK High Commissioner in Kenya focused on using Twitter to communicate information on various initiatives and programs to strengthen the relationship between Kenya and the UK. The focus was on areas such as trade, regional security, and health. The Commissioner also announced the UK's plans to ship COVID-19 vaccines to support Kenya's vaccination programs. Most tweets were formal and business-like, emphasizing recorded video messages about regulations and control measures put in place to prevent future COVID-19 cases. The Commissioner also focused on the UK's efforts to help families in Mombasa through cash transfer programs and their commitment to returning stolen assets by corrupt officials to the people of Kenya.

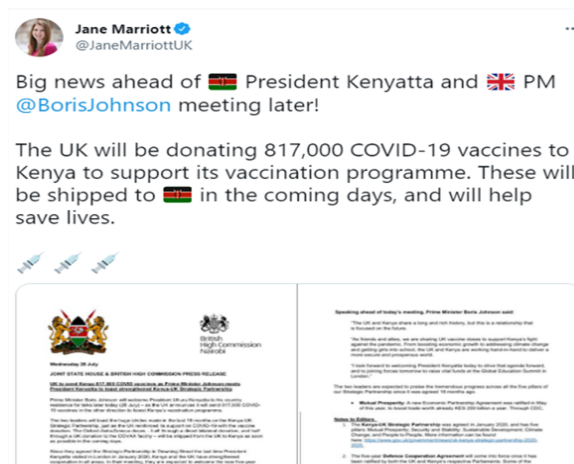


Figure 2: UK High Commissioner on COVID-19 (Documented by Author, 2020).

### Chinese Embassy on Twitter

The Chinese embassy in Kenya used Twitter to communicate China's success in handling COVID-19. They attached press releases to the tweets to be picked up by the media and reported as news. The Chinese embassy's strategy of mediatization allowed them to set the agenda and become a source of information on how to fight the pandemic (Alden & Chan, 2021). The embassy reported on the improving situation in China and the resumption of factory work to provide an example for other countries.

In addition, it used Twitter to communicate about the success of China in handling the COVID-19 pandemic and to set an agenda as a source and point of reference on how to fight it (Wang, 2022). The tweets were backed up by communication from China's spokesperson and included daily updates on disease control and hope for defeating the virus (Song, et al., 2023). The embassy also retweeted tweets from Xinhua news agencies that emphasized that the virus does not respect nation or religion and is a threat to global humanity and that the response to the outbreak is a "test" for China's system and capacity for governance. To avoid miscommunication, most tweets from the Chinese embassy originated from its state media.





Figure 3: Chinese Embassy Tweet on COVID-19 Situation in China (Documented by Author, 2020).

### *Case 2-Kenya Winning the UN Security Council Non-Permanent Seat*

In 2019-2020, Kenya ran a campaign to be elected to the UN Security Council, which was important because Kenya is a crucial security partner to the US and UK in the fight against terrorism. The US worked with Kenya on border security, anti-terrorism efforts, community engagement, and rule of law. Kenya won the non-permanent UN security council seat during the COVID-19 pandemic and became part of Mexico, India, Norway, and Ireland. It was claimed that China supported Djibouti, who was also competing for the seat, and the US preferred Kenya. The Chinese embassy in Kenya tweeted a farewell meeting between the Kenyan Foreign Office and the Chinese ambassador, and the ambassador later congratulated Kenya on its election. The reason for the delay in congratulations from China was because of its influence in Djibouti, where China has a naval base, and it preferred Djibouti over Kenya because of its ties to the US and concerns over African debt traps caused by Chinese-financed infrastructure projects. The Chinese embassy tactfully did not show any favor, but the ambassador counteracted the allegations.



Figure 4: Chinese Embassy on Tweet Countering West Narrative (Documented by Author, 2020)

The UK high commissioner took to Twitter to congratulate Kenya on securing the UN security council seat, claiming that they were excited to be working with Kenya on the biggest international stage. This tweet means that the UK is working with Kenya on security issues at the local level while Kenya is being elevated to the Council, which means that their cooperation could continue to prosper. For example, through this cooperation, it means that the UK could continue to implement its foreign policies in Kenya, which includes training of Kenyan security organs on handling small weapons and explosives, among others.



Figure 5: UK High Commissioner Tweet on Security Council Seat (Documented by Author, 2020).

### *Case-3-BBI-Bridge-Building Kenya's Initiative*

In comparison to the UK high commissioner and the Chinese ambassador in Kenya, the US ambassador engaged Kenyans on Twitter on democratic issues. In his tweet, the ambassador alluded to the fact that the BBI was not his concern, but rather Kenya's. Although the ambassador was determined to avoid accusations that America was interfering in Kenyan internal political affairs, he was the first to comment on American companies' involvement in Kenya's democratic process.

