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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN UAE FOREIGN POLICY: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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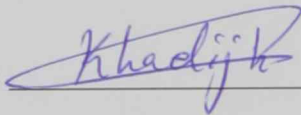
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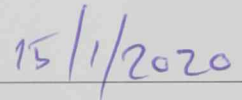
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Declaration of Original Work

I, Khadija Ali Mohammed Al Mazrouei, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*The Role of Digital Diplomacy in UAE Foreign Policy: Strategies, Challenges and Opportunities*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Osman Antwi-Boateng, in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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Abstract
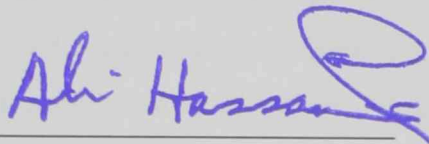
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is emerging as a world leader in digital diplomacy due to its excellent communication infrastructure and willingness to connect with the outside world as part of it is foreign policy goals. In spite of UAE's central role in this digital diplomacy phenomenon, not much by way of research has been conducted into the UAE's efforts. Thus, this thesis seeks to fill the research gap by addressing three key research questions vis-à-vis UAE's digital diplomacy. First, what are the UAE's digital diplomacy strategies? Second, what are the benefits of digital diplomacy to the UAE? Third, what challenges does the UAE faces in its digital diplomacy strategies and how can they be addressed? These research questions are addressed via the qualitative methodology of in-depth personal interviews with Emirati Diplomats and Academics and Expatriate foreign policy practitioners and Academics. This is complimented by primary data from the UAE government and international agencies, as well as secondary data from media, governmental and international organization sources.

The UAE's digital diplomacy strategies involve the use of the following tools: Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The goal is to use the above tools to promote and market the country, serve as a source of information about the country, offer a platform for global interaction and to conduct diplomacy. In spite of the benefits that the UAE derives from digital diplomacy, there are several challenges. These includes: personnel challenges in administering the tools; negative regional perception; problem of audience identification and targeting; generational gab in the use of social media in the foreign policy establishment; keeping pace with a fast paced media environment; the growing phenomenon of fake news from hostile sources; the use of digital tools by non-state actors to challenge state authority; the culture of anonymity in the digital realm; the risk of cyber-attacks and organizational culture.

In countering all these challenges, this research recommends the following solutions to the government of the UAE: constant training and orientation for UAE diplomats and UAE professionals within the foreign policy media circles; audience research in order to convey the right message as well as increased connectivity through social media; developing a rapid response mechanism to combat fake news; direct

messages with other languages apart from Arabic and English and raising awareness among targeted audiences about the risk that comes with social media.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

دور الدبلوماسية الرقمية في السياسة الخارجية لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة: الاستراتيجيات والتحديات والفرص

الملخص

برزت دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة كرائد عالمي في مجال الدبلوماسية الرقمية نظرًا لامتلاكها بنية تحتية ممتازة للاتصالات، ورغبتها في التواصل مع العالم الخارجي كجزء من أهداف سياستها الخارجية، وعلى الرغم من الدور الرئيسي لدولة الإمارات في هذه الظاهرة الدبلوماسية الرقمية، لم يتم القيام بالكثير من الدراسات في توضيح جهود دولة الإمارات في هذه الظاهرة، وبالتالي، تسعى هذه الرسالة إلى سد الفجوة البحثية من خلال معالجة ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية أساسية تتعلق بالدبلوماسية الرقمية لدولة الإمارات: أولاً، ما هي استراتيجية الدبلوماسية الرقمية لدولة الإمارات ؟، ثانياً، ما هي فوائد الدبلوماسية الرقمية لدولة الإمارات؟ ، ثالثاً، ما هي التحديات التي تواجه دولة الإمارات في استراتيجية الدبلوماسية الرقمية وكيف يمكن معالجتها؟، تمت معالجة أسئلة البحث المذكورة أعلاه من خلال المنهجية النوعية للمقابلات الشخصية مع الدبلوماسيين الإماراتيين والأكاديميين وخبراء في مجال السياسة الخارجية، ودعمها من خلال بيانات أولية مصدرها من حكومة دولة الإمارات ووكالات دولية، وكذلك بيانات ثانوية من مصادر وسائل الإعلام، حكومية، ومنظمات الدولية.

تتضمن استراتيجية الدبلوماسية الرقمية لدولة الإمارات في استخدام الأدوات التالية: موقع وزارة الخارجية والتعاون الدولي، فيسبوك، تويتر، إنستغرام، ويوتيوب، وذلك بهدف استخدام الأدوات المذكورة أعلاه لتعزيز والتسويق للدولة، ولتكون بمثابة مصدر رئيسي للمعلومات عن دولة الإمارات، وتوفير منصة للتفاعل العالمي وممارسة الدبلوماسية، على الرغم من الفوائد التي تجنيها دولة الإمارات من الدبلوماسية الرقمية، إلا أن العديد من التحديات تعترض ذلك، ويشمل الآتي: تحديات الموظفين في إدارة الأدوات؛ التصور الإقليمي السلبي؛ صعوبة تحديد الجمهور واستهدافهم؛ الفجوة بين الأجيال في استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في ممارسة السياسة الخارجية ؛ الحفاظ على السلام في ظل مواكبة تغير السريع في البيئة الإعلامية؛ زيادة ظاهرة الأخبار الزائفة من مصادر معادية؛ استخدام الأدوات الرقمية من قبل الجهات الفاعلة من غير الدول للطعن في سلطة الدولة؛ ثقافة عدم الكشف عن الهوية في المجال الرقمي؛ خطر الهجمات الإلكترونية والثقافة المؤسسية.

في مواجهة كل هذه التحديات، يوصي البحث فيما يلي: بالنسبة لحكومة دولة الإمارات في القيام بما يلي: التدريب المستمر وتوجيه الدبلوماسيين الإماراتيين والمهنيين الإماراتيين في الدوائر الإعلامية للسياسة الخارجية ؛ بحث عن الجمهور المستهدف من أجل توصيل الرسالة الصحيحة وكذلك تكثيف الاتصال من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؛ تطوير آلية استجابة سريعة لمكافحة الأخبار المزيفة؛ توجيه الرسائل بلغة أخرى ليس فقط باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية وزيادة الوعي للجمهور المستهدف حول المخاطر التي تأتي مع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، الدبلوماسية الرقمية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الدبلوماسية العامة، السياسة الخارجية، أخبار مزيفة، الهجمات الإلكترونية.

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Special thanks go to my parents, sisters, brothers and friends who helped me along the way. I am sure they suspected it was endless. In addition, special thanks are extended to the whole, extended Al Mazrouei family for their assistance and friendship.

Dedication

To my beloved parents and family

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List of Abbreviations

EDA	Emirates Diplomatic Academy
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
US / USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Diplomacy is one of the foreign policy tools that the government of United Arab Emirates (UAE) is using to boost its profile in the international arena. Every citizen when traveling outside the UAE is viewed as a representative of the country and expected to model UAE's values, traditions, thoughts, personality, etc. UAE's diplomacy is reflected through the vision, wisdom, attitude, and cultivated relationships of the leadership of the country. Diplomacy has become a formal job that entitles people representing the UAE to promote the country's foreign policy goals across the globe as formal representatives of the country. The tools used for diplomacy vary from century to century. In the ancient times, countries used to send a messenger carrying a letter to other kingdoms communicating peace and good will. However, diplomacy has evolved dramatically through the years moving from just sending a messenger to different continents with the assistance of technology. The 21st century, opened the door for diplomacy to use different kinds of technologies and one of them, is the Internet via social media, etc. Diplomats, Ambassadors, Presidents, kings and Sheikhs all have used social media to spread a message of joy, sadness or threat.

Therefore, diplomacy via Internet tools has led to the emergence of a new terminology called "digital diplomacy" which is defined as the "strategy of managing change through digital tools and virtual collaboration" (Holmes, 2015). It "is usually conceptualized as a form of public diplomacy. It involves the use of digital technologies and social media platforms" (Adesina, 2017).

It is used worldwide including the UAE. The UAE foreign policy through digital diplomacy has given a new approach for the country to interact with other governments on matters of politics, humanitarian aid, finance, defense, etc. The process of digital diplomacy occurs under the radar nowadays making the study of the capabilities of technology being fascinating. However, while the role of digital diplomacy in promoting the foreign policy of countries is promising, there are many challenges that stand in the way of this potential.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Diplomacy has evolved dramatically with the advent of the Internet and social media. Globally, technology is being used to support diplomacy in various aspects as a result of increased political and economic interdependency among countries. The UAE as a hub of different nationalities is at the forefront of this ongoing transformation and is constantly seeking innovative ways to communicate its foreign policies goals and to achieve these goals. Many countries are increasingly relying on the Internet to convey their messages to other countries as their diplomats, ambassadors and embassies reach out to people around the globe. The UAE is emerging as a world leader in adopting digital diplomacy due to its excellent communication infrastructure and willingness to connect with the outside world as part of its foreign policy goals. In spite of UAE's central role in this digital diplomacy phenomenon, not much by way of research has been conducted into UAE's efforts. Hence, this research seeks to fill in the gap of knowledge about UAE's use of digital diplomacy as well as contribute towards the burgeoning literature on digital diplomacy.

In order to accomplish this, the research seeks to address three major questions:

1. What are the digital diplomacy strategies of the UAE and what are their benefits?

2. What are the challenges associated with UAE's digital diplomacy strategies?

3. How can the challenges associated with UAE's digital diplomacy strategies be addressed?

1.3 Research Objectives

Below is a general road map of this research:

- Discuss the evolution of UAE's foreign policy goals and objectives

- Discuss the emergence and role of digital diplomacy in international relations

- Discuss UAE government's digital diplomacy strategies and benefits

- Examine the challenges of UAE government's digital diplomacy strategies

- Recommend solutions to challenges associated to UAE's digital diplomacy strategies.

1.4 Methodology

The data for this research was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary research method utilized qualitative methodology and collected data from in-depth personal interviews with top UAE foreign policy officials, scholars as well as UAE based foreign diplomats and expatriate Academics and foreign policy experts from UAE think-tanks and universities.

All the expatriates interviewed were those exposed to UAE digital diplomacy in order to grasp their experiences and knowledge in this field. The in-depth personal interviews were recorded in English/Arabic and transcribed for further analysis. The interviews conducted fall under elite level interviews with no possibility of psychological or physical harm to participants. A major advantage of elite level interviews for this research is that it enables the grasping of the knowledge and experiences of those behind the use of digital diplomacy. A major disadvantage of this type of interview in the course of the research was that was often difficult to contact top level officials and to get them to commit to scheduling an interview due to their busy schedules.

Also, some diplomats or top-level officials were hesitant to share their experiences perhaps due workplace rules of confidentiality, security issues or ethical considerations. A major issue pertaining to the Academics was the hesitation among some of them with regards to sharing all their knowledge on the subject due to the fact that they may be researching on a similar topic. Finally, I witnessed some level of hesitation among interviewees mainly due to trust issues as some were worried about my intentions and how their responses might be interpreted or represented in the course of my analysis and conclusions. To alleviate these concerns, I assured them of a process of validation whereby, they could seek or would be given a full transcript of their typed responses as well as being assured of anonymity as promised in the letter of consent form they signed, before the beginning of the interview. In the questions used for the interviewees were semi-structured with the goal of keeping the research focused while at the same time allowing room for interviewees to offer unsolicited responses that might be helpful or unanticipated.

Participants for the interviews were initially purposively selected because of their expertise in the field under study. More competent people were eventually recommended by previous interviewees via a snow balling effect. In all, a total of 22 people were interviewed for this research presenting 8 Emiratis and 11 Expatriates.

In the order to maintain high ethical standards, the original proposal for the research and intended questions were submitted for vetting and approval by the University's Research Ethics Board to ensure that my studies did not harm human participants. In addition, each interviewee was offered the opportunity to sign a consent and confidentiality form prior to being interviewed and told that they could stop participating any time they wanted in the course of an ongoing interview. In addition, participants were offered the option of anonymity in terms of the citation of their answers or the use of their responses in the research. In the course of the analysis, the data derived from the interviews were supplemented with primary and secondary data from official UAE government sources, international agencies and publications from reputable domestic and international media outlets.

First, an important element of a credible and reliable interview is validation. According to Cook and Beckman (2006) "Evidence should be sought from a variety of sources to support a given interpretation. Reliable scores are necessary, but not sufficient, for valid interpretation. Increased attention to the systematic collection of validity evidence for scores from psychometric instruments will improve assessments in research, patient care, and education" (Cook & Beckman, 2006).

The concept of validity is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe. Validity like reliability, is a notion primarily associated with positivist research and has been questioned by those who favor qualitative, or interpretive approaches (Bush, 2007:82).

In other to ensure the accuracy of the data collected from the interviews, the transcribed responses of half of the interviewees were randomly selected and emailed out to them for confirmation and authentication. This was to ensure that no one was misquoted or wrongfully ascribed a response they did not make. This process falls under "validation" as part of scientific inquiry and has several advantages.

Chapter 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Digital Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy

Throughout the centuries, diplomacy has evolved and is now supported by technology. As a result, the terminology of diplomacy has progressed so that people now speak of digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy has been defined in numerous ways by researchers and practitioners to mean multiple things relating to how countries communicate with one another in the foreign policy arena (Sotiriu, 2015:33), and this chapter will attempt to explore the concept of "Digital Diplomacy" has been raised in the literature by multiple scholars and it is relations to the term "Public Diplomacy".

Firstly, Diplomacy is a concept that facilities in playing a good role in sending messages to others. According to Cohen (1998:1), "Diplomacy is the engine room of international relations". It is the established method by which states articulate their foreign policy objectives and co-ordinate their efforts to influence the decisions and behaviors of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiations and other such measures, short of war and violence. It is, in other words, the centuries-old means by which states seek to secure particular or wider interests, including the reduction of frictions between or among themselves. It is the core instrument through which the goals, strategies and broad tactics of foreign policy are implemented. It strives to preserve peace and aims at developing goodwill towards foreign states and peoples with a view to ensuring their cooperation or, failing that, their neutrality (Adesina, 2017:2&3).

According to Cull (2009:12), Public diplomacy "is an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public". There are key shifts in the practice of public diplomacy; 1) the international actors are increasingly non-traditional and NGOs are especially prominent; 2) the mechanisms used by these actors to communicate with world publics have moved into new, real-time and global technologies especially the Internet; 3) these new technologies have blurred the formerly rigid lines between the domestic and international news spheres; 4) in place of old concepts of propaganda Public Diplomacy makes increasing use of concepts on one hand explicitly derived from marketing—especially place and nation branding—and on the other hand concepts growing from network communication theory; hence, there is 5) a new terminology of PD as the language of prestige and international image has given way to talk of 'soft power' and 'branding;' 6) perhaps most significantly, the New Public Diplomacy speaks of a departure from the actor-to-people Cold War-era communication and the arrival of a new emphasis on people-to-people contact for mutual enlightenment, with the international actor playing the role of facilitator; and 7) in this model the old emphasis on top down messaging is eclipsed and the prime task of the new public diplomacy is characterized as 'relationship building (Cull, 2009:12&13).

On the other hand, there is no broadly recognized definition or framework that covers the concept. Thus, current studies have initiated to speculate about the meaning of digital diplomacy and how it works. However, the current literature does not provide a reliable conceptual framework for evaluating the efficiency of social media for public diplomatic purposes (Bjola & Jiang, 2015:7).

According to Manor and Segev (2015:6), digital diplomacy involves the emergent use of social media platforms by a country in correspondences to achieve its foreign policy goals and to manage its image and reputation. Digital diplomacy can operate at the foreign ministry and embassies sited around the world. It can alter their foreign-policy and local branding messages with regard to history, culture, values and traditions, thereby, facilitating the acceptance of their foreign policy and the image they aim to promote among a global audience (Manor & Segev, 2015:6).

Digital diplomacy can be defined as the use of digital tools of communication (social media) by diplomats to interact with each other and with the general public (Lewis, 2014). On the other hand, Potter (2002:5) refers to digital diplomacy as the diplomatic practices through digital and networked technologies, including the Internet, mobile devices, and social media channels.

According to Holmes, digital diplomacy is a "strategy of managing change through digital tools and virtual collaboration" (Holmes, 2015). Information may be gathered from a collection of sources and expert knowledge in classifying, analyzing and interpreting initial key issues and their implications for peace, progress, security and other benefits for the sending country. In order to provide both information and policy advice to their governments, foreign ministries have relied on the expertise of their staff, their network of diplomatic missions, the confidentiality of diplomatic communication, and their access to foreign decision-makers. Governments in turn have come to rely on their foreign ministries for both providing their national viewfinder for events in the world and for conducting foreign policy in a way that best advances the national interest (Grant, 2004:10).

According to Melissen, digital diplomacy progressed from public diplomacy, a form of diplomatic practice, which has been defined as an "instrument used by states to understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; build and manage relationships; and influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values" (Melissen, 2013:436).

Sotiriu (2015:36) argues that, "bringing the public at large into the diplomatic equation has also increased the number of stakeholders participating in international diplomacy, from state-to-state interactions, to international organizations and international non-governmental organizations". He adds that in recent times, this has expanded to the everyday people, which diplomats have sought to reach in order to reinforce communicate or to get divergent views on a number of issues (Sotiriu, 2015:36). Essentially, this means that a number of relationships built between the government and other parts of society which are affected by the way information of interest to foreign ministries is managed, analyzed, and broadcast. The relationships can be categorized as follows (Adesina, 2017:4):

1. Citizens and the media;

2. Citizens and the Government;

3. The Government and the media;

4. The Government and non-state actors;

5. The civil service adviser and the minister; and

6. The Government-to-Government relationship

Digital diplomacy has been used interchangeably with other terms: as digital diplomacy (Bjola, 2015), e-diplomacy (Hocking et al., 2012), cyber-diplomacy (Barston, 2014), diplomacy 2.0 (Harris, 2013), or twiplomacy (Sandre, 2012). The State Department of the United States calls it 21st Century Statecraft; the UK Foreign Office calls it digital diplomacy; while the Canadians refer to it as Open Policy. Ben Scott, Innovation Advisor to former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, outlines three components of digital diplomacy:

1. Public diplomacy, including the use of online platforms;

2. Building expertise in technology policy and understanding the way the internet impacts international developments such as political movements;

3. Impact on development policy and how information and communications technology (ICT) can be used more effectively to promote economic growth around the world (Funnell, 2014).

According to Ross, the argument is that the creation of communications and information technology was not only transforming the means of social protest, but that it also pointed towards an emerging revolution in diplomacy:

"Traditionally, diplomatic engagement consisted largely of government-to-government interactions. In some instances, it was from government to people, such as with international broadcasting in the twentieth century. With the advent of social media and the rapid increase in mobile [technology] penetration, however, this engagement now increasingly takes place from people to government and from people to people. This direct link from citizens to government allows diplomats to convene

and connect with non-traditional audiences, and in turn allows citizens to influence their governments in ways that were not possible ten years ago" (Ross, 2011).

Christodoulides has noted that, "the Internet can be considered by governments as a unique diplomatic instrument; through its proper use they can "advertise" not only their positions on different issues, but also promote their ideas worldwide. Such a function, if used in the right way, helps the embassy, and as a result the state that it represents, to create a positive image in the host state" (Christodoulides, 2005).

However, while some diplomats embrace change as an opportunity to reform their profession, to others it represents a challenge to established conventions and may simply be "dangerous" to prove and accepted forms of conducting international relations—or to their own self-interest. As a result, the impact of the Internet and the rise of social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook, are generating a wealth of reactions (Hocking & Melissen, 2015:14).

As stated before, specifying the most appropriate or accurate meaning for digital diplomacy can be a difficult enterprise. Many different scholars have attempted to explain the meaning from their own perspectives, and each scholar has added a new meaning to digital diplomacy. As posited by Hanson (2012:2), digital diplomacy has eight policy goals which includes the following: knowledge management, public diplomacy, information management, consular communications and response, disaster response, internet freedom, external resources, and policy planning. Hanson (2012:14) framed digital diplomacy into a flow chart of responsibilities that diplomats may target when using social media for a country's objectives and in delivering messages to global audiences, reaching out to citizens abroad, preserving government information

and so on. Melissen (2013:436), on the other hand, added that digital diplomacy is rooted in public diplomacy.

However, Sotiriu (2015:36) focuses more on a collective relationship that outgrows the important flow of information between citizens, governments, media and other entities. Meanwhile, Holmes has described digital diplomacy as the "strategy of managing change through digital tools and virtual collaboration" (Holmes, 2015:15).

In my opinion, every scholar that has been mentioned in this research has outlined the definition of digital policy in practical terms. Governments have adopted the idea of using advanced technology in promoting their foreign policy. Yet some countries still use traditional tools in sending their messages across nations or even to local audiences or even still use the old concept of public diplomacy. However, we see more strategized efforts to implement the new means of digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy may improve the potential of countries to become strong in terms of economy, and at the political and cultural level. As such the United Arab Emirates, from the time of its establishment in 1971 has improved dramatically across those areas of the economy, politics and culture, and has been able to co-exist with dilemmas and conflicts in the region, while still being secure and stable. The UAE has proved that the advanced technology that facilitated its leadership vision let the country be first in every field, and specially having been ranked first in possessing the most authorized passport that allows the bearer to enter 170 countries across the globe (Passport Index, 2019). All that is due to diplomacy and the considerable efforts in using all kinds and means of tools to communicate. On the other hand, a country such as North Korea exists with a kind of monarchy where they are closed off from reaching

others and not letting others in as well. News about North Korea only gets through their own media and the form of that news and information is mostly traditional.

2.2 Differences between Digital Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy

Since digital diplomacy is such a new concept, there is little existing literature about it. There are Journal articles on "Public diplomacy" and "What is public diplomacy? Past practices, present conduct, possible future" first explain the transformation from traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy. These sources highlight the way in public diplomacy reshaped foreign policy discussions from occurring only between elites, to now occurring between government officials and foreign publics. However, there is debate amongst scholar as to how new digital technologies are affecting public diplomacy. with some scholars believing digitalization enhances public diplomacy, and others claiming that it completely alters it into something new, known as digital diplomacy (Verrekia, 2017:6).

Some Scholar refer digital diplomacy to a new public diplomacy. Where they elaborated that changes that occurred in the conceptualization and practice of public diplomacy following the proliferation and rapid adoption of social media at the beginning of the 21st century. Digital diplomacy was born out of the need to contend with transformed media ecology characterized by a fragmentation of audience to networks of selective exposure (Hayden, 2012:3). Two-way communication separates digital diplomacy from public diplomacy which was based on a one-way flow information and limited interaction between communicator and recipient (Pamment, 2013:3). Following the adoption of social media platforms by diplomats, the goal of public diplomacy is transformed from transmission of information to the building and leveraging of relationship with foreign publics. This may be achieved by engaging

with and listing to foreign publics. Thus, digital diplomacy is characterized by dialogue, collaboration and inclusiveness.

2.3 Tools of Digital Diplomacy

According to Cave (2015) digital diplomacy is a persuasive and timely supplement to traditional diplomacy that can help a country advance its foreign policy goals, extend international reach, and influence people who will never set foot in any of that country's embassies across the world (Cave, 2015).

Hocking and Melissen (2015:46) argue that digital diplomacy has distinctive characteristics that are the outcome of its historical evolution, culture, role perceptions and a blend of tasks that have added to it over time. This was seen before, in the nineteenth century, with the impact of the electric telegraph which had a profound impact on social, bureaucratic and political changes in foreign ministries. Hocking and Melissen (2015:46) questioned the differences and similarities in the issues discussed by digital technologies as follows:

- Do they change the roles and relationships between the Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic posts of the subsystem?

- What consequences do they have for the roles and role perceptions of professional diplomats?

- How are rules developed and risks managed in developing online diplomatic strategies?

- What are the emerging criteria for success in developing and evaluating digital capacity and performance?

These questions are important and need to be answered. In my opinion, digital diplomacy is about using social networks, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and so on. These tools are used for the purpose of serving the objectives of countries by reaching domestic and international audiences. However, they may differ in techniques compared to what was used before, as stated by Hocking and Melissen (2015:46).

According to the Diplo Foundation, the concept of social networks needs no introduction, since they are now part of our everyday lives. Twitter and Facebook are currently the most popular e-tools used by foreign ministries around the world. These two networks are particularly good examples of integrated platforms, because they can be linked to one another, driving traffic from one platform to the other (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Twitter allows the user to sound the opinions of the community on various issues, engage in discussions with others to present and explain their own views, and to identify articles and readings on particular topics of interest (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Whilst it was previously used mainly to connect with friends and share updates (statements, feelings, photos, event invitations, music, interesting readings and links, etc.), Facebook is increasingly used for professional outreach as well. By creating institutional or public personal profiles, pages, interest groups, or events, an organization can gather a community interested in their work, curate content, and engage efficiently with the community and the public (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Other platforms include YouTube, FlickR, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram. While the above refers to social media, there are then other e-tools which are important

for public diplomacy. These include blogs, which are immensely popular, and wikis, which are nowadays more frequently used for internal purposes, such as knowledge management (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

The infographic below summarizes current findings related to foreign ministries from Diplo Foundation's ongoing study of e-diplomacy trends, and reveals interesting tendencies (Diplo Foundation, 2018) (Figure 7, Appendix).

According to Manor, it is a cultural shift which obliges the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to share information rather than secure it. And it is a technological shift for diplomats to develop digital skills that extend from knowledge of social media to writing texts on computer and smartphone applications (Manor, 2016:10).

Twitter, Facebook and Instagram enable diplomats and embassies to converse online with foreign populations and create relationships with them. Thus, digital diplomacy enables one to overcome the limitations of traditional diplomacy and continuously engage with a large and diverse audience. Notably, it is the two-way communicative nature of social media that represents the fundamental difference between digital diplomacy and 20th century diplomacy practiced via radio or television (Manor, 2016:4).

2.4 Globalization Concept

Looking at the new century, any scholar would relate the progress and the changes to diplomacy from public to digital as being due to globalization. This is especially so when understanding the theoretical aspect behind the new technology and how the system is working for politics, economy and social process. In the literature, globalization has been characterized as "the intensification of worldwide

social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990:21), "The integration of the world-economy" (Gilpin, 2001:364) and "De-territorialisation or …. the growth of supraterritorial relations between people" (Scholte, 2005:46).

It seems that globalization has many definitions and the scholars are not restricting themselves to specifying one meaning as globalization can be playing a part in politics, economy and social process.

The driving force of globalization is certainly the progress of technology. It speeds up the effects of globalization and contributes to an essential transformation of the functioning of economic systems. In this sense, " ... the international economy is no longer divided vertically to separate national economies but involves several different levels or types of market activities, which spread horizontally over a wider area of virtual space, replacing physical geography of national borders with quasi geography of market structures, transaction costs and informational cyber space" (Jakšić, 1997:13).

Globalization is understood as a social process in which geographic obstacles to social and cultural arrangements lose importance and where people are becoming increasingly aware that they lose importance (Waters 1995:3). Globalization is also defined as a compression of the world and an intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson, 1992:8).

The conclusion is that globalization is a complex phenomenon with multiple effects, which makes it hard to define. There are, in fact, three possibilities for defining globalization (Mittelman, 2006:64). First, it can be defined as the intensification of

global flows of goods and production factors, facilitated by modern transportation and communication means. Globalization can also be defined as a compression of time and space in a way that events in one part of the world have instantaneous effects on distant locations. The third approach is to comprehend globalization as a historical structure of material power. Globalization represents historical transformation in the economy, politics and culture (Mittelman, 2006:64).

According to McGrew, rather than growing interdependence between discrete bounded national states, or internationalization, as the skeptics refer to it, the concept of globalization seeks to capture the dramatic shift that is under way in the organization of human affairs: from a world of discrete but interdependent national states to the world as a shared social space (McGrew, 2008:18).

The concept of globalization therefore carries with it the implication of an unfolding process of structural change in the scale of human social and economic organization. Rather than social, economic, and political activities being organized solely on a local or national scale today, they are also increasingly organized on a transnational or global scale (McGrew, 2008:18).

Globalization therefore denotes a significant shift in the scale of social organization, in every sphere from economics to security, transcending the world's major regions and continents. Central to this structural change are contemporary informatics technologies and infrastructures of communication and transportation. These have greatly facilitated new forms and possibilities of virtual real-time worldwide organization and coordination, from the operations of multinational corporations to the worldwide mobilization and demonstrations of the anti-globalization movement. Although geography and distance still matter, it is

nevertheless the case that globalization is synonymous with a process of time–space compression—literally a shrinking world—in which the sources of even very local developments, from unemployment to ethnic conflict, may be traced to distant conditions or decisions (McGrew, 2008:18).

In this respect globalization embodies a process of deterritorialization: as social, political, and economic activities are increasingly "stretched" across the globe, they become in a significant sense no longer organized solely according to a strictly territorial logic. Terrorist and criminal networks, for instance, operate both locally and globally. National economic space, under conditions of globalization, is no longer coterminous with national territorial space since, for example, many of the UK's largest companies have their headquarters abroad and many domestic companies now outsource their production to China and East Asia, among other locations. This is not to argue that territory and borders are now irrelevant, but rather to acknowledge that under conditions of globalization their relative significance, as constraints upon social action and the exercise of power, is declining. In an era of instantaneous, real-time global communication and organization, the distinction between the domestic and the international, inside and outside the state, breaks down (McGrew, 2008:18).

Territorial borders no longer demarcate the boundaries of national economic or political space. A "shrinking world" implies that sites of power and the subjects of power quite literally may be continents apart. As the world financial crisis of 2008 illustrates, the key sites and agencies of decision-making, whether in Washington, Beijing, New York, or London, quite literally are oceans apart from the local communities whose livelihoods are affected by their actions. In this respect globalization denotes the idea that power (whether economic, political, cultural, or

military) is increasingly organized and exercised at a distance (or has the potential to be so) (McGrew, 2008:18).

As such the concept of globalization denotes the relative denationalization of power in so far as, in an increasingly interconnected global system, power is organized and exercised on a transregional, transnational, or transcontinental basis while—see the discussion of political globalization—many other actors, from international organizations to criminal networks, exercise power within, across, and against states. States no longer have a monopoly of power resources, whether economic, coercive, or political (McGrew, 2008:19).

The above literature review on globalization has shown that digital diplomacy is a reality and is a result of globalization. The dimensions in which globalization has been involved, especially in culture, politics and the economy, have witnessed progress in technology and the idea of the world becoming a small village where everyone is interacting and affecting each other. Technology has clearly advanced the aspect of communication, especially when nations try to approach each other through new means and tools, one of them being digital diplomacy.

Mention has been made that the concept of globalization has carried an implication of an unfolding process of structural change in the scale of human social and economic organization. Rather than social, economic, and political activities being organized solely on a local or national scale today, they are also increasingly organized on a transnational or global scale.

Regardless of the globalization theories above that have tended to be defined with greater regard to economic aspects, I feel that Transformationalists are more

multidimensional, considering mechanisms of globalization over and above economic ones and tending to focus more on the modernity in terms of an emphasis on the ubiquity and linearity of the globalization process, as well as assessing progressivism in its effects. The indisputable and fundamental changes in the organization of society that globalization brings are the growing, overall integration and acceleration of socioeconomic dynamics through "compression" of space and time. If we consider digital diplomacy this reflects more on modernity and the progress that happens to society. In this respect we should take into consideration that diplomacy over the years has evolved, and that countries try to open up to each other and explain their actions, their voices and their culture and in this case, it is people working through tools rather than the traditional means of communication.

UAE got affected by globalization as the rest of the world, it is economic is based upon market principles, to achieve competitive business environment in order to be able to host foreign investors. The economy has been diversified due to great leadership visions and good working laws.

Despite all that the UAE host different nationalities, open up their cultural and social to accommodate multiple nationality with different background, origins, religions. All that due to the effect of globalization. Even for the foreign policy it is been shifted from soft diplomacy to more open to other continent to deal in business, diplomacy, politics and culture. Also, the foreign policy due to globalization has witnessed great ship in posing power and advancement of defense for middle power, less developed countries in order to survive in this globe.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 The Effectiveness of Digital Diplomacy as a Foreign Policy Strategy

The reason why digital diplomacy makes use of social media is because of the various avenues that it provides in reaching citizens of other countries in what is almost real-time. Social media platforms also provide spaces for interaction, increased engagement, and thus furthering the goals of diplomacy (Fisher, 2013).

The potential ease with which social media can be accessed and the low cost in comparison to other methods make it an attractive tool for many embassies, as well as other government offices, that are often facing the twin challenges of budget cuts along with demands to increase engagement. Numerous platforms allow for the use of more dynamic content, such as videos, photos, and links, rather than traditional methods of giving lectures or passing out pamphlets. In addition, social media provide key channels in reaching youth populations, a major goal of current public diplomacy efforts (Reshetnikova, 2018:2).

Digital technologies can be particularly useful in public diplomacy in the field of information collection and processing, and in consular activities, and for communications during emergencies and disasters (Reshetnikova, 2018:2).

International practice shows that competent use of digital diplomacy tools can bring big dividends to those who invest in them. Moreover, digital diplomacy does not always require financial investments. On the contrary, it is often aimed at reducing costs. The human factor—the desire of employees to grow, master new technologies, spend part of their work time on working with the target Internet audience, and on

processing electronic data, and creating information and reference materials—is very important (Reshetnikova, 2018:2).

3.2 The Risks Associated with Digital Diplomacy in International Relations

Criticisms of the use of social media in politics have included ineffectiveness and danger. According to Richard Solomon (2000:40), President of the United States Institute of Peace and a former U.S. Foreign Service officer, information about breaking international crises that once took hours or days for government officials and media to disseminate is now being relayed real-time to the world, not only via radio and television, but over the Internet as well. Ironically though, for policy-makers, instant dissemination of information about events both far and near is proving to be as much a bane as a bounty.

In other words, digital diplomacy has its risks, which include information leakage, hacking, and the anonymity of Internet users. A good example of information leakage is the Wikileaks episode. According to Manor (2015), "on the 28th of November 2010, pandemonium spread among foreign ministries throughout the world as WikiLeaks began publishing some 250,000 diplomatic cables sent between U.S. missions around the world and the State Department in Washington. These cables included frank assessments by U.S. diplomats of world leaders, governments and their host countries (Adesina, 2017:11).

Hacking is another risk, which has existed since the advent of the Internet. A recent example is the case of a hacking attack on the personal website of Yuli Edelstein, Israeli Minister for Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs. Commenting on this, the Minister said that nothing could stop him from performing public

diplomacy on behalf of the State of Israel. He intends to continue to defend the interests of the state on all fronts, including in the Internet (Permyakova, 2012).

Additionally, diplomatic rivals, including both state and non-state actors (such as terrorist organizations), may try to hack into government systems and extract information of use to themselves (Westcott, 2008). Another challenge of digital diplomacy is the Internet's "culture of anonymity" whereby anyone can adopt any persona, address or even attack anyone (Yakovenko, 2012; Adesina, 2017).

In the light of this anonymity, anyone can mimic and pretend to be someone else, or actively seek to cause mischief. Interestingly also, sometimes, even digital diplomacy advocates and practitioners also commit blunders in their uses. For example, according to Permyakova (2012), on the eve of the 2012 World Economic Forum in Davos, the Swedish foreign minister, Carl Bildt, posted a very politically incorrect tweet, which caused a lot of criticism from his microblog subscribers: He tweeted "Leaving Stockholm and heading for Davos. Looking forward to World Food Program dinner tonight. Global hunger is an urgent issue! #davos". Tweeter users immediately condemned the minister and called his tweet a #fail. It is clear that hunger and a sumptuous dinner do not sit happily side by side (Adesina, 2017:11).

3.3 The Evolution of UAE Foreign Policy

In this section, the objective of the thesis is to explore the role of digital diplomacy in UAE foreign policy which requires identifying sides of UAE foreign policy, which will focus in; Factors that affect UAE foreign policy, Evolution of UAE foreign policy, UAE foreign policy at the regional level, UAE foreign policy at the MENA level and UAE Relations With The International Community.

UAE Foreign Policy was known since the establishment to have constructive engagement, soft diplomacy and commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts to achieve its national goals (Al Mashat, 2008:1).

In carrying out such Foreign policy, Digital diplomacy was one of many tools that was and till today to be one of the major communication tools that the government employs in order to pursue its diplomatic goals in an increasingly competitive global communication environment. And to find out more of this field, a background of the UAE foreign policy will suite the purpose of this thesis when understanding how digital diplomacy play a role in UAE foreign policy.

3.3.1 Factors Affecting UAEs Foreign Policy

The UAE has come a long way since its founding in 1971. It has a legitimate governing system that has taken political development in its stride, emphasizing a gradual building of institutions, norms and mechanisms. Its moderate and non-aligned foreign policy has ensured friendly relations around the world and a place at any international forum concerned with peace, security and prosperity (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

To identify the factors behind the moderate UAE foreign policy, these can be pointed through the following:

3.3.1.1 The vision of the leadership

The new state, under the practical political skills of the late Sheikh Zayed (1918-2004), saw that its best chance for success was a political system that combined local autonomy with a federal government to coordinate state affairs and design a unified foreign policy (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

The leadership has displayed considerable visions under the level of federation that applies strategies and plans across different sectors in UAE such as vision 2021 which aims to make the UAE among the best countries in the world in time for the golden jubilee of the Union. To achieve this an extensive range of strategies and programs has been put in place. These include the following: the Emirates Blockchain 2021; National Cyber Security Strategy of the UAE; National Food Security Strategy 2051; The National Employment Strategy 2021; the National Policy for Senior Emiratis; UAE Centennial 2071; the UAE National Family Policy; and the National Advanced Sciences Agenda 2031; the National Strategy for Advanced Innovation; UAE Energy Strategy 2050; National Climate Change Plan of the UAE 2017-2050; Government communication Strategy 2017-2021; National Agenda; the UAE Water Security Strategy 2036; National Strategy for Higher Education 2030; the UAE Soft Power Strategy; the UAE Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revaluation; UAE strategy for Artificial Intelligence; the National Innovation Strategy; the National Literacy Strategy; and the National Tolerance Programme, Education 2020 Strategy; the National Space Programme; National Strategy for the Year of Giving; the national Policy for Empowering People of Determination; National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirati Woman; Youth Empowerment Strategy; the National Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy; the Foreign Aid Strategy 2017-2021; the Ministry of Finance Strategy Plan 2017-2021; Strategy of the Future; the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017- 2021; and the Ministry of Justice's Strategic Plan 2021 (UAE Government, 2019).

3.3.1.2 Demographics

Another factor that explains the relatively high degree of domestic stability within the UAE is rooted in its unusual demographics. There has not been official census data released since 2005, when the population was listed at 4,106,427, but a United Nations estimate in 2015 put the UAE population at 9,157,000. In 2010, nearly ninety-six percent of the UAE's workforce were non-Emirati. While non-nationals receive attractive employment benefits, such as tax-free salaries and subsidized education and housing, the national population of less than one million receive significant government largesse through the rentier system. Compared with the much larger population of Saudi Arabia, it is apparent that the leaders of the UAE, while having less capital to redistribute, have a significantly smaller pool of citizens to redistribute it to, leading to a wealthier and more satisfied domestic base (Fulton, 2017:200).

3.3.1.3 Economic Factor

The UAE has followed an economic vision based upon market principles, with an emphasis on achieving a competitive business environment that is hospitable to foreign investors and attractive to skilled expatriates. While the oil and gas sector has always played a dominant role in the economy, diversification efforts have been diligently pursued to transform the UAE into a regional and international leader in essential fields such as financial services, renewable energy, tourism and technology (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

Economic policy in the UAE is predicated upon the following approaches:

- First, it has sought to achieve economic stability through adopting a fixed-exchange-rate regime based on the U.S. dollar (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

- Second, it has signed an agreement with GCC countries to implement a value added tax (VAT), this being done in 2018. VAT constitutes an additional meaningful source of financing for policies that seek to foster economic growth in the next development phase according to UAE vision 2021 (UAE Vision2021, 2019).

- Third, for the benefit of future generations it invests oil and gas revenues in infrastructural projects domestically and financial assets internationally through the use of sovereign wealth funds (Al-Suwaidi, 2011). The Gulf region's share of global oil and natural gas production is projected to rise from 28% (including Iraqi and Iranian output) in 2000 to 33% in 2020. With most of that increase going to Asian markets, the GCC states will continue to diversify and broaden economic interdependencies (Coates, 2011).

- The location of the UAE has provided a key passage point for the import and re-export of goods (Abed & Hellyer, 2001:162). Dubai, in particular, has developed into a regional financial center covering a wide area between the European and East Asian exchanges. Ideationally, too, Dubai, Bahrain and Kuwait have all looked toward, and applied elements of, the "East Asian model" in their development plans during this period (2002-8), expressing close interest in Singapore's proactive leadership and its combination of state guidance with private initiative (Coates, 2011).

- A focus on other sectors such as renewable energy, nuclear weapons, space, and artificial intelligence, has attracted increased foreign investment, this focus

being supported by adding free zones and applying new laws for workers in order to accommodate them in the UAE.

3.3.1.4 Politics

Politics in the UAE can be characterized by how it is governed, as the government's legitimacy rests upon a universal acceptance of both its form and the identities of those who lead it. Whether it is at the local level in the individual emirates or at the federal level, UAE leaders boast a sense of legitimacy that no one, even those on the fringes of the political process, doubts or disputes (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

The UAE has been able to combine different elements that are seen as essential for political legitimacy. Its rentier status, involving a social contract between rulers and ruled, has been augmented by a social openness sanctioned by a tolerant version of Islam that has allowed widespread modernization and an exposure to regional and international influences. At the same time, the UAE leadership has preserved the society's heritage and Islamic character, grounding new trends and modernity in tradition and avoiding a complete rupture with the past (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

The claims to political leadership, however, have not obviated the need for an electoral process to draw leaders from the different strata of Emirati society into decision making. Besides having a Higher Council composed of the rulers of the seven emirates and a federal cabinet in charge of the armed forces, foreign policy and monetary policy, the UAE has a consultative body, the Federal National Council (FNC), where each emirate is represented by a number of deputies (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

The UAE is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the Arab Quartet, the Committee for the Arab Peace Initiative, the United

Nations, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and tens of regional and international and intergovernmental organizations. It advocates a two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a negotiated settlement for the Iranian nuclear standoff with the world, and the preservation of Gulf waters as an open international trade zone and the Strait of Hormuz as an open maritime passageway (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

3.3.1.5 Geopolitical Factor

Since its formation the United Arab Emirates has had to make some significant decisions that would advance its political, economic and social development. The Gulf and Middle East regions were in the throes of strategic challenges that represented both potential opportunity and uncertainty. The entire Middle East was undergoing widespread political, economic and social changes that were to influence whatever state emerged after the withdrawal of British colonialism in the area once known as the Trucial Coast. For all of that, the UAE became united in 1971 and realized its aspiration for success through the vision of its leaders. Due to it is geographical location, decisions had to be made for safety of its land and borders. Despite so many events having happened to the region and among its close neighbors, the foreign policy that was shaped from the time of its establishment until today, has made the UAE a state of tolerance and peace to be part of an alliance designed to spare countries from rebellions and to protect nations. More can be said on this but there is little to be silent about (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

3.3.1.6 UAE Aid Approach

By the end of the 1970s, the UAE approach to foreign policy shifted to the use of alliances and foreign aid as diplomatic tools to ensure the status quo. In terms of foreign aid, the UAE became a very generous donor, ranking second internationally in 1975 and 1991 in terms of donations as a percentage of its GDP. In the years after the oil embargo, UAE leadership used significant amounts of the dramatic increase in revenue as foreign aid, with thirty percent of its federal budget in the mid-1970s allocated for developing states in the Middle East (Fulton, 2017:197).

Naturally, this earned the UAE a degree of goodwill from other states in the region, and added an element of security, as regional political elites benefited from this largesse and perceived a sovereign UAE as being aligned with their interests (Fulton, 2017:197).

3.3.2 Evolution of UAE Foreign Policy

According to Abdulla (2012), the United Arab Emirates' foreign policy has undergone a dynamic change in recent years. The change is obviously comprehensive and certainly essential. It includes the very content as well as the style in which the UAE deals with external opportunities and challenges. The UAE is relatively small but as an oil-rich country it is remarkably firm, and is active both regionally and globally (Abdulla, 2012).

UAE foreign policy can be neatly divided into two distinct stages — the Zayed and the post-Zayed eras of UAE foreign policy. During the time of the late founding father and first president of the country, Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan, UAE foreign policy was mainly "idealistic" in its orientation and essentially Arab world

centered. The focal ambition at the time was limited to stabilizing the country's sovereignty and independence. However, since 2004, an assertive and motivated UAE has been chasing a more "global" and substantially a more "realistic foreign policy" (Abdulla, 2012).

However, in the current multilateral foreign policy, economic interests and not identity has surpassed even security as the new anchor in this mainly realistic approach to international politics (Abdulla, 2012).

The growing importance of economic interests establishes a fundamental shift away from the mostly idealistic and humanistic UAE foreign policy of the late Shaikh Zayed era with its preoccupation with "Arabness". The Arab world is still needed for its identity and sympathy, but it is no longer the main focus of the UAE's current foreign policy. The U.S. and the West also remain as essential, strategic allies. Yet their importance is increasingly reduced to serve as a kind of security insurance (Abdulla, 2012).

In contrast, Asia is the new center of interest in the present UAE foreign policy. The UAE, like the rest of the world, is going east to discover China, the second biggest economy in the world, South Korea, the fourth biggest economy in Asia, and all the other Asian Tigers. They are the new destinations for economic, energy and security diversification policy (Abdulla, 2012).