These findings suggest that the US ambassador uses Twitter to promote American foreign policy, including issues of governance and democracy (Manor, 2017). Although the ambassador did not only discuss democracy, he curated his tweets to attract followers to gain more support and establish a relationship. Given the response time on the tweets, the ambassador was quick to respond and framed his messages to encourage more Twitter engagement (Pertiwi & Purwanti, 2023).



Figure 6: US Embassy Interactive Tweet on Democracy (Documented by Author, 2020).

### *Diplomatic Actors Assigning Blame to One Another*

According to the study, UK diplomatic actors blamed the US for how democracy was handled after supporters of President Trump marched to Capitol Hill to prevent Congress from certifying President-elect Joe Biden's election victory. This incident was

tweeted by the UK Prime Minister, calling it a “disgraceful” scene in the US Congress and claiming that the US stands for “democracy” around the world. On the other hand, the UK high commissioner followed suit in urging the US to show its “democratic strength”.

In addition, the US embassy published a statement stating that while the overwhelming majority of those who went to the US Capitol “protested peacefully”, there were “criminals” who committed “violent acts” of “terror” against democracy. These criminals would be held accountable since they did not succeed in stopping the Constitutionally mandated count of the Electoral College vote and the US would have a “peaceful” transfer of power on January 20, and democracy cannot “survive” without the rule of law.

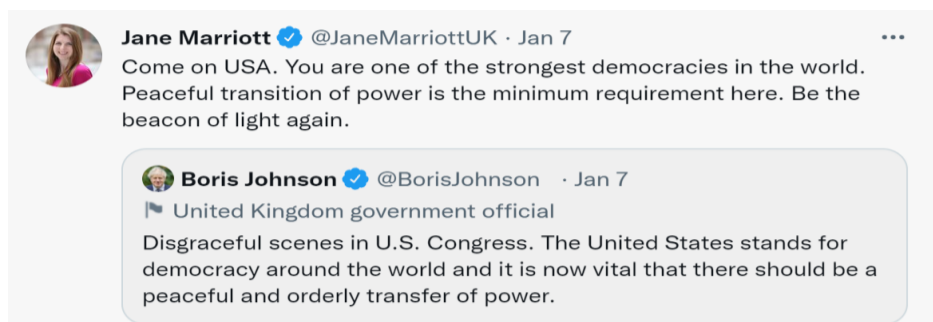


Figure 7: UK High Commissioner Tweet on Democracy (Documented by Author, 2020).

On the other hand, China, did not pay attention to talking about US issues on Twitter in Kenya, but through its spokesperson Hua Chunying, compared the events in Hong Kong in 2019 where the city’s legislature was stormed to being more “severe” than those on Capitol Hill, where not one of the demonstrators died. The remarks from the Chinese spokesperson postulate how the Chinese government views democracy. It also revealed the tension between the US and China. In such an event, the Chinese embassy and ambassador in Kenya did not tweet on this issue but let the senior authorities do so.

### *Interactive Communication Strategies*

The US ambassador to Kenya has adopted an interactive communication strategy to engage with his Twitter followers’ accounts. This strategy ensures that he maintains relationships with his digital public (Lane & Kent, 2018; Taylor & Kent, 2014). In so doing, he strives to achieve his foreign goal of winning the hearts and minds of Kenyans. As an example, the content of the tweets of the ambassador includes elements of humor, amusement, and allows the followers to ask questions. Such questions are promptly answered by the ambassador, with the intention of attracting more followers.

For example, as can be seen in Figure 8, the ambassador was stressing the importance of social distancing in order to avoid the spread of COVID-19. He used the example of the wildebeest to show that if Kenyans continued to interact in that way, they could be at risk of being infected by the virus. He also used the migration of the wildebeest to promote Kenya’s tourism, even though many foreign tourists had already

left the country. When his follower asked him whether the wildebeest were tested, he responded that he was offended. This example shows that the US ambassador and the US, in general, promote environmental protection and propagate the values of climate change and response to nature.



Figure 8: US Ambassador Interactive Strategy on Twitter (Documented by Author, 2020).

The US ambassador use Twitter to promote American foreign policy and to engage with Kenyans on issues of governance and democracy. The ambassador is characterized as quick to respond to tweets and framing his messages in a way that encourages further engagement. On the other hand, the UK high commissioner tends to be selective in her responses to tweets and does not often address questions about UK policies that affect Kenyans.

In one instance, instead of directly responding to questions about the alleged involvement of the British Army Training Unit in starting a fire that impacted wildlife and locals, the high commissioner made a video to address the issue but did not respond to specific questions or comments. The Chinese embassy, in contrast, prefers to use email for communication and uses its Twitter account mainly for official communication in formal language. The embassy is quick to respond to tweets related to China and human rights issues in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, using Twitter as a tool to correct misinformation and disinformation and protect China's image globally.



Figure 1: Chinese Embassy Tweet on Human Right Issues (Documented by Author, 2020).

This study investigated the potential discourse of power influence by mapping how the three diplomatic actors performed on Twitter and providing answers to questions on: who the diplomatic actors prioritized to engage; how they used Twitter during crisis communication; and how they employed interactive strategies to become media actors in adopting media logic in digital diplomacy practice.