The UAE has changed massively and beyond recognition since its formation on December 2, 1971. It is no longer the young, small, vulnerable and oil-centered country that it was in that year. The 21st century UAE is an economic and financial powerhouse, a rising military actor, a regional hub and a global brand that rubs

shoulders with big powers and has friends and allies all over the planet (Abdulla, 2012).

3.4 UAE Foreign Policy at the Regional Level

The foundations of UAE foreign policy comprise good neighborliness, understanding, and non-interference in internal affairs, as well as the amicable resolution of disputes (MOFA, 2018).

The fruits of this policy are mutual openness between the UAE and the world, and strategic partnerships on the political, economic, trade, cultural, scientific, educational and health levels with many countries in all continents, and asserting the prominent position the country has gained in the international community (MOFA, 2018).

3.4.1 Relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

3.4.1.1 Political

The GCC, the grouping that brings together Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has not changed substantially from the organization that was launched in 1981. In that sense it is a platform upon which the political leaderships of six neighboring states seek to cooperate or collaborate in areas of common interest (Partrick, 2011:2).

The introduction to the founding charter of the GCC commits the member countries to achieving coordination, integration and interdependence between them in all fields. The Gulf countries have comparable political systems and cultural traditions, which have "ties of special relations, common characteristics and similar systems founded on the creed of Islam," should cooperate in areas of mutual advantage. The

GCC took the spirit of cooperation in which it was formed into aspects of security as well as economic and cultural affairs. It has not achieved political integration in the process, nor has it affected to do so (Partrick, 2011:2).

The aim of coordination and cooperation in the field of foreign policy is to formulate joint and unified positions on the political issues of interest to the GCC countries in the Arab world, both regionally and internationally (GCC, 2019).

The framework of foundations is based on mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs and considering common interests, safeguarding the interests of the GCC States and enhancing their security, stability and the prosperity of their peoples (GCC, 2019).

3.4.1.2 Economic Issues/ Trade

Economic coordination would lead to decreased duplication of large-scale economic programs, and as a result remove the potential of competing interests amongst the states. Because of the structural similarities between the Arab Gulf economies, and the inherent risk of generating competing and therefore less efficient economic sectors, close regional economic cooperation was required to achieve the longer-range economic objective of sector diversification (Al Makhawi, 1990:48).

Upon economic cooperation between the Arab Gulf states which preceded the formation of the GCC, under five broad heads:

- The first was the extension of direct financial aid for the development of financial institutions in one Arab Gulf state or area by another (Al Makhawi, 1990:45).

- The second channel of cooperation took the form of collective infrastructure programs in the areas of education, transportation, communication and industrial development (Al Makhawi, 1990:46).

- The third area of cooperation consisted of bilateral and multilateral trade and economic treaties (Al Makhawi, 1990:46).

- Fourth, the Arab Gulf states cooperated in a number of international organizations involving other states. This primarily took the form of cooperation with other oil exporting states, under the auspices of both the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Furthermore, the Arab Gulf states participated in various Islamic forums, the most significant of which was the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (Al Makhawi, 1990:47).

- Finally, the development of technology, and modern transportation and telecommunication systems, enabled public and private sector representatives from the Arab Gulf countries to come into far greater contact with one another, and the impact of this heightened personal contact cannot be overestimated (Al Makhawi, 1990:47).

3.4.1.3 Security

The GCC constitutes a pluralistic security community in a special sense, in that not only do the members eschew violence in the resolution of conflicts of interest; they actively cooperate in maintaining security as a perceived objective (Al Makhawi, 1990:87).

In accordance with the principles and objectives of security cooperation between the GCC States, the signing of a comprehensive security agreement between member states has been agreed, based on the unity and interdependence of the GCC countries and the principle of collective security that concludes that any aggression against any member state is an attack on all members. This signifies that an intervention by an outside party in the internal affairs of a member state is interference in the internal affairs of all GCC states (GCC, 2019).

They collaborate to facilitate the movement and flow of goods and cooperate across a wide range of areas of concern. These include cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism; in the field of civil defense; in the face of nuclear and radiological risk; in the fight against drugs; in the field of criminal investigations and detection; in the field of border control and coast guard operations; and in the field of penal and correctional institutions (GCC, 2019).

The Gulf Security Agreement, signed at the GCC's 21st Summit in Manama in December 2000, merely affixed an official stamp on existing military cooperation. The GCC's combined military force, Dir' al-Jazeera (Peninsula Shield), had already long been in existence but the 2000 agreement prepared the ground for far stronger military cooperation and co-ordination. This seems to have reached a high point in 2014, and includes the formulation of a unified defense strategy and military command, the linking of anti-missile systems, and the bridging of capacity gaps by establishing a joint force for rapid intervention (AlJazeera Center for Studies, 2014).

It seems likely that Iran's quest for nuclear weapons, political instability in Iraq, the upheaval in Syria, the emergence of Daesh or the so-called Islamic State (IS), the advances of the Houthis in Yemen, and America's overtures towards Tehran, all

gave the GCC clear incentives to strengthen its collective defense and security systems. However, while the GCC states have moved beyond monitoring threats, and have established mechanisms that are capable of counteracting threats militarily, the greatest obstacle to security cooperation persists, namely: convincing the decision makers that the security of the region is in the interest of all nations and requires a greater military strength than their separate forces can effectively provide (AlJazeera Center for Studies, 2014).

3.4.2 The Boycott of Qatar

UAE has taken several measures when it comes to protecting its sovereignty and compacting those who support terrorism. This was especially in 2017 when the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt broke diplomatic ties with Qatar for the support of terrorist groups which aimed to destabilize the region (The National, 2017).

The decision by five Arab states to sever ties with Qatar marks another chapter in a multiyear saga of turbulent relations between Qatar and its neighbors. A split between Doha and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was brewing for years. At the heart of the problem lies an irreconcilable difference between the Persian Gulf countries about how to interpret the events of the 2011 Arab Spring and, more importantly, how to react to them. In contrast to its GCC neighbors, Qatar actively promoted regime change across the Arab world. The Qataris mobilized finances and offered favorable media coverage to many Islamist actors, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Gaza, the Ennahda party in Tunisia and myriad militias in Libya and Syria (Roberts, 2017:12).

In response, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia worked forcefully to block Qatar's interests in the region, helping to depose Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, funding rival opposition factions in Syria and giving support to handle the challenges. AL Jazeera was hemorrhaging viewers regionally, and Qatari foreign policy increasingly struggled in Libya, Syria and Egypt in the face of GCC pressure (Roberts, 2017:12).

Sensing their opportunity, the Emiratis, Saudis and Bahrainis urged Tamim to scale back Qatar's regional activities. Following six months of failed negotiations, the three countries pulled their ambassadors from Doha in protest in early 2014 (Roberts, 2017:12).

With the help of Kuwait's emir, Qatar agreed to acquiesce to each of the three countries in a series of bilateral negotiations, leading to a repair in relations by the GCC summit in December 2014. But it was not until December 2016, when Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz travelled to Doha, that the rift was publicly mended (Roberts, 2017:12).

In recent months, Qatar has once again drifted outside the GCC consensus. Particularly galling for the UAE and Saudi Arabia has been Qatar's interaction with Islamist groups linked closely to the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda. Worse still to them are its business dealings with Iranian regional affiliates. In April, Qatar was involved in communications with the al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al Sham organization to guarantee population transfers in the country. Qatar appeared to have brokered the deal by communicating with Iran, which in return managed to secure the release of 26 Qatari royals kidnapped in Iraq in return for a princely sum to be paid to Iranian client militia Kataib Hezbollah (Roberts, 2017:12).

The Emiratis have also found themselves in favor with the new Washington administration, whose strong dislike for both Iran and Sunni Islamists fit well with UAE policy priorities. Accordingly, there is a newfound confidence in Saudi Arabia and the UAE that strong measures to force the Qataris back into their box will find support in Washington (Roberts, 2017:13).

Qatar's support for Hamas seems to have been a card the Gulf states have played effectively to curry favor with U.S. decision-makers amid the warming relations between the Gulf and the Israelis. The UAE and Saudi Arabia appear to be preempting U.S. policy by sounding notes that will find favor with pro-Israel, anti-Iran, and anti-Islamist legislators in Congress, albeit for reasons much more applicable to intra-GCC politics than the regional strategic goals of the United States (Roberts, 2017:13).

The crisis broke on June 5, shortly following President Trump's visit to the region. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain declared a blockade of Qatar with no evident immediate cause. The anti-Qatar quartet released an extreme list of 13 demands which seemed intended to be rejected (Roberts, 2017:14).

After hosting dozens of Arab and Muslim leaders for President Trump's summit, Saudi Arabia and the UAE evidently expected a rapid victory over Qatar and widespread regional support. It has not worked out that way. The effort to demonstrate Saudi-UAE hegemony over the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Middle East has instead demonstrated the continuing divisions of the regional order (Roberts, 2017:14).

As with their disastrous war in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE radically overstated their prospects for success and failed to have a plausible plan B in case things did not go to plan. The anti-Qatar quartet seems to have overestimated Qatari fears of isolation from the GCC and their own ability to inflict harm on their neighbor (Roberts, 2017:14).

An economic boycott could only marginally harm one of the wealthiest countries in the world, while the U.S. military base provided an effective military deterrent. Military threats had little effect once the U.S. military made it clear that it had no interest in UAE suggestions that it move the U.S. air base from Qatar and the demand to close Al Jazeera attracted widespread global condemnation as an assault on media freedom, while four fiercely repressive and anti-democratic regimes had a difficult time mounting plausible criticisms of Qatar's undemocratic system (Roberts, 2017:14).

While the failure to coerce Qatar seems predictable, it is more remarkable that Saudi Arabia and the UAE failed to expand the anti-Qatar coalition beyond the four core members. Bahrain hardly has an independent foreign policy, since its brutal repression of protests in 2011, while Egypt views Qatar as part of its own domestic power struggle with the Muslim Brotherhood. Neither needed much enticement to join (Roberts, 2017:14).

But no other country has wholeheartedly supported the campaign. The GCC itself has been divided, as Kuwait and Oman have sought to play mediating roles, whilst North African states, and even heavily dependent Jordan, have hedged their positions, struggling to stay neutral and wait out the crisis (Roberts, 2017:14).

Meanwhile, the effort to isolate Qatar created openings for other regional power players. Most dramatically, Turkey sent military forces to Qatar to deter any invasion. This was a symbolic gesture, given the unlikelihood of an overt attack, but one which further fragmented the established norms of Gulf security (Roberts, 2017:14).

At the same time, Iran has taken the opportunity to improve its relations, not only with Qatar but also Oman and Kuwait. That Saudi Arabia and the UAE were willing to rip apart the GCC over their grievances with Qatar suggests that their fear of Iran is not quite so all-consuming. The power struggles and political competition between the Sunni powers, as well as their continuing existential fears of popular uprisings and Islamist challengers, remain more urgently threatening than the more widely discussed conflict with Iran (Roberts, 2017:15).

3.4.3 Yemen Conflict

The current war in Yemen is a result of the failure of the political transition after the Arab Uprising in 2011. The transition deal was a result of the GCC efforts to stabilize the political situation in Yemen, although its implementation remains more than unsatisfactory. However, before its involvement in the war, the GCC had done very little to prevent an eruption of the war. Some analysts have even said that the Yemeni conflict is a direct result of the regional inaction over the last few years, if not decades. This inaction was the consequence of the GCC conviction that Yemen is a weak link in the region and a potential source of instability for the Arabian Peninsula as a whole. The instability in Yemen has contributed to the strengthening of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Additionally, the GCC states have perceived Yemen as a much poorer state and as the only republic which does not fit into the "monarchical

Peninsula". Yet, although an uneven status of development and different political system are an indisputable fact, problems of the second largest country in the Peninsula with strategic access to the vital Bab al-Mandab strait, where the Red Sea meets the Indian Ocean, are unlikely to be ignored (Grabowski, 2016:1).

On 24th March 2015, Hadi the president of Yemen – though now living in exile in Saudi Arabia – called on the UN Security Council to authorize willing countries that wish to help Yemen to provide legitimate authority and protect Yemen from the Houthi aggression. A day after Hadi fled Yemen to Saudi Arabia in a boat, the Houthi forces advanced in Aden and on 26th March 2015, the Saudi-led military operation called "Decisive Storm" began contributing to the escalation in the conflict. The aim of the campaign, which is still ongoing, is to support Yemeni military troops that are loyal to the internationally recognized government of President Hadi and the intervention of the GCC and Arab League members was justified by the UN Resolution 2216 (2015) of April 14, April 2015, which demanded that "the Houthis should end violence and refrain from further unilateral actions that threatened the political transition". The Council also demanded that the Houthis, "withdraw from all areas seized during latest conflict, relinquish arms seized from military and security institutions, cease all actions falling exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen and fully implement previous Council resolution". The speed at which a ten-country coalition was formed and mobilized is unprecedented in the Arab World. The coalition sent a clear message to many actors regionally and globally, especially those who had doubted the possibility of Arab unity and decisiveness, i.e. that the Arab World is willing and able to control its own destiny, protect its own interests, and prevent the collapse of another Arab state (Grabowski, 2016:8).

3.5 UAE Foreign Policy at the MENA Level

**3.5.1 The Historical Support of the UAE from the Era of Sheikh Zayed (for a
common Arab foreign policy on issues such as Palestine)**

The foreign policy of the UAE is reflected through the values and political perceptions of its founder, Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan. In 1972, he laid out the main goals of UAE foreign policy during his first ever speech as president. in this he emphasized how UAE foreign policy is all about resolving conflicts peacefully with neighboring countries, supporting Arab causes, coordinating with Arab states in all fields, and committing to the international principles of the UN charter.

Sheikh Zayed's identity as an Arab and Muslim guided the UAE into adopting this set of Foreign Policy Goals. For instance, his sense of belonging to the Arab world is what motivated the UAE to be a great advocate and supporter for the Palestinian case. Moreover, the Islamic value of the humanitarian support is a clear motivator for UAE's outstanding record in providing foreign aid for the Arabs and the Muslim world.

On the other hand, the distinctive features that are displayed in Sheikh Zayed's speech happen to also be a typical set of behaviors that small states tend to follow. For instance, small states tend to limit their behavior to their immediate geography, project a lower contribution in world affairs, and focus more on regional issues. For the UAE, this translates into a foreign policy that is focused on establishing cardinal relations with neighboring Gulf States and limiting their influence to the Arab and Muslim dimension.

Hence, we could say that the objective conditions that define the UAE foreign policy of the Zayed era include the differing small state attributes of size and population, but also its remarkable oil wealth, its strategic position and, most importantly, its leadership (Alzaabi, 2019 :143&144).

3.5.2 UAE's Role in the Arab Oil Boycott

The world's oil reserve picture is even more startling when looked at in detail, for the oil is not distributed uniformly, even though the Arab world. Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen have virtually none; Egypt has little, Algeria and Libya somewhat more; but the giant reserves are concentrated in the countries of the Persian Gulf: The Federation of Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and, by far the most important, Saudi Arabia (Akins, 1973:6).

The proven reserves of Saudi Arabia are frequently listed as 150 billion barrels, but this is almost certainly too low. One company with extensive experience in that country believes that the present proven reserves are over twice that figure. And the probable reserves could double the figure again (Akins, 1973:6).

That most of the world's proven oil reserves are in Arab hands is now known to the dullest observer. That the probable reserves are concentrated even more heavily in the Middle East must also be the judgment of anyone who is willing to look at the evidence. And that relations between the United States and the Arab countries are not generally cordial should be clear to any newspaper reader. Even King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who said repeatedly that he wished to be a friend of the United States and who believed that Communism was a mortal danger to the Arabs, insisted to every visitor that U.S. policy in the Middle East, which he characterized as pro-Israeli, would

ultimately drive all Arabs into the Communist camp, and that this policy would bring disaster on all America's remaining Arab friends, as earlier Anglo-American policies did to Nuri Said of Iraq. Others in the Middle East have framed their predictions in a different but almost equally menacing vein, in terms of a growth of radical anti-Americanism, manifesting itself in behavior that may at times be irrational. King Faisal also said repeatedly that the Arabs should not, and that he himself would not, allow oil to be used as a political weapon. But on this issue, it seems all too likely that his was an isolated voice. In 1972, other Arabs in responsible or influential positions made no less than 15 different threats to use oil as a weapon against their "enemies." Almost all of them singled out the United States as the prime enemy (Akins, 1973:6).

These threats have been well publicized; the common response among Americans has been: "They need us as much as we need them"; or "They can't drink the oil"; or "Boycotts never work." But before we accept these facile responses, let us examine the facts more carefully. First of all, let us dispose of the straw man of a total cut-off of all oil supplies, which some Arab governments, at least, could not survive. Apart from threats made during the negotiations of December 1970, no Arab has ever taken such a position, and Arab representatives took it at that time, in concert with other governments, for economic bargaining purposes, not for political reasons. Rather, the usual Arab political threat is to deny oil to the Arabs' enemies, while supplies would continue to their friends. In such a case, the producing countries would still have a considerable income under almost any assumption—unless we could assume complete Western and Japanese solidarity, including a complete blocking of Arab bank accounts and an effective blocking of deliveries of essential supplies to the Arabs by the Communist countries—in other words, something close to a war embargo. We must recognize that most of the threats have been directed against

Americans alone. Many of our allies and all others would be allowed to import Arab oil. In the 1967 Six Day War a boycott was imposed against the United States on the basis of the false accusation that it had participated with Israeli planes in the attack on Cairo. The charge was quickly disproven, although the boycott lasted for over a month. It was then lifted through the efforts of Saudi Arabia, and its effects never became bothersome. We were then importing considerably less than a half-million barrels per day of oil from the Arab countries, and this was easily made up from other sources. Today the situation would be wholly different, and tomorrow worse still. By 1980 the United States could be importing as much as eight million barrels of oil a day from the Middle East; some oil companies think it will be close to 11 million (Akins, 1973:6).

Suppose that for some reason, political or economic, a boycott is then imposed, which, if the Middle East problem is not solved by that time, cannot be called a frivolous or unlikely hypothesis. The question we must face now, before we allow ourselves to get into such a position, is what would be our response? The choices would be difficult and limited: we could try to break the boycott through military means, i.e. war; we could accede to the wishes of the oil suppliers; or we could accept what would surely be severe damage to our economy, possibly amounting to collapse. Europe and Japan might conceivably face, or be asked by us to face, the same problems at the same time. Would their responses be in line with ours? (Akins, 1973:7).

Moreover, a collective Arab boycott is not the only conceivable political threat. Until now the world has enjoyed the luxury of considerable surplus production capacity, relative to total demand. Now that has changed. The United States now has no spare capacity and within the next few years, assuming other producer governments and companies do not invest in huge added capacity, the production of any one of

seven countries—Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, the Federation of Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Libya or Venezuela—will be larger than the combined spare capacity of the rest of the world. In other words, the loss of the production of any one of these countries could cause a temporary but significant world oil shortage; the loss of any two could cause a crisis and quite possibly a panic among the consumers (Akins, 1973:7).

The UAE foreign policy is a commitment to Arab and Islamic affairs, especially the Palestine case, and as a result the UAE used a different set of foreign policy tools in support of Arabs and the Muslim world. The UAE utilized a negative economic tool through the oil embargo of 1973, and a positive economic tool in developing a foreign aid policy (Alzaabi, 2019:144).

When the Arab-Israel war of October 1973 broke out, the United States (US) President Richard Nixon pushed for two million U.S. dollars of additional support to Israel to support the Israelis in the war. Many Arab states viewed this as an act of "indirect" intervention. As a result, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia came up with the idea of an "oil boycott" on states supporting Israel and asked the same from Arab states with oil wealth. Eventually, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was able to reach an agreement of cutting exports by 5% only on states supporting Israel. Nonetheless, Sheikh Zayed intervened calling for a total ban on oil exports to the US, as the 5% sanctions would not do the U.S. any harm (Alzaabi, 2019:144).

The UAE participation in the Oil Embargo was greatly influenced by UAE leadership, its values and core beliefs. For instance, Sheikh Zayed spoke the famous line that, "Arab oil is not dearer than Arab blood," emphasizing the importance of Arab Unity for the UAE. Thus, the UAE was able, alongside other Arab oil exporting states

to maintain an oil embargo for six months from October 1973 to March 1974, and was able to cut its oil exports to both the USA and the Netherlands due to their support for Israel during the war. For the first time in Arab history, oil was able to unify the Arab nations to pursue an interest that they could all agree on, rather than to look at Arab unity just as sharing the same history, language and religion. Besides, the embargo was seen as a success as it was able to pressure countries such as Japan to withdraw its support for Israel, which resulted in the lifting the ban on Japan (Alzaabi, 2019:144).

3.5.3 UAE has Historically Followed the Lead of Saudi Arabia in the Region. Is this Changing Now?

The UAE's foreign policy orientation has long been a reflection of a threatening geopolitical environment, described by Rugh (1996:58) as "the realization that it is a small, wealthy country in a rough neighborhood". Early in its statehood, the UAE's international political choices conformed to the preferences of Saudi Arabia and Iran. The UAE had territorial disputes with both states and did not have the resources available to challenge either, meaning that it chose a "follower" status as a strategy of avoiding conflict with its larger and more powerful neighbors. This reflects what Al-Alkim (1989:59) has called the "Saudi dimension" in the UAE's early foreign policy choices, when the UAE's position on regional issues was consistently aligned with the Saudi position. To create a more independent position, Emirati leadership pursued active membership in the international system, joining international organizations and agencies and creating a systemic role for itself (Fulton, 2017:197).

The UAE's most important political and security relationships are with the southern Gulf states, Saudi Arabia and the United States (Foley,1999:30). In contrast to the federation's dispute with Iran over the islands, the UAE has been able to address

its territorial problems with Saudi Arabia and Oman by direct negotiation and by skillful use of Abu Dhabi's oil wealth. Saudi Arabia is the federations' most important neighbor, and relations have been close for many years. Sheikh Zayed strongly supported the GCC as well as the kingdom's pro-Western policies and Saudi -UAE territorial disputes were largely put to rest when Zayed ceded Zarrarah oil field to Riyadh in exchange for Saudi recognition of UAE sovereignty over the Burami Oasis in 1992. The two states, along with Britain and Oman, fought a brief war over the territory in the 1950s (Foley,1999:32).

3.5.4 UAE Relations with Iran

Iran under the Shah was the hegemonic power in the Middle East and Gulf region. It possessed the largest and best-equipped standing army and was an ally of the Arabs' arch foe, Israel. Arabs saw in Iran a threat based mostly on their perception of a Persian desire to dominate the region. They also perceived Iran's alliance with Israel as an attempt to suppress pan-Arabism (Riad, 2004:56).

These interests were not seen as totally incongruous, however. The common goal between Iran and its Arab neighbors was the Organization of Oil-Producing Countries (OPEC), which the Shah used as a tool to increase oil prices and occasionally to pressure Washington to achieve political gains. The United States saw in Iran's geographic location on the borders of the former Soviet Union a great strategic asset, and due to Cold War geopolitics, Iran increasingly acquired a special status in U.S. foreign and defense policies (Riad, 2004:56).

The rise of the Islamic Republic changed the entire geopolitical scene and for many Arab states, the Iranian Revolution replaced the threat of Persian nationalism

with that of radical Shiism. Attempts by Tehran's new Islamic government to export the revolution to neighboring countries has caused many predominantly Sunni Arab states, including the GCC, to worry about the Shiite communities within their own polities (Riad, 2004:56).

In response to the rise of a theocratic and ideologically expansionist Iran, GCC states aided Iraq's war effort in the 1980s. Additionally, in the past two decades, the United States has built up a "containment" strategy toward Iran based on harsh economic sanctions as well as forward military deployments in the region, including an explicit deterrence policy based upon military threats. Soon after the 1991 Gulf War, the "dual containment" of Iran and Iraq became the basis of U.S. policy. While this term is no longer used officially, and while Iraq has now dropped off the list of powers needing containing, U.S. policies toward Iran are still based on the philosophy of containment through diplomatic isolation, economic pressure and military threats (Riad, 2004:56).

While U.S.-Iran enmity has grown or remained constant, the start of the twenty-first century saw a steady improvement in Iran's relationship with the GCC. Growing trade ties between Iran and the Arab Gulf states helped improve political relations, and the rise of the reformist movement in Iran, which eased the rhetoric about the export of the revolution to neighboring countries, helped calm the fears of many officials in the Gulf. Iran, strained by the U.S. containment policy, needed its neighbors more than at any time before (Riad, 2004:56).

So, the past five years have witnessed high-level visits by officials from Iran to individual Arab Gulf monarchies on a bilateral basis, including the signing of many trade and security pacts. Oman took the lead in improving relations with Iran in the

late eighties and later helped mediate the re-establishment of ties between Tehran and Arab Gulf states, and Iranian and Omani officials have been exchanging frequent visits, further improving their relations. Saudi Arabia moved ahead in 2000 with a series of trade and mutual-cooperation pacts with Iran. Ties continued to improve between the two countries in the following years, especially with the signing of a security agreement in April 2001 and a judicial-cooperation memorandum of understanding in July 2003. Another security-cooperation agreement was signed between Iran and Qatar in October 2002, covering cooperation on various aspects of border security, including measures to counteract drug running and money laundering (Riad, 2004:56).

However, the dispute with the UAE over the Abu Musa and Tunb islands continued to affect the ties between the GCC and Iran. While Saudi Arabia has used its leadership position within the GCC to carry out an agenda of steadily improved relations with Iran, the UAE (and other small Gulf states such as Kuwait) have remained highly critical of the Iranian moves since 1997 to consolidate military control over the three strategically placed islands. Iran has created naval facilities and other active military bases on at least one of the islands, and it has made statements to the effect that if any power attacked Iran, Tehran would use its military presence on the islands to deny oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz as a punitive measure. However, at the same time, the UAE and the GCC have always maintained that they would seek a political settlement to the disputed Tunb Islands, and UAE and Iranian officials have had a few positive diplomatic exchanges in the past three years to improve ties (Riad, 2004:57).

Overall, the picture is one of protracted stalemate. Iran sees the islands as critical to its deterrence and defense posture (especially with the peaking of U.S. deployments and influence in the region in the past 10 years), while the UAE views the final status of the islands as a central issue of sovereignty. Although the GCC has a common stance that is critical of Iran and strongly in favor of good-faith negotiations, the political reality is that the UAE's GCC partners have a strong desire to improve relations with Iran, even as Tehran has cut off concrete bilateral and multilateral negotiations over the status of the islands. In particular, Saudi Arabia has not let UAE concerns (and those of other small Gulf states) stop its ongoing rapprochement with Iran, which is based squarely on realist foreign-policy tenets (Riad, 2004:57).

Furthermore, the sensitive issue of Shiite political status in Arab Gulf countries continues to cause friction with Iran. The most recent example was Kuwait's tough reaction to meetings held at the Iranian embassy in Kuwait with Kuwaiti Shiite figures. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah criticized the meetings as interference in Kuwait's internal affairs and called Iran "a strategic threat to the Gulf" (Riad, 2004:57).

Overall, there is still substantial mistrust on both sides about the intentions of one another. Iran is perceived by the GCC states as wanting to cement its regional hegemony while, for its part, it argues that GCC states have invited a hostile power (the United States) into the region. Some Iranian officials believe that the heavy U.S. military presence in GCC states constitutes an existential threat to the Islamic government in Tehran. Further, Iranian officials and experts believe that the GCC states are using far superior U.S. military technology to threaten Iran needlessly. In the Iranian view, there is nothing to deter, since Iran only wants to exercise its natural

leadership role in the region; while in the Gulf Arab view, Iran seeks dominance (Riad, 2004:58).

The GCC states believe that they share strong regional interests with Iran in creating prosperity and stability, even though they disagree on the best methods of guaranteeing that stability (Riad, 2004:57).

Sheikh Zayed used his famous "quiet diplomacy" policy in protesting the Iranian claims through   international platform including the Arab League, and the Emirati claims over the islands were also showcased in a quiet manner in the United Nations (UN) in order to avoid making them into a huge problem. Thus, diplomacy was a major tool to establish the UAE's historic claims over the areas and to avoid going into a war that would lead to chaos in an area that was already filled with unrest. One can measure the success of such a foreign policy tool by the fact that the UAE was able to gain Iranian recognition back in 1972 (Alzaabi, 2019:144).

Even before the Iranian nuclear deal, the region was already beset by crises and rising violence, and inter-Arab solidarity remained as elusive as ever. Yet the 2015 summit of the Arab League promised more than the usual platitudes to emerge from the organization. This time, the Arab regimes insisted, the summit would be meaningful and finally lead to regional cooperation to restore some semblance of regional order. At least rhetorically, the Arab states seemed united: calling for a joint Arab military force for "rapid reaction" against militancy and terrorism (Ryan, 2017:36).

For Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the key threat was Iran and Iranian influence in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, and allegedly even within Saudi Arabia and Bahrain

themselves. For the UAE and Egypt, the core threat remained the Muslim Brotherhood and other similar Islamist movements. For Jordan, meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood seemed a loyal opposition compared to rising Salafi movements within the kingdom and the transnational jihadists of the Islamic State who had taken huge swathes of Syria and Iraq, frequently testing Jordan's borders (Ryan, 2017:36).

The UAE remains extremely wary of Iran's ambitions and powers, but it has sought to reach out to Iran's government and deny Iran any justification for aggression or adverse action against the UAE. Commercial ties between the two are extensive and relatively free of complaints by either side. And, as discussed above, these Iran-UAE ties have used U.S. concerns about league of jet dual technology to Iran and to UA-UAE measures to limit such leakage (Katzman, 2010:9).

UAE fears of Iran have been elevated since April 1992, when Iran asserted complete control of the largely uninhabited Persian Gulf island of Abu Musa, which it backed shahm seized two other islands. Greater and lesser Tunb, from the emirate of Ras Al Khaymah, as well as part of Abu Musa from the emirate of Sharjah. In October 2008, the UAE and Iran signed an agreement to establish a joint commission to resolve the dispute, that agreement coming two months after the UAE protected Iran's opening in August 2008 of administration and maritime security offices on Abu Musa. Iran allowed Sharjah to open power and water desalination facilities on the island, and whilst the United States is concerned about Iran's' physical control over the islands, it takes no position on the legal sovereignty of the islands. The UAE – in this case, Abu Dhabi – has long feared that the large Iranian-origin community in the emirate of Dubai (estimated at 400,000 persons) could pose a fifth column threat to UAE stability. By way of illustration of UAE attempts to avoid anatomizing Iran, in May 2007,

Iranian president Mohammed Ahmadinejad was permitted to hold a rally for Iranian expatriates in Dubai when he made his first high level visit to the UAE since its independence in 1971. Still, reflecting the underlying tensions and volatility of UAE – Iran relations, the two countries engaged in mutual recriminations in January 2009 over the UAE decision in late 2008 to begin fingerprinting Iranian visitors to UAE (Katzman, 2010:10).

3.5.5 Cooperation on Iraq

The UAE has undertaken several initiatives to support U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein and has provided facilities for Germany to train Iraqi police. It pledged $215 million for Iraq reconstruction but has provided the funds not in cash but in the form of humanitarian contribution in Iraq ($71 million as of Dec 2007). Some of the funds were used to rebuild hospitals in Iraq and to provide medical treatment to Iraqi children in the UAE. As the result of an agreement in June 2008, the UAE appointed an ambassador to Iraq, the first Arab country to do so. The following month it wrote off $7 billion (including interest) in Iraq debt, and the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited Iraq in October 2008 (Katzman, 2010:10).

3.6 UAE Relations with the International Community

3.6.1 UAE Foreign Policy towards the Great Powers: USA

The increased role of the USA as a security guarantor came to play a central role in meeting systemic pressures, most notably in the cases of Iranian hostility during the Iran-Iraq war, and then in ending Iraq's expansionist goals for the region after its invasion of Kuwait. This reliance on an external security provider to provide a security

umbrella was consistent with the role the United Kingdom had played until 1971, and continues today, with the USA relationship a central pillar of the UAE's security and foreign policies. This is not likely to change, and there is little evidence that China could play even a supplementary role to that of the USA in supporting the UAE's security (Fulton, 2017:197&198).

The American security architecture in the UAE is substantial. It uses facilities at Jebel Ali port, the U.S. Navy's busiest port of call, as well as the Al Dhafra Air Base. These facilities have been used extensively for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. There are approximately five thousand American soldiers stationed in the UAE, and Al Dhafra remains the only overseas base where the USA stations F-22s. The UAE is a major client for USA arms manufacturers, having purchased weapons and related services valued at $10.4 billion between 2007 and 2010, a strategy perceived by Emirati leadership as one that enhances the American commitment to UAE security (Fulton, 2017:198).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) increased its security cooperation with Washington during the Gulf War and it deepened bilateral relations with the U.S. by signing a defense agreement in 1994. The UAE hosts approximately 3,000 U.S. troops and it supports an American military presence, which it hosts in the "Al Dhafra" air base "U.S. fighter, 82 attack, and reconnaissance aircraft" and it also "hosts U.S. Patriot missile batteries". Moreover, the U.S. has provided the UAE with different types of defense equipment and in the period 2007-2010, the UAE agreed to receive U.S. defense equipment through the foreign military sales program worth $10.4 billion dollars; an amount that exceeds any other country except Saudi Arabia. As Cook makes mention, "The UAE provides berthing and husbanding of U.S. naval vessels

which are essential for forward basing and support of the Fifth Fleet" stationed in Bahrain, and the United States has "poured over $60 million in military construction into Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates" (Al-Barasneh, 2015:81).

Another example of cooperation between the USA and the UAE is that which takes place against terrorism and proliferation, which accumulated in providing a training program to UAE financial institutions on money laundering and terrorism financing. Added to this is the signing of an agreement on the container security initiative statement of principles, aimed at screening U.S. bound containerized cargo transiting Dubai port. UAE was also signatory to the proliferation security initiative, the mega ports initiative designed to prevent terrorists from using major ports to ship illicit material and customs – essentially a trade partnership against terrorism (Katzman, 2010:7).

On the Arab-Israel dispute, the UAE does not follow U.S. policy strictly or uncritically, but does generally agree with most U.S. assessments of regional threats, and it supports efforts by U.S. diplomats to resolve regional issues. On the Arab Israel issue, the UAE wants to ensure that any settlement between Israel and Palestine is "just," and it is sometimes critical of the United States as being excessively supportive of Israel (Katzman, 2010:14).

The steps taken by the UAE to support U.S. policy on the Middle East peace process have tended to come in concert with other Gulf states, with a further tendency to defer to Saudi Arabia rather than try to emerge as a major direct mediator between Palestinian factions, as have Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or Egypt. In 1994 the UAE joined with the other Gulf monarchies in ending enforcement of the Arab League's boycott of companies doing business with Israel and on companies that deal with companies

that do business with Israel. The UAE formally bans direct trade with Israel, although UAE companies reportedly do business with Israeli firms and some Israeli diplomats have attended multilateral meetings in the UAE. Unlike Qatar and Oman, the UAE did not host multilateral Arab-Israeli working groups on regional issues when those talks took place during 1994-1998 (Katzman, 2010:14).

In 2007, the UAE joined a "quartet" of Arab states (the others are Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan) to assist U.S. diplomacy on Israeli-Palestinian issues. The UAE publicly supports the Palestinian cause and has sometimes put its considerable financial resources to work on behalf of the Palestinians. One major UAE action has been to fund a housing project in Rafah, in the Gaza Strip, called "Shaykh Khalifa City". It also has given economic aid to Lebanon, perhaps in part to counter Iranian and Syrian influence there—an objective that UAE shares with Saudi Arabia and the other GCC states. In December 2008 and January 2009, the UAE government permitted street demonstrations in support of Hamas during its war with Israel and in February 2009, the UAE denied a visa to an Israeli tennis player who was to participate in a Dubai tennis tournament, earning the UAE some international criticism. It also aggressively investigated and, based on evidence developed, formally accused Israel in the killing of Hamas leader at a Dubai hotel in January 2010 (Katzman, 2010:14).

3.6.2 UAE Foreign Policy towards the Great Powers: China

In a speech delivered in late 2015, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said,

"The UAE, as a vital political, economic and cultural hub between East and West, and the gateway to the Middle East, considers its relations with China to be crucial in bringing about stability and development in our region and beyond".

The same week, his brother, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, travelled to Beijing for a three-day state visit, during which several bilateral agreements were signed across a range of sectors, including energy, trade, space cooperation, higher education, and clean energy. This visit is the most recent of many, as Sino-Emirati relations have come to be a regular feature of each state's foreign policy and interdependence between the two has increased dramatically. Bilateral trade has grown annually, from approximately $2.5 billion in 2000 to nearly $55 billion in 2014. However, it is the UAE's role as a regional hub that strengthens the relationship, with infrastructure, finance services, transport and communication, as well as a business-friendly environment, as Chinese companies are setting up regional offices in the UAE to service contracts throughout the Arabian Peninsula and Middle East. Both states have become very important partners to one another (Fulton, 2017:194).

Factors that shape the UAE's international political choices at the systemic and unit levels. In terms of systemic pressures, Emirati leadership has perceived hostile regional powers as their greatest security threat and have used a variety of diplomatic tools that are available to a relatively small but wealthy state: specifically, participation in international organizations, alliances, and economic statecraft. These tools, combined with its important role in the global energy market, have made the UAE a significant partner for other states, which therefore see the stability and security of the UAE as being aligned with their interests. China's large commercial presence in the UAE makes it yet another powerful state that has an interest in the Emirates. In terms of unit-level pressures, the UAE faces fewer challenges than other GCC states, but the demands inherent in its rentier model means the state, already the overwhelmingly central economic actor in its citizens' lives, must continue to deliver a wide range of economic benefits (Fulton, 2017:195).

Trade with China is an important factor in this, although unlike the cases of Saudi Arabia and Oman, it is not as an importer of Emirati energy, but as an exporter of Chinese goods that the UAE re-exports throughout the Middle East. As the world's third-largest re-export hub, behind Hong Kong and Singapore, a substantial part of the UAE's non-energy economy is based on re-exports, making China an important economic partner for the UAE (Fulton, 2017:195).

For Emirati leadership, the most significant source of systemic pressure has been from aggressive and hostile regional powers: Iran and Iraq. This has manifested as both material and ideological threats. In order to meet these threats, the UAE has developed a technologically powerful modern military, in the process becoming one of the largest purchasers of armaments on the international market. It has also used alliances with external security providers, first the UK and currently the USA. While China does not play a significant role in arms sales to the UAE and has not indicated a larger security relationship, the structure of the relationship is such that there is potential for China to play a larger role in assisting the UAE in security matters as their interests become more deeply intertwined (Fulton, 2017:195).

China is the largest source of the UAE's imports, at nearly sixteen percent. Much of this is in the form of large machinery and transport equipment, which is being used for infrastructure projects throughout the region. As is discussed below, China is using the Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA) in Dubai as a base of operations for its companies working on construction and infrastructure contracts on the Arabian Peninsula (Fulton, 2017:201).

Also important to the Emirati economy is the value derived from re-exports. In 2014, re-exports represented $120 billion, an increase of nearly eleven percent from

2012. This is especially relevant as non-oil exports over the same period decreased by almost eight percent. China accounts for ten percent of the UAE's non-oil trade, and approximately sixty percent of China's exports pass through the UAE, making China a crucial partner for the UAE's continued efforts to diversify its economy beyond trade in hydrocarbon, a necessary step in addressing potential unit-level pressures (Fulton, 2017:202).

Prior to the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 there were no recorded interactions between China and the societies that eventually became the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE, then known as the Trucial States, did not exist as a sovereign state until 1971, and its foreign policy and international representation was directed by Britain, which PRC leadership considered as an enemy of both China and communism. The troubled history shared by the United Kingdom and China was an important factor in shaping the PRC's negative perceptions of the emirates of the Trucial States, as was their marginal geopolitical importance during this period. While not formally a British colony, the Trucial States were a British protectorate, which led Chinese leaders to consider the sheikhs of the emirates as "reactionary monarchies," reliant upon foreign powers for their continued rule. As such, PRC leadership considered the emirates of the Trucial States to be firmly in the Western camp in the Cold War system, with no potential to align them with Chinese interests. In the absence of diplomatic relations, ties existed just at the economic level. However, Dubai's role as a business and transportation hub increased international traffic to the UAE, and China became especially interested in establishing a commercial presence (Fulton, 2017:207).

Geopolitical interests also played a role in the establishment of diplomatic relations. The UAE was as always concerned with Iran's ambitions in the Gulf, and while supporting Iraq in its war with Iran, any chance to exert influence in Tehran was crucial for the UAE, and in China, Emirati leaders saw an opportunity for a more balanced relationship with Iran. For the UAE, there was the realization of "the significance of engaging China rather than isolating it in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives". From China's perspective, stronger relations with the UAE continued its policy of creating a position of greater influence in a strategically important region, with the goal of ultimately gaining diplomatic relations with each of the Arab Gulf monarchies. In the period after establishing diplomatic relations, the PRC and UAE moved to strengthen ties, with a series of business, military, and political visits that culminated with Presidential visits in 1989 and 1990 (Fulton, 2017:208).

PRC President Yang Shangkun visited the Middle East in December 1989, stopping in Egypt, Kuwait, the UAE, and Oman. The visit was an opportunity for China to reiterate that its commitment to the Gulf remained strong, in spite of regional instability. In May 1990, Sheikh Zayed made a five-day official visit to China, the first for an Emirati president. He was accompanied by his Minister of Defense, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed al Maktoum, the current Sheikh of Dubai and Prime Minister of the UAE, and his son, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, who was then Commander of the Air Force and is now the Crown Prince of the UAE (Fulton, 2017:208&109).

Throughout the 1990s this remained the highest-ranking visit from either state, although there were visits at the ministerial and deputy levels. During the period of indifference, there was nothing in the way of domestic gains to be found for either side

by pursuing relations with the other, and systemic pressures rooted in the Cold War bipolar structure and their opposing alignments meant that international political considerations dominated relations during this time. During the period of hostility, China's interpretation of international pressures led to an aggressive regional policy which threatened the status quo and enhanced the perception held by Emirati leadership that China was a dangerous external actor. During these two periods, a structural theory can explain much of the relationship between China and the territory that would become the UAE (Fulton, 2017:223).

During the transitional period we see the beginning of a more complex relationship in which both domestic and international pressures explain the improved relations between China and the UAE, although international pressures still played a dominant role. China's appreciation for the status quo within the Gulf, triggered largely by the interpretation of an unstable Gulf as a Soviet gain, and therefore a threat to Chinese interests, led to a more positive regional activism for China, albeit on a relatively small scale. This transition in the 1970s intensified after Emirati leadership saw evidence of the benefits of a relationship with China, Iran-Iraq war. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1984 demonstrated domestic benefits, primarily through increased trade, as well as mutual international benefits (Fulton, 2017:224). During the period of interdependence, Trade has been the central pillar of Sino-Emirati relations, making each state increasingly important to the economic strength of the other and contributing to ongoing domestic stability. China provides the UAE with a stable, long-term energy customer and is its largest source of imports, much of which generates re-export revenue for the Emirates. The UAE provides China with energy, an important export market, and crucially, a regional base of operations

that gives Chinese firms a greater presence throughout the Arabian Peninsula and Middle East (Fulton, 2017:224).

Over the course of this period of interdependence, China and the UAE built upon trade relations to strengthen political cooperation, evident in the strategic partnership announced in 2012. People-to-people interactions, important for the PRC as a soft power initiative, has been an important element of Sino-Emirati relations, as language training, cultural and religious exchanges, and importantly, Chinese tourism, are creating opportunities for relationships to develop at the non-elite level. Projects and infrastructure play a minor role in China's relations with the UAE, and finally, in terms of military and security interactions, there is little evidence of a growing Chinese role as a security partner for the UAE. However, given the range of Chinese interests in the UAE, its large population of Chinese expatriates, and significant commercial interests, it is not unreasonable to assume that Chinese leaders perceive the UAE as a strategically important partner, and that its continued security is in China's interest. As such, closer participation involving a security dynamic could be a feature of Sino-Emirati relations in the future (Fulton, 2017:224).

3.6.3 UAE Foreign Policy towards the Great Powers: Russia

Russia is striving towards sustainable partnership in security matters with the member states of the GCC (the Gulf Cooperation Council or, more formally, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf), which was established in 1981 at a summit of the leaders of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in Abu Dhabi (Almaqbali & Ivanov, 2018:539).

Russia has made certain progress on its way to a consensus with Abu Dhabi, and on June 3, 2016, the speaker for the UAE Federal National Council spoke favorably of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov's active position in promoting peace talks in Syria. High-ranking UAE officials also expressed their readiness to settle the Syrian issue with the participation of all major political players, including President Assad. Abu-Dhabi's changed outlook indicates Russia's strong hand in the game, as it is able to steer the GCC members away from Riyadh's hegemony (Almaqbali & Ivanov, 2018:541).

Russia's relations with the UAE have been fortified through economic investments. Emirati corporations invested funds in the construction of facilities for the 2014 Olympics in Sochi and a major port outside Saint Petersburg; and they also subsidized Russian oil giant Rosneft for the upstream project. The established partnership between Russia and Kuwait, and the growing economic interaction between Moscow and Manama, as well as the UAE investments into the Russian economy indicate a strong Russian presence on Saudi Arabia's traditional turf. "For the year 2016, bilateral trade between the two countries reached $1.2 billion, the same level as in 2015 but the figure is expected to go up this year as ties between the two countries strengthen and the UAE imports more goods from Russia," said Ara Melikyan, a trade representative of the Russian Federation in Abu Dhabi (Almaqbali & Ivanov, 2018:544).