The findings of this study revealed that, identically, Twitter is used to set the agenda of the day, express opinions, and influence followers and the media on what diplomats think is best to report. Diplomatic actors wield power over their followers and use their networks on the Twitter platform to connect with other powerful organizations, such as the presidency, international organizations, and heads of state. The Chinese and UK embassies frequently use Twitter platforms for formal communication.

In addition, Twitter is used as a tool for digital diaspora diplomacy, communicating, coordinating consular services, and getting updates on what is happening within and outside their country of residence (Manor & Adiku, 2021). The three diplomatic actors leverage Twitter as a tool for amplifying information on the programs that they are undertaking in Kenya.

Further, the study also found that the US ambassador follows online influencers to set the online conversation and expand their online presence. The UK ambassador in Kenya uses the media as a mouthpiece to drive foreign policy and provides the opportunity to tailor messages to the Kenyan audience. Overall results show that all the embassies have adopted a media logic by following the various media at their disposal.

It is also interesting to note that, during the study period, the Chinese embassy follows the Twitter accounts of the Russian Embassy and the UK High Commissioner to Kenya but not that of the US embassy, which can be alluded to as the global political power tussle between China and the US being taken to foreign countries. China and Russia are close allies in the eastern region, and this friendship is also evident abroad. A rich and stable China is essential for Russia. China requires a powerful and thriving Russia, and they have no desire to become an exclusive group as true partners and

excellent neighbors. It's simply difficult to build a gap between China and Russia or promote dissension.

The majority of the tweets that originated from the Chinese embassy in Kenya were from its state-owned media. This was to avoid any miscommunication, and communication about the COVID-19 pandemic was swift and carefully crafted. This strategy of mediatization allowed it to set an agenda and become a source of information and a point of reference on how to fight the pandemic.

Additionally, the study found that after supporters of President Trump forced their way to Capitol Hill to prevent Congress from certifying President-elect Joe Biden's election victory, the UK's diplomatic actors blamed the US for how democracy was handled. China did not pay attention to talking about US democracy on Twitter, but through its spokesperson, it compared the events in Hong Kong in 2019, where the city's legislature was stormed, to be more severe than those on Capitol Hill, where none of the demonstrators died. The remarks from the Chinese spokesperson postulate how the Chinese government views democracy.

It is important to note that the US ambassador was determined to avoid allegations that America was involving itself in the internal political affairs of Kenya but was the first to comment on the involvement of American companies in Kenya's democratic process. This means that diplomatic actors try to keep their online engagement with their audiences to a minimum for fear of their messages being misconstrued (Oloo, 2021, 2022; Ong'Ong'A, 2022; Ong'ong'a, 2021).

Although this is a good strategy for digital diplomacy, there is a need for diplomats to constructively engage with the digital public to accomplish their goals. The Chinese ambassador is rarely involved in tweeting about politics. But whenever he does so, the tweet is framed in a way to show how China's political power stands out over the rest. This finding indicates the level of engagement on political issues that diplomats may want to achieve, China is seen as a country that is controlled, and therefore, its diplomats' involvement in other countries' politics may be contrary to their foreign policy of not interfering with other countries' internal affairs.

This study also revealed that the Chinese embassy is quick to respond to any tweet that involves and mentions China and the alleged human rights issues in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, and it is ready to correct such information, therefore using Twitter as a corrective tool for misinformation and disinformation while protecting China's image globally.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that diplomats use Twitter to engage with different audiences and achieve their diplomatic goals through various interactive strategies. These strategies include two-way communication, storytelling, influencer engagement, hashtag campaigns, and media amplification. They also use Twitter to respond to questions, provide information, build relationships, expand their reach and influence, bring attention to specific issues, and amplify their messages on international events and issues.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of X (formerly Twitter) as a platform for digital diplomacy, enabling diplomats to engage audiences, influence narratives, and amplify messages. Through two-way communication, storytelling, influencer collaborations, hashtag campaigns, and media amplification, diplomats use X to clarify issues, align messaging with audience expectations, and promote their nations' interests. Leveraging local influencers further enhances public diplomacy efforts, fostering deeper connections with local populations and amplifying national agendas.

While X proves effective in combating misinformation, enhancing global image, and facilitating international dialogue, its use varies among diplomatic actors, with strategies ranging from formal communication to influencer-driven engagement. However, this study acknowledges limitations, such as its focus on online interactions, which may not fully capture offline dynamics, and the potential influence of changing diplomatic roles over time.

Despite these constraints, the findings underscore X's growing importance in global diplomacy and its broader implications for international relations and public relations practices. Future research should integrate in-depth interviews and longitudinal analyses to explore evolving diplomatic strategies on digital platforms. This study contributes to understanding digital diplomacy and offers actionable insights for diplomats and policymakers navigating the complexities of modern communication.

## BIODATA

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