Russia has built up with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Although the UAE and Iran have the longstanding territorial dispute that has earlier been mentioned, over three islands in the Gulf and although Iran is a major purchaser of Russian arms, the UAE is also a major buyer of weapons from Russia (Tables 1 and 2) (Katz, 2010:2).

Table 1: Russian Trade with Middle East, 1995-2004 ($ million)

	1995	2000	2001	2002	2004
Exports					
Egypt	394	449	426	489	374
Iraq	-	90	187	367	167
Jordan	17	35	20	18	33
Kuwait	-	6	9	82	3
Lebanon	78	198	228	112	137
Saudi Arabia	28	55	66	137	208
Syria	75	95	89	138	209
UAE	194	178	222	386	273
Yemen	-	29	5	205	89
Algeria	120	120	130	169	291
Libya	78	23	11	24	54
Morocco	66	61	134	197	111
Tunisia	59	94	55	91	99
Total Arab	1,031	1,433	1,582	2,414	2,048
Iran	249	630	894	752	1,319
Israel	215	473	507	618	688
Turkey	1,632	3,098	2,980	3,349	4,754

Source: (Rivlin, 2005:32)

Table 2: Russian Arms Exports to the Middle East, 1990 -2003 ($ million, 2003 prices)

	Total	Algeria	Egypt	Iran	Kuwait	PA*	Sudan	Syria	Turkey	UAE	Yemen
1992	408			248						160	
1993	936			725					20	191	
1994	588	194	7	96	8				6	271	6
1995	987	406		58	188	1			55	279	
1996	681	72		312	103	10			153	51	
1997	614		190	288						136	
1998	495			302				28		165	
1999	636	189	66	290				28		65	
2000	1,440	312		402				591		60	75
2001	1,202	544		450			188				20
2002	1,463	148		394			77	21		232	590
2003	1,481	614		423				21		389	42

Source: (Rivlin, 2005:35)

Russia has established a robust partnership with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that goes well beyond the Middle East to include Sub-Saharan Africa. And Russia has done all this while simultaneously making economic deals and negotiating arms sales with the Qataris, the UAE and Saudi Arabia's Gulf rival (Al Makahleh, 2018:1).

This situation, as Karasik observes, create a basis for Russia's increasing economic-political penetration into Africa. For example, Russia's successes in the Middle East have led the UAE's Crown Prince, Mohammad Bin Zayed, to say that both governments share open communication channels on all issues of international affairs and will form a strategic partnership to promote their relationship. And thanks to their economic and political partnership, the UAE is helping Russia penetrate Africa as well. Presumably, as the UAE visibly increases its capabilities for projecting its influence abroad, it will likely bring Russia into at least some of those arenas, such as Africa (Al Makahleh, 2018:10).

Commercial Cooperation between the two countries in November 2015. Another investment fund, worth $10 billion, was agreed upon in July 2015. At the fifth meeting of the joint UAE-Russia committee in November 2015, an agreement on enhancing cooperation in the field of tourism, transport and investment was signed. Two additional memorandums of understanding were also signed, in the fields of sports cooperation and intellectual property. The Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's visit to Russia in September 2013 saw the UAE and Russia signing a memorandum of intent to establish a joint investment partnership between the Department of Finance in Abu Dhabi and the Russian Direct Investment Fund, to invest up to $5 billion in Russian infrastructure projects (Al Makahleh, 2018:82).

The UAE had been among major buyers of Russian arms in the 1990s and early 2000s although Russia's relations with this region deteriorated significantly during the Syrian conflict, with Russians and Arabs generally lining up on opposite sides. Despite this, interest in Russian arms among Arab states remains. In February 2017, the UAE signed a letter of intent to purchase the Sukhoi Su-35, as mentioned above. At this time only China bought these jets from Russia. The Emirates has also purchased ground weapons from Russia, such as BMP-3 infantry combat vehicles and Pantsir S1 air-defense systems, and in February 2017, the UAE also signed $1.9 billion worth of military contracts, which reportedly included 5,000 anti-armor missiles, in addition to training and logistic support. The country also started talks with Rostec about the development of a fifth-generation MiG-29 aircraft variant; though experts are skeptical of the ability of the UAE to be able to co-produce this aircraft. Very few countries can produce a fifth-generation fighter aircraft. Theoretically, Russia can, but it only recently began production of fourth generation Su-34s developed in the 1980s (Al Makahleh, 2018:211).

In a second trip to the region in September 2007, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, accompanied by the heads of Rosoboronexport, Aeroflot and Roskosmos, visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where economic, cultural, and military deals were signed, including for Arab access to Russia's space launch facilities in Kazakhstan, and a foundation stone was laid for the Arabian Peninsula's first Russian Orthodox church in Sharjah. The establishment of a Russian Orthodox Church in the conservative emirate holds special significance for the current status of Russo-Islamic relations by building on Emirati concepts of tolerance. A second Russian Orthodox Church is now open in Abu Dhabi. That tolerance is not confined to the physical building since the collection of alms, which is part of church operations, is allowed by

UAE authorities. Putin's visits in 2007 were a masterstroke for Russia. His trip to the UAE accelerated Moscow's interest in bidding for—and winning— energy projects. For example, in July 2008, Stroytransgaz won a $418 million contract to build a gas pipeline from Abu Dhabi to Fujairah. And the traffic is two-way. At the time, UAE investments in Russia totaled about $3.5 billion dollars, mostly equity in state and private companies, but several businesses in the UAE are investigating further ventures in Russia. Dubai World, for instance, is looking at ports, logistics and infrastructure investments, while Limitless, Dubai World's real estate arm, is building more than 150,000 homes in Russia.8 Russia was moving from a bilateral relationship with the UAE based solely on shuttle trade and tourism to inter-state relations at the highest levels of government. In the wake of Putin's visit to the Gulf region in 2007, Russia began to use its financial might to launch two different, successive tactics for Russian investment into the Gulf States (Al Makahleh, 2018:244).

In 2013, Abu Dhabi established, together with the RDIF, a $3 billion fund to develop infrastructure in the south of Russia, with Mubadala investing in Russia's agricultural sector. Simultaneously, Russia sought to build an air hub in the UAE to deliver aid and knowledge transfer to Africa. This facility is to act as a bridge to Africa, where Russia, with its extensive air cargo-carrying capabilities, can help develop infrastructure and provide health services in areas affected by conflict and famine. It is interesting to note that Russia and the UAE, through Mubadala, are cooperating to build a $750 million airport in Cuba, as well as redeveloping a port and building a railway line in the Caribbean country. Ties between the UAE and Russia are robust thanks to inter-SWF investment and are well-developed in terms of geopolitical and economic engagement. These look to continue, with many plans for productive collaboration (Al Makahleh, 2018:264).

3.7 The Use of Digital Diplomacy by Great and Middle Powers, International Organization and NGOs

Since we didn't find much sources on the use of digital diplomacy for the UAE, this chapter will examine that several of the traditional great powers such as the U.S, U.K, France, China and Russia as well as middle-ranking powers such as Canada, Saudi Arabia, India etc. utilize digital diplomacy in an aggressive way to further their foreign policy objectives across the world. This section surveys their strategies and messages.

3.7.1 France

In the case of France, for example, soft power is aimed notably at promoting France's image and thus defending their economic, linguistic and cultural interests. It also aims to raise general public awareness of the French Foreign Ministry's work. It results from the combined efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' central services and diplomatic network (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was, in 1995, one of the first French institutions to set up a website. The website "France Diplomatie" now has close to 1.5 million visitors each month, almost a third of whom consult its flagship service: Advice for travelers (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

Since 2008-2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had a proactive communication policy on social networks. It was, for example, the first French Ministry to create a Twitter account in spring 2009: @francediplo (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

On the social web, diplomacy is no longer merely a matter of State - to -State relations, but also of State-civil society relations. Social networks offer civil society the opportunity to interact directly with the Ministry (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development is now present on several platforms and in various languages (Ministry of Europe, 2019):

- Twitter in French @francediplo, in English @francediplo_EN, in Arabic @francediplo_AR and in Spanish @francediplo_ES, in German @francediplo_DE and in Russian @francediplo_RU

- Advice for travelers on Twitter @ConseilsVoyages

- Facebook in French, in English and in Arabic

- FrancediploTV on Youtube

- France diplo on Instagram

Three focuses of French Foreign Ministry's digital communications strategy are:

- Enhancing dialogue with French and foreign civil society;

- Strengthening the "public service" dimension of France Diplomate and quality of service more generally;

- Supporting the diplomatic network in terms of digital communication;

- The digital communication of France's diplomatic network.

In 2017, more than 43 million Internet users visited the 267 sites of French embassies and consulates abroad which communicate in some 15 languages. At the same time, their social networking activity has intensified: 204 diplomatic posts communicate on Facebook and 149 on Twitter (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

They mainly use Twitter and Facebook but are capable of adapting to the most widespread local usages and platforms: for example, the French Embassy in China communicates on Weibo (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' digital soft power strategy covers the diplomatic network and its main development focuses are as follows:

The Ministry provides its diplomatic network with many tools and services: editorial support, standard templates for embassy and consulate websites, hosting solutions, telephone and online assistance, and tutorials. This support concerns both their communication on their institution website and through social networks (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

Since 2011, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs has implemented a social web training program for all diplomats newly posted abroad (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

Digital technology is central to policy on disseminating the French language and culture. Digital technology offers many opportunities to promote the "French brand" against a background of increasingly stronger power plays between countries and regional blocs as emerging powers assert themselves, and digital technology is used and action taken to promote democracy and freedom of expression (Ministry of Europe, 2019).

3.7.2 China

China missed the opportunity to use the social media to promote themselves as a country in accordance with the G20 summit. However, in the digital age, citizens expect their governments to be more open and transparent in their dealings at home

and abroad. Traditionally, the government of China has resisted such transparency given a risk-averse culture and an institutional mentality that favors information keeping rather than information sharing (Manor, 2016).

As such, China has created their own platform of social media which required foreign embassies and consulates in China to establish online presences on some of China's most popular microblogging platforms such as Sina Weibo and on mobile communication services such as Wechat. In this section, we will explore how diplomatic missions in China use Chinese social media, and what strategies they employ in order to best engage and communicate with local audiences (Jan, 2015)

Social media platforms allow diplomatic missions in China to reach out to members of the local Chinese public and to expat populations in ways that are far more direct, interactive and far-reaching than tradition channels of public diplomacy (such as through speeches or newspaper articles). In March of 2014, Sina Weibo counted 144 million monthly active users; reflecting its ever-increasing popularity, WeChat counted 470 million monthly active users at the end of 2014. If positioned intelligently and executed cleverly, a foreign embassy's social media presence has the potential to reach an audience that significantly exceeds the size of audiences reached by traditional channels of public diplomacy. By way of illustration, the French Embassy in Beijing (240,000 followers) and the American Embassy in Beijing (920,000 followers) have amassed a sizeable online following. To put these figures into perspective, the Weibo account of the Beijing Subway System reaches almost 2 million people, whereas the Beijing City Government's Weibo account lists 6 million followers (Jan, 2015).

Arguably more important than the size of audiences to be reached through digital public diplomacy, however, are the notably improved methods of engagement afforded by social media platforms. Both Weibo and Wechat allow embassies to engage with local audiences in novel ways. Followers share, like and comment on content posted on embassies' social media accounts, thus not only providing diplomatic representations with instant feedback on what sort of content attracts user attention, but also allowing embassy officials to directly respond to user comments and queries. The Swedish Embassy's approach to digital diplomacy further illustrates the potential of social media to generate meaningful interaction with local audiences: on its Weibo account, the Swedish Embassy, among other things, gives "Swedish ministers or officials an opportunity to chat directly with Chinese microbloggers". The more private nature of WeChat allows for an even more personal interaction with local audiences (Jan, 2015).

In addition to the more intimate nature of audience engagement, WeChat further sets itself apart from Weibo by allowing for interaction with both Chinese and non-Chinese (expat) audiences. This is primarily due to WeChat's popularity among both Chinese and non-Chinese users. As a predominantly Chinese language platform, Weibo accounts are primarily – if not exclusively – targeted at Chinese audiences; WeChat, on the other hand, is available in 15 languages, thus allowing embassies to reach out to Chinese audiences and expat populations located in China. The French Embassy in Beijing, for instance, runs two separate WeChat profiles, in French and in Chinese. Having two separate accounts allows the Embassy to efficiently address the distinct content demands of Chinese audiences and of French expats in China (Jan, 2015).

Anyone who has been to China would know that over 50% of the most commonly used apps will not work there. A visitor must either come prepared with a VPN pre- installed on their phone or realize that they cannot use Facebook, Gmail, Google Maps, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Dropbox and even Pinterest. The utilization of digital diplomacy tools by China was mostly limited to a website and an SNS account. In August of 2016 the Chinese government launched the @G20_China twitter channel. Over the course of the G20 summit, the channel was updated regularly by the Chinese government. Yet an analysis of the content published online suggests that the vast majority of tweets included images from meetings between world leaders and the occasional ceremonial handshake, as can be seen in the tweets below. Such tweets were also comprised of carefully selected images that merely gave the appearance of the backstage while actually still portraying events from the stage of the summit. The summit could be incorporated into the Chinese narrative of a rising Soft Power, one dedicated to achieving goals through diplomacy, culture and trade rather than through military force (Manor, 2016).

China's cyber diplomacy consists of three levels. The first level is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' direct operation, which is the core of the whole. It involves two components. The first are the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its overseas embassies and consulates. The second component is the utilization of the social media. It provides direct communication for China's cyber diplomacy. On Sina Weibo, the official account of the Office of Public Diplomacy, (little messenger of diplomacy), is followed by over 6.6 million users. It has posted more than 11.5 thousand micro-blogs (Wang, 2015:146).

On Facebook, the Office of Public Diplomacy is also managing the pages for the government's cyber diplomacy. Besides, many departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have also created their own official accounts on social networks, thus participating in China's cyber diplomacy. Other than the activities for shaping China's image in cyberspace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has an obligation in coordinating the activities from another two dimensions. As the core of the system, the ministry is not only the actor but also the director in China's program of cyber diplomacy (Wang, 2015:147).

At the second level of China's cyber diplomacy are the operations of other official institutions. It is constructed of two administrative components, which provide operational support for China's national image despite their activities representing themselves. The final level is the participation of the Chinese civil society, which mainly provides advisory support for cyber diplomacy (Wang, 2015:147).

China's cyber diplomacy might have gained some achievements. As the BBC's annual survey on national image indicated, from 2007 to 2013, the respondents who had positive views towards China had increased by 5%. This slight rise might originate from the promotion of Chinese culture and the positive image of Chinese youth in cyberspace. According to the report of the Charhar Institute in 2013, the non-Chinese respondents are very positive about Chinese youth, who are widely recognized as hardworking, energetic and seen as the hope of China. Furthermore, also in this report, 61% of the non-Chinese respondents expressed their interest in learning about Chinese culture, and a third of them would like to learn Mandarin (2013:10). Therefore, the promotion of Chinese culture and the communication among the Chinese and the foreign youths on the Internet might be meaningful (Wang, 2015:149).

Nonetheless, the outcome of China's cyber diplomacy is still limited. The negative side of China's national image cannot be shrugged off at least in short term. The BBC's annual survey in 2007 found that 42% of the 28,000 respondents from 27 countries had negative views towards China. In 2013, the figure was almost the same. Among those 26,299 interviewees from 25 countries, 42% of them still held negative views towards China. Criticism against China has never ceased throughout the evolution of Chinese diplomacy, and the lack of credibility and validity are the constraining factors in China's cyber diplomacy (Wang, 2015:149).

It must be noted that the first and the second levels of China's cyber diplomacy are tightly controlled by the official departments. And the most influential Chinese cyber media, for instance, ChinaDaily. com and Xinhua.net, are considered as the mouthpieces of their government. The Chinese civil society, which should be considered the proper actor in cyber diplomacy, can merely provide advisory support for the system (Wang, 2015:150).

Due to the lack of credibility and validity in its system, China's current efforts in cyber diplomacy have gained little outcome. As various polls have indicated, still a great number of people in the world dislike China. To a large extent, the hatred is caused by China's military actions against its neighboring countries. The promotion of Chinese history and culture cannot eliminate the world's concerns regarding China's military threat. The Chinese government has to attach more importance to the justification of its foreign policy in cyberspace. Moreover, the improvement of China's cyber diplomacy is also related to the development and participation of its civil society, the bridging of the conceptual gaps with the world beyond China, and improved, or more open, governance in domestic affairs (Wang, 2015:157).

3.7.3 Russia

The Russian Foreign Ministry sees digital diplomacy as a useful tool that allows reaching out to wide international audiences. Digital diplomacy is considered a part of Information Support for Foreign Policy Activities, a traditional ministerial term for press and public relations. Although a relative latecomer to digital diplomacy, over recent years Russian Foreign Ministry has quickly risen to become one of the leaders in this field. As Russian diplomats have demonstrated the benefits of this new practice for advancement of foreign policy goals and have come to feel quite experienced in it, their main task now is how to make digital diplomacy more effective. The Russian governments has built a strong resistance to the Western media's information monopoly, including by using all available methods to support Russian media outlets operating abroad and, in the opinion of Shakirov, to counter lies about Russia and not allow falsifications of history (Shakirov, 2016).

Since 2014, as relations between Russia and the West deteriorated, first over contestation with Ukraine and later over Syria, opposition to the West has become a major topic of the Foreign Ministry's communications on social media. In early Twitter fights over a hijacked hashtag or the geography of Ukraine, Russian diplomats saw how, on social media, their Western counterparts were willing to transgress traditional diplomatic rules and hence they felt similarly unconstrained, and responded in kind. In addition, these exchanges sometimes drew more attention than official press-releases, thus helping each side to promote its message (Shakirov, 2016).

As a result, the Foreign Ministry effectively adopted a laissez-faire approach in dealing with the West online, allowing its diplomats to experiment as long as their message was in line with the overall policy. This took different forms, such as regular

Facebook posts by Maria Zakharova, Director of DIP since summer 2015, that for instance criticized bias and the perceived unprofessionalism of Western media or that mock Western officials for their anti-Russian statements. Russian embassies mastered the art of using social media to pinpoint Western hypocrisies and to do so in an Internet-friendly fashion (Shakirov, 2016).

Some have argued that Russia uses social media for propaganda, and analysis has shown that the Russian MFA is one of the most active and dominant foreign ministries on Twitter. Moreover, the Russian MFA is one of the most central ministries among the online diplomatic milieu (Manor, 2016).

However, as far as Britain is concerned, the Russian embassy's online presence seems to be targeted at three core audiences: the press, the diplomatic community in London and the British public. The embassy's unique digital diplomacy model enables it to extend its online reach through tweeting from followers' accounts. This may enable the embassy to be more effective online as its messages emanate from regular users rather than government accounts that may be seen as "Twipoganda" (Manor, 2016).

Moreover, the embassy seems to closely monitor its audience base and tailor social media content to followers' interests. Likewise, each social media platform is used to promote different content, which is another form of tailoring. Finally, the embassy seems to regard social media as an integral part of the practice of diplomacy in the 21st century (Manor, 2016).

3.7.4 USA

The U.S. foreign policy establishment has moved faster and further away from this tradition in recent years than have most of its counterparts abroad. There is resistance to accepting the new digital realities by tradition -bound officials within the diplomatic community. Old habits die slowly.

Whilst the barriers are being lowered with the recruitment of a generation of professional who at ease with computers and other digital resources it was not until March 1998 that the U.S. State Department took the overdue step of consolidating management of its electronic information resources into a central office (Dizard, 2001).

Meanwhile a minority view has emerged that calls for a radically stepped up pace of the computing of foreign policy operations. In their more imaginative moments, this minority proposes a diplomacy conducted by remote control and their plan for telediplomacy involves virtual embassies serving as electronic data gathering outposts for computed decision making in Washington. This would be technocracy run amuck. Machines cannot replicate the essentials personal skills of the diplomat or articulate what British diplomat Harold Nicolson has defined as moral precision: the willingness to confront foreign policy realities directly and with conviction (Dizard, 2001).

3.7.5 UK

According to Verrekia, one of the best examples of this was displayed by UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, who used his Twitter account to launch an initiative called "Meet the Foreign Secretary". This initiative asked his followers to tweet him

with their ideas of what issues they thought the Foreign Office's priorities should be in the upcoming years, with the promise of rewarding several participants with the ability to meet him. Hundreds of people joined in to tweet Hague with their opinions, showcasing how social media can provide a platform for the public to be included in conversations about foreign policy. Other foreign officials have become well-known for their online interactions as well. For example, the Twitter account for the Dutch government devotes every weekday from eight in the morning until eight at night to answering questions posed by its followers, and reportedly 81% of Rwandan President, Paul Kagame's tweets are replies to other users. New social media features such as Facebook live video chat and Twitter polls have made these interactions even easier (Verrekia, 2017).

Since the beginning of this century, scholars and practitioners have employed the term the New Public Diplomacy (NPD) to distinguish between the Public Diplomacy (PD) of the Cold War and the PD of the post-Cold War, and to adjust PD to the conditions of the information age. Potter cited the following changes in international relations and communication that have affected PD: the increased importance of public opinion, the rise of more intrusive and global media, increased global transparency, and the rise of a global culture leading to a reflexive desire to protect cultural diversity. Melissen focused on the rise of non-state actors, the difficulty of reconciling domestic and foreign information needs, and the two-way communication pattern of exchanging information between states. Gilboa offered an expanded list of characteristics, including the interactivity between states and non-state actors, two-way communication, strategic PD, media framing, information management, PR, nation branding, self-presentation and e-image, the domestication of

foreign policy, and addressing both short- and long-term issues. This work keeps the term PD but uses the attributes associated with the NPD (Gilboa, 2009:24).

PD provides middle powers with ample opportunities to gain influence in world affairs far beyond their limited material capabilities. The constant search for a unique niche and extensive PD programs to promote it distinguishes today's middle powers from other states. States face different challenges and have different needs, and therefore the PD of middle powers is different from that of great or small powers (Gilboa, 2009:24).

Middle powers face several fundamental challenges. Peoples around the world don't know much about them, or worse, are holding attitudes shaped by negative stereotyping, hence the need to capture attention and educate publics around the world. Since the resources of middle powers are limited, they have to distinguish themselves in certain attractive areas and acquire sufficient credibility and legitimacy to deal with them on behalf of large global constituencies (Gilboa, 2009:24).

Middle powers have developed various approaches to evaluation, development and the conduct of PD programs. They have established investigative committees, commissioned research, held hearings, consulted experts, and even solicited views and ideas from the general public. Middle powers employ two basic approaches to mission searching: a closed approach that primarily is held in-house and involves extensive consultations among officials responsible for PD with the help of outside experts, and an open one which involves the public in the evaluation process. Norway employed the closed process, while Canada and Australia preferred the open approach (Gilboa, 2009:24).

Canada and Australia have adopted a different approach to reforming their PD systems. They opened up the process for wide, direct, public participation. In January 2003, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade published a "Dialogue Paper" and invited the public to discuss major questions of diplomacy and PD. Many organizations and thousands of individuals responded online, and many participated in town hall meetings and conferences. The results were presented to the public in a special report and this had some impact on the formulation of the Canadian PD. A parliamentary committee in Australia initiated a major study of PD in 2007 and made many interesting and useful recommendations. The committee opened up the process, inviting heads and leaders of relevant organizations to submit papers and hold hearings (Gilboa, 2009:25).

3.7.6 Canada

Looking more closely at Canada, an embrace of digital diplomacy with a focus on the use of social media and other technologies to engage stakeholders in Canada and abroad is a strategic option for increasing openness in the conduct of its foreign policy (Dierkes et al., 2016).

In prioritizing digital diplomacy, Global Affairs Canada did not have to start from scratch. The Department had had a presence online for some time and visibility was stepped up significantly in the last year of Foreign Minister John Baird's tenure, when many Canadian missions abroad set up social media accounts. Such "Twiplomacy" received a further boost through early statements by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Minister Stéphane Dion, empowering Canadian diplomats to speak on Canada's behalf publicly, including on social media. As a result, there has

been a noticeable increase in the visibility of diplomats and missions in traditional and social media (Dierkes et al., 2016).

Global Affairs Canada's social media accounts have a strong international reach. Across all Global Affairs Facebook accounts there were 2.5 million likes and across all Twitter accounts there were 520,000 followers. Even allowing for some portion of this being the result of fake, inactive and overlapping accounts, we estimate that Global Affairs Canada accounts reach a total audience of 2.5 million readers on these two platforms alone (Dierkes et al., 2016).

The average number of likes/followers per account is 16,914 on Facebook and 3,390 on Twitter, respectively. However, as the engagement chart below reveals, some accounts received far more likes or mentions on posts in a one-week period than many accounts received overall. We generally found a great deal of discrepancy across accounts between user interaction, with some having only a handful of likes or followers, and others having large and engaged audiences. Surprisingly, on Twitter the accounts that received the most interaction were the Government of Canada department accounts, with half the total number of retweets. Specifically, the Government of Canada account received 41 percent of the total retweets, despite only posting 0.3 percent of the material (Dierkes et al., 2016).

On Facebook, country level accounts received more interaction than any other type of account (worth noting are Burma, Netherlands, Philippines, United Kingdom and India, as shown in the engagement table below). These five accounts received 25 percent of the total page likes, and also have high levels of user engagement. Also excelling on Facebook in terms of levels of interaction is the Ukrainian account, which holds 55 percent of the total likes per post and posts frequently with 15 percent of the

total posts. On a regional basis, the majority of the accounts were concentrated in Europe, Latin America and Asia, with Asia being a particularly active region (Figure 1) (Dierkes et al., 2016).

TOP 5 ACCOUNTS

Facebook		Twitter	
Average Likes per Post Oct. 26 - Nov. 2 2015		Average Mentions per Tweet Oct. 26 - Nov. 2 2015	
Myanmar	525	@Canada	272
Netherlands	378	@CanadaTrade	67
Philippines	248	@CanadaChina	49
United Kingdom	240	@CanadaDev	36
India	203	@CanadaFP	31

Figure 1: Facebook and Twitter Data
Source: (Dierkes et al., 2016)

3.7.7 India

India has been ranked in the top 10 nations in terms of its digital diplomacy performance over the last year by Diplomacy Live, a global research, advocacy, consulting and training platform. India and Mexico are the only two countries from the developing world in this list, and India's high ranking is despite a relatively modest budget for public diplomacy. The MEA's Official Facebook page, with more than 1.2 million followers is second only to that of the U.S. State Department amongst Foreign Ministries (excluding its companion page "Indian Diplomacy" which alone has some 850,000 followers) (Chaudhury, 2016).

On Twitter, the Indian Foreign Ministry's combined presence – i.e., the Official Spokesperson's account plus the Public Diplomacy account – has crossed 1.2 million.

On YouTube, with 40,000 subscribers and 30 million minutes viewed, the Ministry's video content has truly gone viral. MEA is also available on the G+, Flickr, Instagram, and Soundcloud platforms. These combined platforms have a followership in excess of four million and an average monthly reach in excess of 20 million. The MEA has a unique Mobile App, which has garnered more than 150,000 downloads on Android and iOS platforms, and which is now being revamped to accommodate new technologies (Chaudhury, 2016).

In addition to digital diplomacy at headquarters, India's Missions and Posts have increasingly embraced the use of social media (Chaudhury, 2016). With support from MEA, more than 95% of Indian Missions and Posts are now available on Facebook and 60% on Twitter. Their online presence plays a critical role in many situations of crisis and was instrumental during recent evacuation efforts from Yemen and Libya. and during the earthquake in Nepal in April 2015 (Chaudhury, 2016).

3.7.8 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is now focusing more on improving its public image by opening itself to the International arena. In this regards Saudi Arabia broadly uses various tools of Public Diplomacy in its policy making to shape and influence public opinions of foreign audience in this regard. Public Diplomacy is also used by states to fulfill their Foreign Policy goals and objectives (Masood, 2018).

Since the modernization of Saudi society, the public diplomacy practices of Saudi Arabia have increased to a level that should be appreciated, and the openness of their society is being addressed through public diplomacy. Saudi Arabia's journey

from a traditional society to one in the process of becoming a modern society was appreciated by the Western and Modern states on one hand while on the other hand it was not appreciated by Muslim-majority countries. So, in this situation Saudi Arabia should focus more on its Public diplomacy to justify their modernization to the Muslim states (Masood, 2018).

3.8 International Organizations and the Use of Digital Diplomacy

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 and currently made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are both guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter (UN, 2018). The United Nations can take action on issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more, albeit that action requires a supporting vote from members and can be vetoed by a vote from one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UN, 2018). Looking back on the UN social media, it seems that the United Nations has a vested interest in promoting digital diplomacy and the use of social media among its member states for three main reasons: The United Nations in New York is one of the world's most important hubs of diplomacy. UN organizations and UN embassies attract large numbers of social media followers. The UN's official twitter account attracts some four million followers, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN has 150 thousand followers while the British ambassador has 22 thousand followers. Combined together, the UN and its ambassadorial representatives attract a global audience of millions of followers (Manor, 2015).

These are people who are interested in the world they live in and who want to take part in shaping it. In an age marked by political cynicism, loss of faith in government and a global decline in democratic participation, UN followers represent a vibrant public sphere. By conversing with these followers through social media, the UN and its member states may be able to increase civic engagement on a global scale (Manor, 2015).

Virtual Relations: Nations that have not established diplomatic relations in the physical world, often establish virtual relations on social media. For instance, long before John Kerry began meeting his Iranian counterpart, the U.S. was conversing with Iranian citizens through the Virtual Embassy Tehran. While digital relations cannot be equated to official diplomatic ones, they do serve as a preliminary basis for sharing information and communicating policy. Thus, digital relations may act as a prelude to full diplomatic relations (Manor, 2015).

Such virtual relations are quite common in the UN. In fact, geo-political enemies often follow one another at the UN. For instance, Israel's mission to the UN follows the UAE's mission even though both nations have no diplomatic relations. Likewise, although direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine are currently non-existent, Israel's mission to the UN follows Palestine's mission as do Iranian and U.S. officials. By supporting digital diplomacy, the UN is also supporting linkages between all nations, even ones who are opposed or that consider themselves enemies (Manor, 2015).

Leveling the Diplomatic Playing Field: Global diplomacy is often characterized by a geographic bias in which smaller nations struggle to compete with larger ones. Digital diplomacy enables smaller states to position themselves at the very

heart of world diplomacy. For instance, African foreign ministries attract the attention of, and communicate with, world powers through social media (Manor, 2015).

The democratizing impact of digital diplomacy is most evident in the UN. For instance, Rwanda and New Zealand are among the most popular UN missions among their peers while Palestine and Norway's missions serve as important hubs of information as they connect missions that do not follow one another directly on Twitter. By supporting digital diplomacy and the use of social media, the UN may be leveling the diplomatic playing field in favor of smaller states, enabling them to take part in setting the global agenda and promoting their global initiatives (Manor, 2015).

In summary, by promoting the use social media and the practice of digital diplomacy among member states, the UN is promoting the values and ideals enshrined in its charter. Therefore, the UN's social media day should represent a successful and humble beginning to a much larger effort. By the example it sets the United Nations is a powerful advocate of social media and it offers a wealth of inspiration to brands, governments, advocacy organizations, and public diplomacy practitioners interested in finding new ways to use digital tools to improve their outreach and solidify their communications strategies (Manor, 2015).

The cinemagraph campaign started with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—at his last UNGA before he stepped down at the end of 2016—and included many other world leaders and celebrities, from Michael Douglas to athletes of the first-ever refugees Olympic team, to Helen Clark, head of UN Development and one of the few women running to replace Ban at the helm of the UN (Sandre, 2016).

As for Facebook, the United Nations went live with interviews and chats on the main issues discussed at UNGA. Launching the live video initiative was Filippo Grandi, head of the UN Refugee Agency, interviewed by his chief spokesperson Melissa Fleming on the refugee and migrant crisis, one of the main themes discussed at the UN in that year (Sandre, 2016).

3.8.1 European Union (EU)

The European Union is a family of liberal democratic states, acting collectively through an institutionalized system of decision making. By 2015 the EU comprised 28 member states, and over 500 million people. The EU sits somewhere between an international organization and a state. It is counted as a unique or a hybrid body and researchers find it difficult to compare the EU to any national systems of government or international organizations (Michelle, 2016:3).

The common institutions of the EU include the Commission, Parliament, Council, Court, the European Council and the European Central Bank along with many other bodies. These institutions are highly interdependent; and together they form a nexus for joint decision-making across a now extremely wide range of policy areas (Michelle, 2016:3).

The EU is involved in a wide range of activities, the most high profile and important of which involve the making and management of European level policies (Michelle, 2016:5).

3.8.2 GCC

Over the last decade, Internet access has seen a dramatic growth in the Gulf region. The Gulf states enjoy the highest Internet penetration rates in the Middle East.

Qatar (97%), Bahrain (93%), the United Arab Emirates (92%) and Kuwait (80%) have near universal access. Oman (71%) and Saudi Arabia (65%) have widespread diffusion as well. Studies increasingly show that Arab society is an engaged public and the use of social media has increased tremendously in recent years (Figure 2) (Dennis et al., 2016:29); (Akdenizli, 2017).
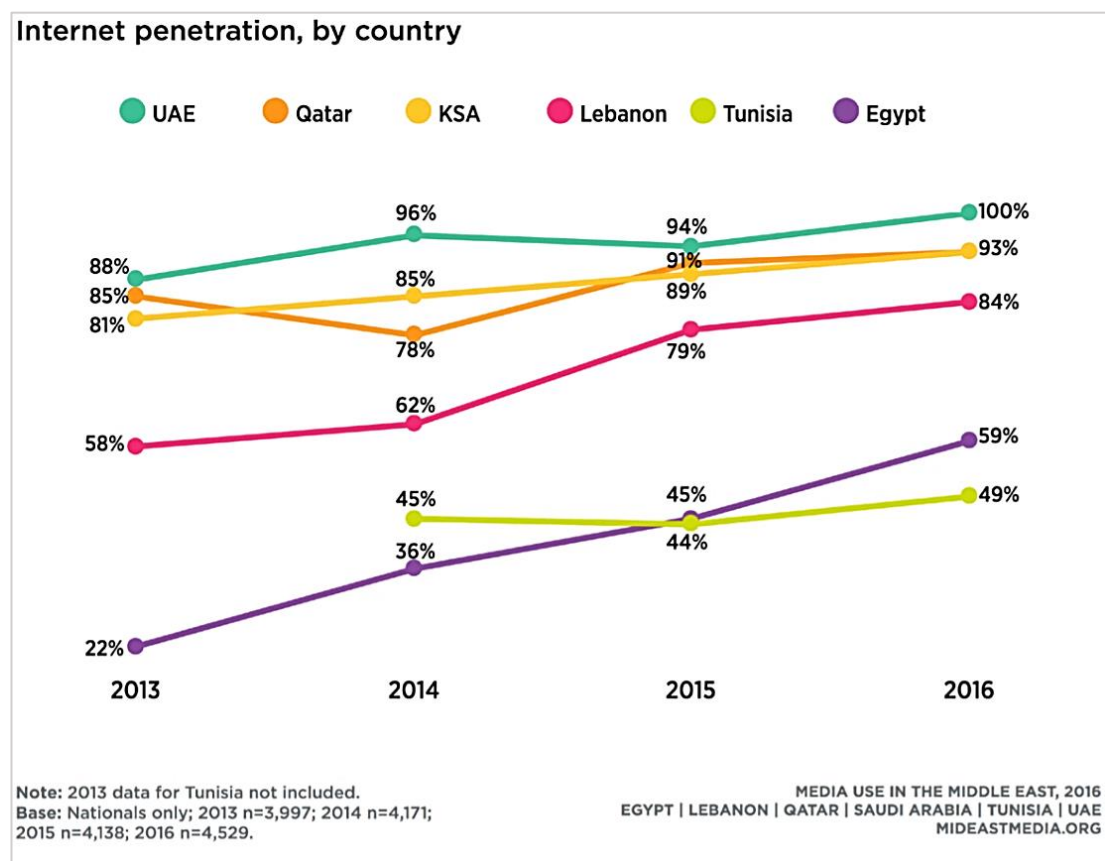
Figure 2: Internet Penetration, by Country
Source: (Dennis et al., 2016:29)

For foreign ministers the main use of social media tools is that they provide a mutual transmission process between political entities and their public by enabling citizen participation through commenting, liking and sharing messages. Arguments that new media tools are effective in increasing public participation and bringing governments closer to their citizens are common. Yet these arguments probably carry

more weight in democratic societies. In autocratic societies, diplomatic efforts are expected to reflect the agenda of the existing regime. The Internet makes public matters more visible, but at the same time contributes to the spread of the powers' discourse (Akdenizli, 2017).

Among the four analyzed accounts, the one that had the most followers was United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 3.6 million. Next was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) with 1.3 million, then Bahrain with close to 350,000 and finally Qatar with only 25,544. Typical of many leaders, the number of "friends" they have (meaning the accounts they follow back) were low in comparison. The foreign minister of UAE in October of 2016 was following 562 people. By December, that number had increased to 600. Bahrain, whose minister had the most friends, had 635 friends in October and that number stayed constant through December. The KSA minister seemingly was not interested in further interaction, because his number remained stagnant at 45 accounts throughout October-December, 2016. Qatar's minister had the fewest friends, and added two accounts to the total number he followed; by December 2016 he was following 27 other accounts (Akdenizli, 2017).

Although no particular topic seemed to dominate, 12.4% of all tweets were about Syria. Leaders expressed concern and called on the international community for action on the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Another popular topic, with 10.8%, were ministers' visits, made or received. Tweets informed followers about the dignitaries they would be hosting or they themselves would be visiting, almost always accompanied with a photograph capturing the moment. A fair number of tweets (10%) were coded under the category of GCC related (GCC is the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf). This is the regional intergovernmental political and

economic union of all Arab states in the Persian Gulf, including Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, KSA, UAE, Kuwait. Iraq is in the area geographically, but is not a member). These tweets were about news specific to the GCC region, indicating a slight interest by the foreign minister in portraying a connection between themselves and the rest of the world. Other topics included issues related to Iraq with 3.8%, Iran with 2.8% and UAE National Day Celebration's with 2.2%, which happened to fall on December 2, 2016 (Akdenizli, 2017).

Almost three fourths (74.2%) of tweets were original content, 20.6% were retweets and a mere 5.3% were reply tweets, indicating that the leaders were not interested in using this tool in an interactive manner. Only 9% of all tweets contained a mention, and 2.2% asked a question to their followers. One fifth (21.3%) of the tweets contained links, which were mostly to international news sites. Hashtags enhance visibility, since hashtags potentially can be read by individuals who are not following the said minister. Almost half of all tweets contained a hashtag (44.7%), and almost 90 % of them were about marking a location (Akdenizli, 2017).

So, what can we say based on this preliminary data? If digital diplomacy is about the ability to develop relationships, feedback, horizontal communication, listening and not declaring, then clearly at this stage, foreign ministers of the Gulf are not making full use of Twitter. They mostly use it in Arabic, create their own content; do not rely on user-generated material; and neither interact nor seek out information. Thus, the expectation that in autocratic societies, diplomatic efforts reflect the agenda of the existing regime seems to be met, and it certainly seems to contribute to the spread of the powers' discourse (Akdenizli, 2017).

3.8.3 NGOs and the Use of Digital Diplomacy

While sometimes the only option for NGOs is to challenge other actors in a direct and adversarial way, the preference for international NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is to engage other actors positively and constructively via digital means. In addition, digital communications give international NGOS the platform to set the agenda and trigger policy debates and changes in major countries around the world. For example, through their advocacy via digital platforms, international NGOS were able to demonstrate that more and better support for refugees is not just right but popular with the public. In doing so they were able to make a more persuasive case for countries to accept more refugees. For example, when the Syrian refugee child, little Alan Kurdi, was found dead on the shores of Greece, more than 450,000 people signed an online petition initiated by international NGOS asking David Cameron to welcome more refugees to the UK, triggering a debate in Parliament and contributing to the then Prime Minister's announcement to open a specific resettlement scheme for Syrian refugees (Smith, 2017:88).

As this example shows, digital media strengthens the ability of NGOs to effect change by allowing them to reach more people, to mobilize them, to demonstrate popular support for a given cause and to ultimately bring about political action or policy change. But three challenges means its full potential remains untapped:

First, the use of digital platforms necessitates a change in the approach to communications of NGOs. To reach and engage audiences with short attention spans and multiple distractions, NGOs need to frame their arguments differently and make them more accessible. For example, the current debate over continued public spending

on foreign aid, in the face of attacks by the hard right across Europe and in the U.S (Smith, 2017:89).

NGOs, accustomed to talking to those whom pollsters term the "cosmopolitan elite," present the facts and the evidence of the impact of aid, and hope this appeals to the rational side of the targeted audiences, whilst the aid critics play to people's emotional sense of patriotism, and their fears, real and imaginary, of the threat to their home posed by supposedly frivolous spending abroad. In the UK in 2016, almost 250,000 people were sufficiently persuaded by these arguments to sign the Daily Mail's online petition to stop spending 0.7% of the UK's GNI on aid. NGOs are still playing catchup, struggling to frame the case for foreign aid in a way that speaks clearly and convincingly to the general public (Smith, 2017:89).

The second challenge is legitimacy. While NGO supporters are greater than ever before, it is still too easy for governments and politicians in particular to dismiss these supporters as a special interest group. Unless NGOs can prove that they act with the support of the wider public, they risk becoming irrelevant to actors who depend on the public for their own power and legitimacy (Smith, 2017:89).

Particularly effective in countering this challenge—but a challenge in its own right—is building coalitions with other organizations to grow the supporter numbers and therefore the legitimacy of our cause. Much of the IRC's work to bring attention to the war in Syria and to encourage engagement from other international actors is done in coalition with other NGOs. Perhaps even more powerful are the corporate partnerships built such as IRC's ongoing campaign on EU refugee resettlement with Ben and Jerry's. The support of their mass consumer base (a wider group than the

usual collection of NGO supporters) demonstrated—through online petition signatures—the campaign's enhanced legitimacy (Smith, 2017:90).

Third and finally, is a practical challenge to the ability of NGOs to engage and influence debates through digital communications. The IRC is rightly proud that 92% of funding goes directly into their programs. But competing for attention and credibility in digital media doesn't come cheap. Whether it is building a better user experience on our digital platforms, promoting organizational content on external platforms or building internal capacity to monitor, post and engage the international community, cost remains a major challenge. IRC digital partners such as Facebook and YouTube provide invaluable support. But identifying sustainable funding models for digital communications remains difficult for many NGOs and will only improve with more evidence of impact (Smith, 2017:90).

NGOs working to address major global challenges are at a tipping point. We know that debates between actors in the international system—about values, priorities and policies—play out online. We know that digital media gives NGOs and the people they serve more influence in this system. Yet, we are still grappling with how to build the capacity, the credibility and the narratives to fully capitalize on this opportunity. Figuring out how to fund this important work is also a challenge. But, without question, progress is being made (Smith, 2017:90).

A source of concern can be identified when organizations like Greenpeace started to leak chapters of agreements and other papers; "Greenpeace's leaked 13 chapters of the agreement so far in May 2016 backed this theory, as the documents indicated human health and environmental protections would be seriously undermined if negotiations continue on the current path. Also leaked was a paper called "Tactical

State of Play (March 2016)" which contains the EU views of the results of the 12th negotiation round and shows interesting differences from the "official" version (the Public Report) of the paper. A particular point of contention for the cultural sector concerns the leak of a document with a focus on copyright and intellectual property rights" (Culture Action Europe, 2016:3).

This makes it an interesting period for the current research, as it is likely that these leaks caused some friction among the public which may have been expressed on Twitter. Besides, France pledged to call for an end of the negotiations due to a lack of progress in the same year (Culture Action Europe, 2016:1); (Roos, 2017:12).

Some diplomats embrace change as an opportunity to reform their profession. For others it represents a challenge to established conventions and may simply be "dangerous" to prove and accepted forms of conducting international relations—or to their own self-interests. The impact of the Internet and the rise of social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook, are generating a wealth of reactions (Hocking & Melissen, 2015:14).

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Factors that Shaped the Use of UAEs Digital Diplomacy Approach

It is not surprising that the UAE has recognized the importance of digital diplomacy and is using it to promote its foreign policy objectives. However, the use of digital diplomacy in the UAE has evolved since its engagement with the rest of the world as an independent state. This evolution is not limited only to the UAE but a worldwide phenomenon, whereby countries are responding to the 20th century shift away from summitry diplomacy. Consequently, leaders needed to learn the crafts of multi-lateral diplomacy, negotiation and relationship building (Manor, 2016:4). The 21st century has seen another stage in the evolution of diplomacy given the utilization of digital tools to achieve foreign policy goals (Manor, 2016).

Four major factors in the form UAE's excellent digital infrastructure as well as the advent of the so-called Arab Spring is its destabilizing effect, the rise of terrorism in the region and UAE's involvement in the Yemen war have converged to accelerate UAE's use digital diplomacy. These factors are hereby discussed below.

4.1.1 Excellent Digital Infrastructure

The UAE as country has an excellent communication infrastructure and a willingness to use that infrastructure to connect with the outside world as part of its foreign policy goals it can emerge as a world leader in digital diplomacy. The UAE has long held the distinction of possessing a well-developed and technologically advanced telecommunications sector with high mobile phone, telephone and Internet penetration. The history of the Internet in the UAE goes back to the year 1995 when Etisalat, the national telecommunications carrier, started providing Internet services to

all categories of users, including academics, business, industry and home users. Due to the World Telecommunications Organization requirements, the monopoly held by the incumbent Etisalat was cancelled and a second operator, Du, launched their mobile and fixed network services in 2007. Motivated by the change in events, Etisalat has been rapidly expanding internationally and has reduced prices in the UAE for broadband and mobile services. Since 1995, the number of Internet users in UAE has grown exponentially. According to Emirates Internet and Multimedia (EIM), the penetration of Internet users in the UAE increased from 19.6% in 2000 to 29.6% in 2003 and reached 34.7% in 2005. In March 2008 this percentage increased to 49.8%, putting the UAE as the most world nation in the Arab world and one of the top nations in terms of coverage in the online world (Internet World Stats, 2019). Access to the Internet is available to businesses and individuals at competitive rates (Ayyad, 2011:42).

With 3,777,900 Internet users out of a population estimated by the UAE federal government as 8.4 million as of June 10, 2011, nearly 76% of the population has access to the Internet, which is one of the highest penetrations in the world, per the International Communication Union. At the time of writing, official UAE census data, estimates Internet penetration at 82.2%, which is higher than in the United States (Ayyad, 2011:3).

4.1.2 Arab Spring

Manor (2016:3) has articulated the purposes that led MFAs (Ministries of Foreign Affairs) to adopt digital tools. One such event was the Arab Spring of 2010. As Professor Phillip Seib of the University of Southern California has argued, 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. While Facebook did not cause the Arab Spring, 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 offline. Following the Arab Spring, MFAs began to wander online so as to better anticipate events in foreign countries (Manor, 2016:3).

Indeed, a top UAE diplomat (2019) has echoed that sentiment with the following observation:

"In 2011, when the Arab Spring happened, we had very little Twitter presence, but it increased reactively, when noticing that HH Shaikh Abdulla joined twitter on August 2011, followed by HE Dr. Anwar Gargash in October 2011 and later HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed in January 2012".

Figure 3: Most Followed Arab Leaders 2018 (Twiplomacy, 2019)

According to Twiplomacy (2019) it can show statistic of, "The 50 Most Influential World Leaders in 2018" in UAE include the following:

1. In 15th position, HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed (@HHShkMohd), registered in 2009 and has 9.85 million followers (2019).

2. In 28th position, HH Sheikh Abdalla (@ABZayed), registered in 2011 and has 4.55 million followers (2019).

3. And in 46th position, HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed (@MohamedBinZayed), registered in 2012 and with 2.73 million followers.

According to the Figure 3, it seems that most of our leaders registered on Twitter during the period of the Arab Spring where the situation demanded an instant reaction from the government and interaction between the government and the people. Of special notice was that the Arab Spring was fired by social media that played a huge part in spreading propaganda, fake news, accusations, making the public fearful and angry about the situation which led to insecurity in the region. For that we will notice how using social media at that time called for a response, especially since even in a peaceful and secure country violence may happen and leaders must approach the public and open a dialogue of transparency, building bridges and giving guidance to public.

4.1.3 Combating Terrorism

UAE foreign policy is committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the inviolability of sovereignty, the stability of oil supplies, and the security of the Arabian Gulf and Peninsula. The UAE has also dedicated itself to the fight against terrorism since the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Al-Suwaidi, 2011).

According to Manor, the process that led to the emergence of digital diplomacy was the use by terrorist groups of the internet to recruit youths to Jihadi movements. In an attempt to combat such activities, and prevent terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda from gaining online support, the U.S. State Department took to the internet in order to wage a war of ideas and win over the hearts and minds of Muslim Internet users (Manor, 2016:3).

However, Manor also mentioned the final process that led diplomats to adopt digital tools, and this was the fact that these were being used by journalists and news organizations. Diplomats have traditionally sought to influence how the media portrays events, actors and even countries, given that the media shapes public opinion. In addition, MFAs rely on journalists and the media for information regarding events in foreign countries. Thus, once the media migrated online, MFAs were soon to follow (Manor, 2016:3).

According to H.E. Kruse, Executive Director of Hedayah, "The UAE worked with the United States of America to create the Sawab Center which is an online platform exclusively using the digital sphere to be able to talk about the issues related to extremism, how to counter these phenomena, how to confront the messages of extremists and also how to prevent alternative messages".

4.1.4 Regional Conflicts such as the Yemen War and the Conflict with Qatar

MENA regional topics to UAE foreign policy where UAE has been actively reporting to the public on these two issues. From using new media to traditional media, it is all to spread the massage of UAE involvement and the role behind the action been made. The Gulf regimes have attracted relatively little attention in the study of

propaganda, whether online or otherwise. As innovation in malicious techniques grows, increased awareness among the public is important. This awareness has been evident in the Gulf crisis, where Qatari citizens felt so targeted by malicious propaganda on Twitter that, at one point in August 2017, the hashtag "don't participate in suspicious-looking hashtags" was trending. In part, this was a reaction to the rise of perceived fake news, but it was also a response to the relatively unfamiliar techniques of disinformation being deployed online. Chief among these techniques was the use of Twitter bots to disseminate propaganda aimed at demonizing Qatar and its government (Jones, 2019:92).

H.E. Fletcher, an Advisor at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) has observed that "it is important to differentiate what makes the UAE special compared to the rest of the region including the big country in this region". He further pointed out how social media has reflected the energy of anger, the criticism, arguing from both side whereas among western audience it's just neutralized".

On the other hand, The United Arab Emirates joined a coalition with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to support legitimacy in Yemen. The UAE believe in confronting the rise of armed terrorist groups such as the Houthi coup in order to stabilize the security of the Yemeni nation, as Al Houthi and Al Qaeda factions have caused chaos and instability in the country and the region (UN, 2018). In addition, UAE continues to provide humanitarian aid and emergency assistance to help the Yemenis (UAE embassy in US, 2018).

Another aspect of their relations is the development of assistance to Yemen and in this field the UAE remains the most active. In 2009 alone, it transferred US$ 772 million for a range of sectors, including education, water and electricity projects.

The UAE has also provided aid commitments to the victims of internal conflicts and flooding (Grabowski, 2016:2). All these actions been reported frequently to be the first to convey the right information and to use the digital tools especially social media to show the reality of the situations. A lot been said in media on the two events, but more has to be addressed by UAE government in that regards which it usually do.

4.2 The Regulatory and Legal Framework behind the Use of Social Media in the UAE

The UAE is a country that prides itself in the rule of law and orderliness. As a result, it has passed laws that regulate all facets of society including the use of communication technology. These laws and regulations are also to ensure the appropriate and beneficial use of communication technology. Below is a discussion about the regulatory framework overseeing UAE's digital communication and diplomacy.

4.2.1 Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)

It implements the Internet Access Management (IAM) policy in the UAE, in coordination with National Media Council and Etisalat and Du, the licensed internet service providers in the UAE (UAE Government, 2019).

The regulation policy consists of certain frameworks and categories in regards to the internet, which must be taken into consideration by internet service providers to ensure the security of the internet and protect end-users from harmful websites containing materials that are contrary to religious and ethical values of the UAE (UAE Government, 2019).

4.2.2 Ten Guidelines for Social Media Users in the UAE

On 23 October 2019, H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai tweeted a list of 10 guidelines that Emiratis should observe when using social media. The list encourages Emiratis who represent their country online to reflect the Founding Father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan's image and ethics, the UAE's accomplishments and humanitarian initiatives, values of modesty, goodness, openness and love for others, a self-confident personality who accepts diversity, is prepared for the uncertainties of future positively and admires his nation (UAE Government, 2019).

The guidelines follow the Letter of the New Season issued by Sheikh Mohammed to citizens and residents in the UAE on 31 August 2018. One of the themes in the letter is a strict warning against stirring up chaos on social media and jeopardizing the image and the reputation of the UAE (UAE Government, 2019).

4.2.3 Laws for using Social Media

The Federal Law such as Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combatting Cybercrimes and its amendment by the Federal Law No. 12 of 2016, Federal Decree Law No. 2 of 2015 on Combating Discrimination and Hatred (UAE Government, 2019).

4.2.4 National Media Council

H.E. Kruse, The Executive Director of Hedayah, has identified different layers through which communication operates for government: "There are two layers. There's the institutional layer where we have for example the national Media Council which is the most senior authority in regulating media activities and communication

activities, but then every governmental department has a specific person who is in charge of policy communications and strategic communications". With regards to the Media Council, Dr. Mansoori, an Assistant Professor in UAEU, notes that, "the National Media Council is the institution that provides the accurate and authentic information together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through their official accounts for the minister himself".

The National Media Council (NMC) is a federal government body established by Federal Law (1) for 2006 following amendments to Federal Law (91) for 1972 regarding ministries and ministers' mandates and specializations. The NMC mandates include (NMC, 2019):

- The responsibilities provided for in law (15) for 1980 and they relate to press and publications;

- Undertaking all functions provided for in Cabinet decisions relating to the Council;

- Other specializations delegated to the NMC as provided for in laws, regulations and Cabinet decisions.

NMC has presented the "Public Confidence in the UAE Media" research study. This index is an exploratory survey of the patterns of media consumption in the UAE, as well as levels of confidence. The figure below states that the largest proportion of respondents (33%) chose TV channels as their main source for news in times of emergencies, crises and disasters. It is noteworthy that Facebook came in second place with 22%, followed by newspapers in third with 12%, and finally Twitter and news websites at (10%) each. This means that diplomats should focus in sending a message

through an appropriate channel – the one that will be most effective in delivering it –

because using the TV and local channel will not deliver the message across the globe;

it will be better to use the scale offered on a larger platform (Figure 4) (NMC, 2019).

Percentage of distribution of news sources in emergency situations, crises and disasters (%)

Source	%
Newspapers	12
Magazines	3
Radio stations	4
TV channels	33
Facebook	22
Twitter	10
News websites	10
Friends / colleagues /…	4
Other	2
I have no interest in…	4

sources of local news, and news in normal circumstances (%)

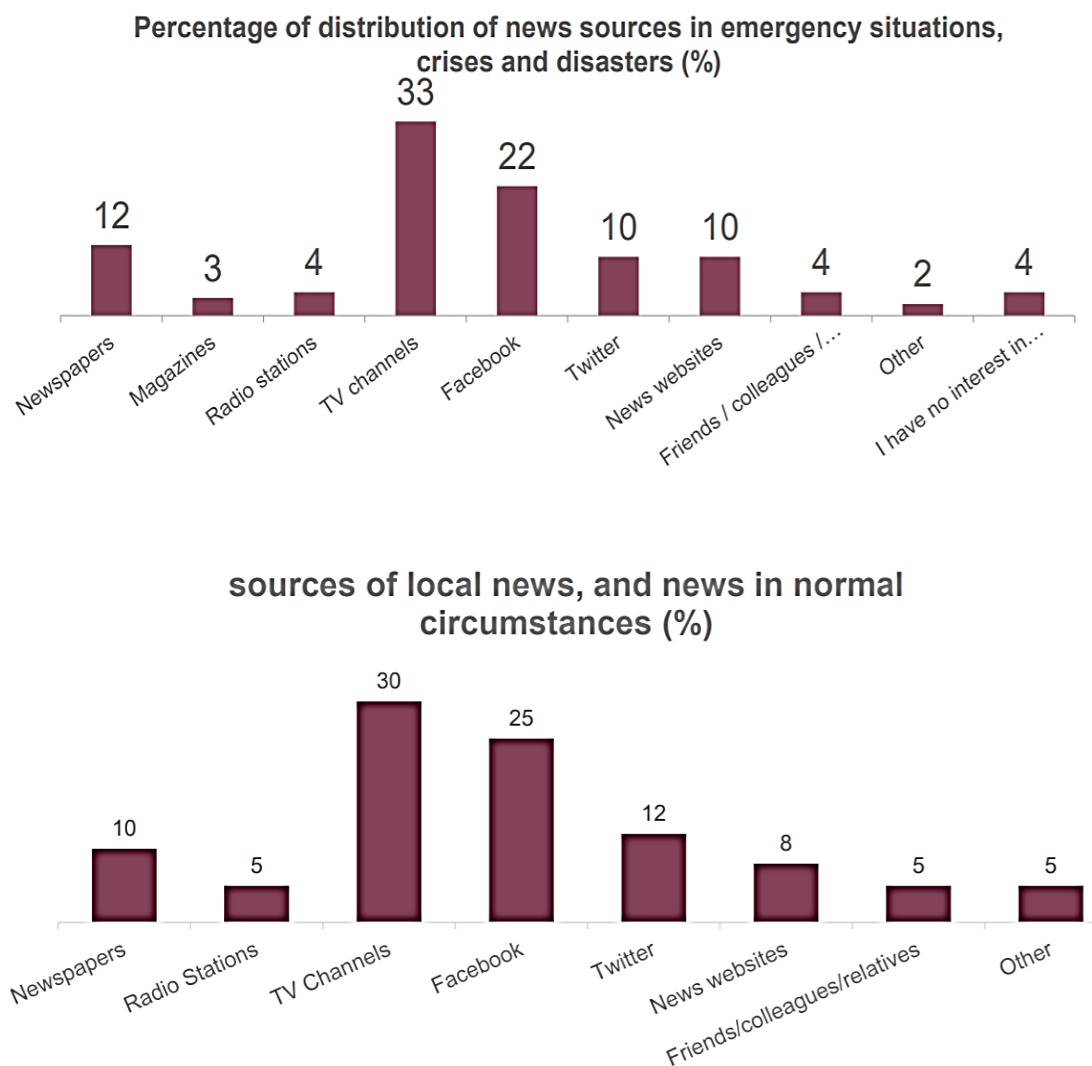| Source	%
Newspapers	10
Radio Stations	5
TV Channels	30
Facebook	25
Twitter	12
News websites	8
Friends/colleagues/relatives	5
Other	5

Figure 4: Statistics on Media, by NMC
Source: (NMC, 2019)

The above figure show TV channels (30%) and Facebook (25%) topped the

preferred sources of local news in normal circumstances. Twitter comes next with

12%, newspapers at 10% and news websites with 8%.

Table 3: Specialized Media Coverage Areas

Trust and follow-up by specialised media coverage areas

Subject	Newspapers	Radio Stations	TV Channels	Websites	Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube...)
Local political affairs	26	7	37	6	25
Local security affairs	22	9	38	5	26
Regional political affairs	19	5	41	6	29
Local general services	22	7	36	7	29
Economic and financial affairs	25	6	36	6	28
Sports affairs	19	4	43	8	26
Weather forecasts	12	9	42	10	26
Crime and violence news	22	7	28	8	36
News of stars & celebrities	12	3	29	4	51

Source: (NMC, 2019)

It seems that most regional political affairs prefer tv channels rather than social media (Table 3 and Figure 5). NMC is playing a channel to convey the right, accurate message to the public and the world as they partner with government entities, and other private media outlets in order to reach a common ground in messaging. However not all countries, even the UAE, are giving the role of monitoring and sending messages to one entity: each entity has their own media team with which they can do messaging.
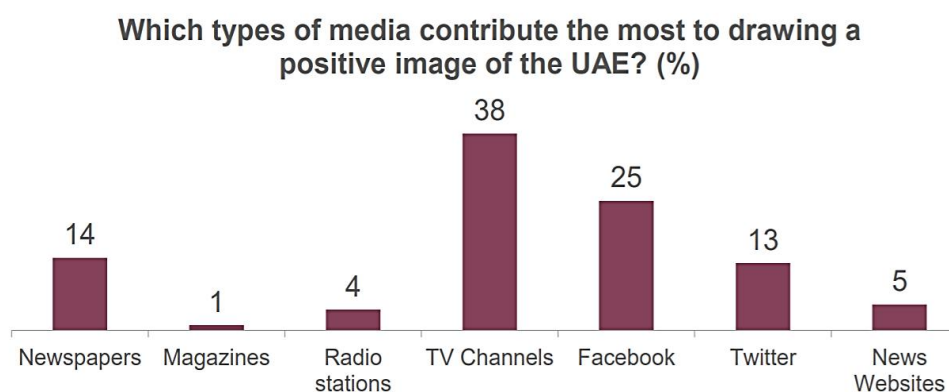

Which types of media contribute the most to drawing a positive image of the UAE? (%)

Figure 5: Statistics on Types of Media, by NMC
Source (NMC, 2019)

4.3 Strategies of UAE Digital Diplomacy

In answering the research question with regards to how the UAE uses digital diplomacy strategies to achieve its foreign policy goals, the next section discusses the strategies in detail.

4.3.1 Traditional Media vs. New Media in UAE Diplomacy

From the time of its establishment in 1971, the UAE has been using the traditional media of radio, printed brochures, and newspapers. At the beginning the UAE newspapers were the government-owned al-Bayan (1969), al-Etihad (1970) and the (now defunct) Emirates News. In 1976 the government changed their status to a new, semi-autonomous publishing house in order to make the government role and responsibility for content less direct. A number of newspapers appeared in post-independence UAE which were placed in private hands. Early on the UAE tried to make the newspaper government-owned but over time this has been privatized. In 1999, the Information Minister, Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed said, "there was a need for independent private media instructions" and in 2001 he said that in the age of satellite television, governments can no longer control the domination of information to their citizens". The public will no longer accept media that are seen as being government-controlled and which seek to provide them with a limited and partial view of events. The choice for the Government media, therefore, is often that of either privatization or closure, and the future is clearly for the privately-owned media. The UAE government has relinquished formal control over the country's largest media group, Emirates Media Inc., which now enjoys editorial and administrative independence. It remains to some extent dependent, however, on government funding,

while ownership is still officially vested in the Government. The UAE press is therefore mostly in private hands, and privatization may increase (Rugh, 2004:65).

In the UAE print media, any comments on the ruling families and any criticism of government officials is limited, as for example when the press reports Federal National Council debates. Domestic and foreign publications do not carry any material that is considered pornographic, violent, derogatory to Islam, supportive of certain Israeli positions, unduly critical of friendly countries, or critical of the government or the ruling families (Rugh, 2004:68).

The UAE newspapers who are independent of the government do criticize the work of various ministers, such as the ministers of health, labor, and education, and they occasionally treat issues such as democracy in a general and muted way, but they never attack the fundamental national policies of the rulers. After the 1991 Gulf war there was a modest trend in the UAE toward more open expression of opinion on subjects sensitive to the government. That began during the Gulf war, and included articles written by non-UAE writers. Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed become the Information Minister, and another increase in free expression took place so that a progressive outlook was evident, and he has sent signals to all UAE media that he supports greater freedom of expression (Rugh, 2004:68).

An in-depth social media study by the market research firm Grafdom (2011) gauged the UAE's top 100 most influential corporate brands, individuals and events through measuring their presence on three top new media sites: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Because of the study's aggregated scores based on the number of followers or subscribers of their social media profile, it serves indirectly as a measure of new media usage itself. Of the three, it found Facebook by far the most popular choice

(72%). Twitter usage was significant (27 %) though about a third of that of Facebook. Between 2009 and 2010 Twitter usage in the Arab region was estimated to be around 5.5 million users (Arab Crunch, 2010), with an impressive 136.5% annual growth rate. About 40% of that growth came from the UAE. By comparison, YouTube usage was minimal at 1%, but this may be explained by the typical non-commercial/entertainment emphasis on YouTube. The potential political impact of social media has been discussed for some time (Ayyad, 2011:3).

According to H.E. Bernardino, the Director General of the Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA), "the audience is having the possibility to understand what is going on in the country. Today, people are looking for information in social media and not in traditional media. People having access and trying to understand what is going on, what are the strategies, where are the priorities".

However, there is a generational challenge in terms of how social media is used in the diplomatic circles. H.E. Bernardino points out that "classic diplomats and himself have been trained to work on secrecy. Traditional diplomacy is thought to have better chances if discretion and secrecy are kept. So today have been a big change. Everything is public and transparent. For that cultural changes is the main challenge in UAE where diplomats has to adopt to changes as well".

According to Dr. Antwi-Boateng, an Associate Professor at UAEU, "the traditional media are newspapers, radio, TV whereas nowadays the new media covers the social media through WhatsApp, Facebook, extra". Furthermore, he points out that "Twitter diplomacy is becoming the foreign policy -institute for UAE, as we can see Ministries, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassies having social accounts even in Facebook".

Dr. Antwi-Boateng also elaborated that "they use all- regardless of the various tools, both the traditional and new social media are both used to promote UAE foreign policy".

Dr. Oyeleye, an Associate Professor at UAEU, has observed that, "generally the UAE is well known in using the new media technologies in various areas of government. And the most standing technique is digital diplomacy which is the front line of technological innovations Where we can noticed HH Sheikh Mohammed is constantly uses social media to inform the public on the latest projects and events resulting as public policy that give good indications of UAE directions".

Dr. Guzkowska, a Higher Education Consultant from the UK, argues that the media needs to cover not only traditional media, but the new emerging media. It includes film, TV, Social media, the traditional print, traditional television and radio, and gaming".

It seems that whenever we talk about traditional media and new media we reflect the traditional diplomacy and digital diplomacy. Where diplomats back then didn't have an internet or technology that can easily transmit the messages. It was conveyed through written letters, verbal notes, a person to deliver the message to other officials in other continents. And using newspapers, radios and tv to engage the public to participate in the decision making, to vote, and make demonstrations for common cause. However, in the UAE in the 90s a new dawn has come with internet phenomena where the diplomacy will be enlarged using new tools like websites and the government start publishing their updates, details of events, speeches and so on via internet and with the-21st century another dimension of new media arose which was the social media platform that made diplomacy evolve even further. We can't say that

every decade has it is up rise and tools to master nowadays we cannot just stand aside, not using those tools which is important for governments and individuals.

For all the above reasons the UAE's role in using social media from the beginning is understandable as the traditional diplomacy used to have a limited role in communicating with the Arab region and in reflecting the government's messages to the globe. I think by now using the new technology we have evaluated the foreign policy to cover more aspects, regions and minds of other nations. That can help send and convey messaging in a proper way. With that, digital diplomacy is a new boon for traditional diplomacy, and it is just a continuous effort of realizing what a country can master and for how long it can provide an opportunity to this country.

4.3.2 Twitter

The power of Twitter emerges through how it challenges conventional diplomatic practices. Political leaders and policymakers frequently use Twitter alongside formal assemblies, social gatherings, and unofficial meetings, which have characterized diplomacy throughout history. Two important aspects of Twitter stand out in facilitating this change: firstly, the public nature of tweets means an initial exchange between Twitter users can be shared with a much larger audience, leading to an incredible level of scrutiny. Secondly, the speed of this communication means there is much less time to digest and evaluate information, which can lead to a slow realization of change (Duncombe, 2017).

The first Gulf ruler to use Twitter was the UAE's prime minister and ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (@HHShkMohd), who has 1.2 million followers and who posts about government policies, national achievements and

his visits to different parts of the country. In the UAE, Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al Nahyan (@ABZayed), who, at 40, is the youngest foreign minister in the Gulf, joined Twitter a year ago and has amassed nearly half a million followers since then. Gulf government ministries are increasingly using the service as part of e-government efforts, enabling them to reach people who would not bother checking the ministries' websites but may access Twitter several times per day (Kinninmont, 2013:4).

Young people in the Gulf tend to be early adopters of technology and are dominating the Arab Twittersphere. The top five Twitter-using countries in the Arab world are all from the GCC, and in March 2012, 88% of the tweets in the Arab region came from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain or Egypt, according to the ASMS (Kinninmont, 2013:3).

Twitter has become an important tool for the UAE especially since its leaders, ministers, and top officials communicate with the public through it by sharing texts, pictures, messages, and videos. It has become one of the quickest tools by which to easily convey messages.

All interviewees mentioned the role of Twitter in the UAE, as a political instrument that is used by decision makers such as government officials, ministers, presidents as well as citizens and residents.

According to Dr. Copeland, a former Canadian Diplomat, political discussions are now taking place on the Internet. Hence, all countries must participate with digital diplomacy. He adds that Desk Officers in any foreign ministry "must transfer any information and analysis on countries, issues, etc via digital tools and not counting on only twitter and blogging".

On the Other hand, Dr. Copeland affirms that "now the mainstream it is Twitter. But there will undoubtedly be something that takes over from Twitter because technologies and social media keep changing".

Pointing out the increased use of Twitter by top UAE foreign policy officials to convey official government policies, H.E. Fletcher an Advisor at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) has noted that the twitter accounts of both HE Dr Anwar, and his Highness Sheikh Abdullah are used to pursue UAE foreign policy objectives and talking to all nations very effectively. However, he notes that the use of twitter by ambassadors is not that effective yet in UAE.

Fletcher also cautions that in any country that diplomats posted to them should think of the most effective tool for conveying their country's messages. He adds that for example, "if you're in Saudi Arabia, then maybe its Twitter. If you're in Britain, then it might be Facebook. So, you pick the one that works best in that environment".

According to H.E. Kruse, the Executive Director of Hedayah, the UAE is one of the leading countries that understood the value of digital diplomacy throughout the senior levels at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international cooperation where you can see. He singles out UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash as the pioneer on the usage of digital diplomacy for his prolific use of the platform of Twitter to constantly issue statements related to UAE's position on a variety of geo-political issues both within the region and abroad.

4.3.3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassy Website

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation works as the front line for the reputation and prosperity of UAE government to the globe. The Ministry and its embassies are the implementing institutions with regards to UAE's digital strategies for the sake of diplomacy and promoting UAE's foreign policy. It has an official website (https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/) (Figure 6), which is accessible to the public where they can explore the facts about the role of the Ministry, strategies, UAE's foreign policy positions on issues such as combating terrorism and human trafficking, labor and work rights, woman rights, climate change and foreign aid, as well as services available to the public.

Figure 6: MOFAIC Website

The primary goals for the Ministry's use of digital tools are as follows: provide domestic and international audiences with a platform to seek information about UAE missions abroad, contacts, project UAE's latest achievements, show case ongoing projects and activities, news, etc. This is in addition to the fact that UAE missions/embassies have their own social media accounts on Twitter and Instagram and convey some of the information on the MOFAIC website. The embassy platforms are meant to also provide speedy consular services to UAE citizens home and abroad as well as serve as a point of contact in times of emergencies. Also, it is a way to reach out to the public and convey massages about UAE foreign policy.

4.3.4 Facebook

Facebook is highly used in the UAE. However, the purpose of its usage is mostly for personal business and marketing, compared to twitter which is purely counted as a political influencer platform.

According to H.E. Kruse, Twitter/Facebook/Instagram are interpersonal interactive platforms similar to the Etisalat (local Telecom Company) e-life concept which has digitalized the entire entertainment industry in the UAE. He also notes that Facebook is usually the "preferred platform for much older groups because of convenience and because of its function differently".

According to H.E. Al Raysi, Director of WAM, the UAE is mostly focusing on twitter and Instagram nowadays and less on Facebook unlike other countries in the region where Facebook usage is still high. However, she points out that a National Media Council study discovered a high Facebook usage rate among other nationals and thus calls for more attention by government when it comes to Facebook usage.

The July 2012 edition of the Arab Social Media Report (2012) states that Facebook has attained 30% penetration in the UAE (the penetration rate is 52.9% in the US) with 3,293,660 followers of whom 54% are between age 15-29 and 46% over 30 years of age (Koshy, 2013:2).

A 2010 worldwide survey by Robert Half a recruitment firm concluded that "professionals from the UAE are among the most active users of social and professional networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter" more than their European counterparts. The most popular social media sites used for these marketing activities are Facebook and Twitter (Koshy, 2013:3&4).

4.3.5 Instagram

According to Dr. Boateng (2019) an Associate Professor of Political Science at UAEU, "Instagram reflects more as economic or cultural diplomacy" whereas for Mr. Fletcher, an Advisor at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) in UAE, some of the more soft power side is starting to come through and particularly on Instagram and Twitter".

Nowadays 50% of the top brands use Instagram as a marketing channel. It works flawlessly on mobile phones as the application was designed originally for mobiles. It has an easy to use platform with minimal conversation. Adding to that, images on Instagram have a longer life than on any other social media network. (Wally & Koshy, 2014:4).

Comparing Instagram to the most popular social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest and Twitter in terms of time and energy required, and virality, Instagram is very competitive. Despite the fact that Facebook purchased

Instagram in April 2012 for $1 billion cash and stock, and it supported and offered integration to Instagram, the two platforms are still competing with each other. In comparison, Instagram is much easier to use and in terms of followers' expectations, Instagram's users are satisfied with only sharing some pictures daily with minimal description while Facebook followers need more intensive participation. The only medium that has a better advantage than Instagram in terms of visuals is YouTube. Indeed, 52% of users feel more confident about a product when they watch a video about it (Wally & Koshy, 2014:4&5).

The tourism and hospitality industry in the UAE is heavily using Instagram to the extent that every five star hotel in the UAE has an Instagram account (Wally & Koshy, 2014:7).

4.3.6 YouTube

A study by Darwish (2017:14) showed that most UAE government communication entities are using twitter, then Facebook, followed by Instagram and lastly, YouTube. The study shows that YouTube is the least usable tool in government entities in UAE and recommends that in order to attract a younger audience and influencers, the UAE has to utilize this platform more by creating videos that represent UAE culture, politics and economy.

According to Fletcher, an Advisor at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) in the UAE, YouTube is a good platform to explore, especially since the younger generation is attracted to the visual aspects of it. He believes that the platform offers a great opportunity for the UAE to tap into in order to further promote its foreign policy.

UAE's top 100 most influential corporate brands, individuals and events through measuring their presence on three top new media sites are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Al-Jenaibi, 2011:4). Etisalat Telecommunication Company supplied programming on YouTube that many UAE parents encouraged their kids to watch (Al-Jenaibi, 2011:19).

4.4 Benefits of Digital Diplomacy

In answering the second research question about the attendant benefits of digital diplomacy to UAE and the Challenges, the following benefits and challenges were discovered:

4.4.1 Interactive Tool

According to Fletcher, an Advisor at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA), digital social media offers huge connectivity to a wider audience as well as a platform for interaction. Buttressing this point, Fletcher posits that digital tools offer an effective interactive platform for both policy makers and regular people to interact with each other, as well as influence public opinion. He adds that the UAE has a massive soft power offering to the world which has attracted so many tourists to come and visit. Therefore, via the power of social media tools, they can share their experiences with a larger audience and thus promote the UAE, globally.

4.4.2 Source of Information

According to H.E. Al Raysi, the Director of WAM, digital diplomacy could be used to promote the achievements of the country by way of projecting soft power. In this era of high cost for advertising in traditional global media outlets an effective digital presence is cheap and can be used to project a country unfiltered or beyond the

restrictive minutes of traditional media platforms. In addition, digital diplomacy via social media tools can be used to serve as a one-stop platform for all necessary information about a country to the outside world.

Buttressing this point, Al Raysi points out that digital tools enables countries such as the UAE to share their achievement and the vision of their leadership with the rest of the world. He also adds that technology has provided the international community with the opportunity to reach out for information faster.

4.4.3 Marketing Tool

Chi (2011:46) defines social media marketing as a "connection between brands and consumers, while offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction". The tools and approaches for communicating with customers have changed greatly with the emergence of social media; therefore, businesses must learn how to use social media in a way that is consistent with their business plan (Mangold & Faulds, 2009:357).

In addition, social media is gaining prominence as an element of Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) marketing strategy at a time when public sector cuts in their funding are requiring them to seek greater value in the way marketing budgets are spent. Social media offers DMOs with a tool to reach a global audience with limited resources (Hays et al., 2013:1).

Dr. Antwi-Boateng, argues that digital tools have become very important in terms of marketing and they are very valuable in reaching a wider audience via a variety of digital tools. He adds that the variety of digital tools at the disposal of the UAE government enables it to reach a huge audience and promote its foreign policy

goals. Furthermore, Antwi-Boateng points out that digital tools in the form of official UAE government social media sites contain marketing information that seeks to promote the country to the international community as a preferred destination for investment, tourism, education etc. In addition, Antwi-Boateng points out that, countries, media agencies and individuals benefit from cheap advertisement using digital tools compared to before but warns that "one disadvantage of using digital tools is that it also serves as a forum for fake news".

4.4.4 Diplomatic Tool

If anyone can benefit from digitalization, it is the diplomat. Tasks such as the search for information, negotiation, the design of alliances and communication and cooperation with third parties, will become easier. However, new challenges will emerge, because it is clear that digitalization has enhanced the availability of information, but has also complicated its processing and analysis (Rigalt, 2017:4).

As noted by Fisher (2013), the advantage of social media provides the opportunity to reach citizens of other countries in near real-time. Social media platforms also provide spaces for interaction, increased engagement, and thus furthering the goals of diplomacy. The potential ease with which social media can be accessed and the low cost in comparison to other methods make it an attractive tool for many embassies, as well as other government offices, that are facing budget cuts and demands to increase engagement. Numerous platforms allow for the use of more dynamic content, such as videos, photos, and links, rather than traditional methods of giving lectures or passing out pamphlets. In addition, social media are key channels in reaching youth populations, a major goal of current public diplomacy efforts.

4.5 Challenges of Digital Diplomacy

4.5.1 Personnel Challenges

The UAE is increasingly expanding its usage of digital tools across all facets of its governance. This has increased the pressure for nationals to get the proper training on how to use these technologies. Moreover, it is important that everyone should be qualified to know the basics in learning how to use and mange digital tools. Also, it is been noted that Dubai is becoming a smart city with all the services provided through Apps and websites and accessible via the touch of a screen. While, these initiatives are noble, it puts pressure on those who are not technologically savvy. Such people would require extra technical training at a cost in order to be abreast with the ever evolving new technologies.

4.5.2 Negative Regional Perception

One of the objectives of UAE's digital diplomacy is to promote itself as a tolerant Islamic country that welcomes all. However, this attempt is hampered by the generally negative perception of the Middle East as a violent and war prone region.

Buttressing this point, Fletcher, argues that the challenges that the UAE faces in its use of digital diplomacy to promote tolerance is more external than internal. He attributes the external threat to "the perception of the region, particularly some of the neighbors here" who make "it harder for the UAE to set out as an independent view of the world".

Indeed, among many social media users outside the region, is the perception that because the UAE is located in the conflict prone Middle East, which is viewed as a bastion of intolerance, then the UAE must be guilty by association. Such negative

perceptions make it difficult for positive messages of tolerance from the UAE to filter through.

4.5.3 Problem of Identifying and Targeting the Audience

Another challenge that diplomats face nowadays is audience targeting. It is imperative for modern diplomats to know who they are targeting, what massage to send and the timing for sending such information. To address this challenge, many countries such as the UAE, puts a priority on the training and hiring of Media Consultants the best qualified people on the field of communication. According to Fletcher, "any diplomat who's using social media is partly trying to influence abroad and partly at home. I think a lot of the UAE's communication work is about talking to Emiratis, when it should be talking to the world".

In addition, Fletcher stresses that content plays a huge role when it comes to effective digital diplomacy. He points to a successful case of digital content when it comes to the UAE's Minister of State's use of twitter by making the following observation:

Look at the content of Dr Anwar tweets. It's very strong and kind of sophisticated messaging. I think there is a need for a script so that senior diplomats or junior diplomats can use, which can have core massages on Louvre or Special Olympics or the F1 or the rights of women which can be delivered to other nations when mentioning UAE in certain topics.

4.5.4 Generational Issue

Over the years, the use of technology/social media have become an integral part of diplomacy, where younger generation of diplomats are eager to explore more

dimension of apps/ websites and new means of communications with other nations. But the challenge is dealing with traditional diplomats where the typical stereotypes continue to show in the difference of dealing with different political matters, services and others. Traditional diplomats still believe that foreign policy should be conducted via the old and elaborate traditional tools. However, the younger generations of diplomats prefer using new means of digitalization. For example, in dealing with countries' national days, traditional diplomats would rather attend receptions and meetings to celebrate. However, the younger generation could publish a virtual text congratulating the other party on their national day and so on. Reinforcing this point, Bernardino, the Director General of the Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA), has observed that older generations of diplomats such as him have been oriented and trained to work on secrecy. Traditional diplomacy is thought to have better chances if discretion and secrecy are kept. This is contrary to the current practice whereby everything is public and transparent. This shift poses a major challenge to the UAE and the Gulf region where generally, there are more traditional diplomats than in other places.

4.5.5 Fast Paced Media Entertainment

In a faced paced global media environment, the UAE remains vulnerable to the growing phenomenon fake news propagated by adversarial actors, organizations or states for political purposes.

Although traditionally, fake news mainly referred to satirical news shows, the perception changed when a lot of fake news went viral and started to affect political parties globally and influencing opinions on a larger scale than before (Reuter et al., 2019:1070).

Fake news is "completely made up and designed to deceive readers to maximize traffic and profit". The intention and purpose behind the piece is important. What appears to be fake news may in fact be news satire, which uses exaggeration and introduces non-factual elements, and is intended to amuse or make a point, rather than to deceive. Fake news may actually be convincing fiction, such as the radio dramatization of H.G Wells' novel "The War of the Worlds", broadcast in 1938; or it may be one of the varieties of possible hoaxes. Propaganda can also be fake news (Kiwi, 2018:5).

In the context of the United States and its election process in the twenty- first century, fake news has generated considerable controversy and argument, with some commentators expressing concern over it as a moral panic or mass hysteria and others deeply worried about the damage done to public trust (Kiwi, 2018:5).

While, most of the fake news is deliberate misinformation, others are the casualty of the fast-paced media environment. According to Al Raysi, Director of WAM, "The challenges will be the raw material when we have the information provided very quickly, whereas gathering information at the right time in a fast way is recommended especially, now that people want the action to be there within seconds".

4.5.6 Fake News from Hostile Sources

With the proliferation of digital tools, especially social media, it has become difficult for the public and countries in general to trust the information that is being bandied around on the Internet. Therefore, countries are always scrambling to respond to accusations that come their way. Also, it is difficult for countries to find the right mechanism to respond.

According Al Raysi, Director of WAM, in his experience in the field of media, he reaffirm that "UAE has to be proactive when it comes fake news due to the act of some individuals/ countries that are working against the UAE in different parts of the world".

4.5.7 Usage by Non-State Actors

New communication technologies have had a profound impact on negative events as well. Terrorist and xenophobic groups also mobilize and recruit supporters through them. The Internet is also perceived as a channel for the spread of extremism, terrorism and the imposition of foreign ideologies. Then, part of social networks can become anyone, from world governments to various extremist organizations, in which the latter ones distribute their norms, values and objectives, whatever they are (Rashica, 2018:82).

Terrorist organizations such as ISIS and Houthis are digitally active and operate several social media platforms to propagate their terror agenda. They even try to recruit young children by infiltrating on-line video games, chatting apps etc. and glorify their dastardly acts as heroism on digital visual platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. Hence, the activities of these non-state actors remain a concern for states who feel threatened by their digital reach. Thus, it is incumbent upon countries to collaborate and come up with tough cyber laws in order to dismantle the digital infrastructure of terrorist groups.

4.5.8 Challenge to State Secrets and Censorship

The easy access to social media and the difficulty in censoring social media content makes it difficult for states to keep state secrets or to censor information deemed harmful to state security. Support this point with relevant literature and quotations if available.

In practice, secrets no longer exist on the Internet. The social media revolution is changing the way how people see the world, and how they are communicating. Not only it has made easier for governments and ambassadors to engage with the public but it has made everybody more aware of the effects - both positive and negative - a single word, tweet, Facebook comment, video, or image can have in a relatively short timeframe. Lack of knowledge about using new communication technologies, the Internet, and social media can result with terrible consequences, severe conflicts, even with dismissals of politicians. Meeting the risks of the digital age means that foreign ministries need to train their diplomats in how to use digital communication tools, in order to avoid diplomatic snafus (Rashica, 2018:83).

4.5.9 Culture of Anonymity

Another challenge of digital diplomacy is the culture of anonymity because anyone can pretend to be someone else and cause damage to persons, organizations or states. The culture of anonymity can lead to complicated crises as a result of the publication of conflicting information or even false information. The prevalence of widespread disinformation on the Internet can hinder the ability of leaders to manage the ensuing crises. Social media platforms are being abused and attached by faceless forces. Hence, persons, organizations and countries are constantly fixing and updating their pages to reassure their audiences. For example, Facebook faced its harshest

criticism of its 14-years history for its privacy practices and how it treats users' data, in an episode now known as the "Cambridge Analytica Data Scandal". The analytical data firm that worked with U.S. President Donald Trump's electoral team and the Brexit winner campaign, took millions of American voters' data and used them to build a powerful software program to predict and influence the U.S. presidential election of 2016. It emerged that Cambridge Analytica had access to the information and data of over 87 million Facebook users without their knowledge (Rashica, 2018:84).

4.5.10 Risk of Cyber Attacks

Hacking is a risk, which has existed since the invention of the Internet. Very rightly, it is considered the biggest threat to digital diplomacy because many heads of states, governments, and diplomats around the world have been its victims. Diplomatic rivals, including state and non-state actors, try to attack government systems in order to extract information that would serve them for certain purposes (Rashica, 2018:85).

According to Dr. Mansoori, an Assistant Professor at UAEU, technological access can be a double-edge sword. He argues that in a situation "where everyone has access to technology, it can evolve into security challenges. In the digital world, people can use fake accounts which count as a challenge…At the end, the security and hacking is also one of the biggest challenges that face us and we need to take some action".

UAE government is aware of cyber threat and has introduced digital security measures such as the Emirates Identification and Smart Pass systems with enhanced security features to safeguard the personal data of users. In addition, the UAE has made it easy to report cybercrimes through initiatives such as the e-crime website, Dubai police website and the "My Safe Society" app. The government also has one of the

toughest cybercrimes laws in the world and has elevated cybercrimes to the level of federal crimes, liable to federal public prosecution (UAE Government, 2019).

Indonesia offers a good model for dealing with digital diplomacy security related threats. According to Madu (2018:17), Indonesia's MOFA has conducted various policies for coping with issues of digital diplomacy. Rather than just a matter of providing information to the wider public through various social media accounts, Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MOFA) readiness has significantly reflected the Jokowi's government policy for having state's presence (negara hadir) for Indonesia's society, both domestically and internationally in recent cyber era. The country also has a Digital Command Center (DCC) as a crisis management center. It serves as a 'watch and monitor' and analyzes the trend of open source sources in supporting its digital diplomacy. Indonesia's MOFA has to work hard to achieve institutional cooperation with other ministries with particular attention to find out strategies in dealing with the increasing cyber activism—including cyber terrorism. A further policy for building national strategy of digital diplomacy is necessary for Indonesia's government in order to cope with the increasing use of social media for interactive means between societies among different nation (Madu, 2018:17).

4.5.11 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture matters in digital diplomacy. It can have deleterious effects on the capacity of an organization to rapidly adapt to the use of digital media. Conservatism can reinforce traditions, which in diplomacy emphasize moderation, caution, secrecy, and elitism, whereas social attitudes, such as collectivism, status, and security consciousness, can reduce willingness to push for change. Equally, this research demonstrates that culture does not have to be thought of as an impossible

hurdle. Organizational transformation to adapt to digital diplomacy can occur naturally through modern civil service best practice to promote transparency, representativeness, and accountability. Importantly, it can also be overcome through more tailored initiatives, such as the establishment of an office of best practice, the use of digital champions, and structured internal training at junior, midcareer, and senior levels (Robertson, 2018:681).

In spite of the UAE's rapid economic transformation in a relatively short period, it is still a conservative society where people value traditions, status and hierarchy. This conservativism is also prevalent in government institutions. Thus, government officials, particularly the older ones are more likely to be slow in adopting new tools of communication.

Echoing the above point, Fletcher points out that the UAE "is a conservative society and anyone doing digital diplomacy has to be conscious of representing a society". He further adds that the UAE is in a complicated region and thinks it is a good idea that there are social media guidelines. Nevertheless, Fletcher has observed that overall, social media is more effective when people feel a bit braver but recognizes that at the moment, there is culturally a sense of nervousness.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Recommendations

This section addresses how the UAE can overcome the challenges associated with the use of Digital Diplomacy? The research has already addressed the challenges associated with the UAE's use of digital diplomacy and therefore recommends the following to address the identified challenges.

First: Diplomatic Tool

If anyone can benefit from digitalization, it is the diplomat. Tasks such as the search for information, negotiation, the design of alliances and communication and cooperation with third parties, will become easier. However, new challenges will emerge, because it is clear that digitalization has enhanced the availability of information but has also complicated its processing and analysis (Rigalt, 2017:4).

- Recommendation 1: According Dr. Antwi-Boateng, the most important thing is to have constant training and orientation for UAE diplomats and UAE professionals within the foreign policy establishment. He recommends the need for UAE Diplomats to undergo frequent training in order to get acquainted with the latest digital tools.

Second: Problem of Identifying and Targeting the Audience

Another challenge that diplomats face nowadays is audience targeting. Thus, it is essential that diplomats know who they are targeting, what massage to send and the timing for sending such information. This challenge can be addressed by placing a priority on the training of diplomats and consulting the best qualified people in the

field of communication. Countries must avoid a one shoe fits all approach and rather conduct a market research in order to identify the best media tools for each country as well as what message to deliver and audience to target.

- Recommendation 2: According to Dr. Oyeleye, an Associate Professor at UAEU, that "providing technical assistance through internet services to poor countries counting as part of soft diplomacy strategy. In association with the internet services to poor countries, the media and entertainment industry can use the opportunity of promoting the reputation of UAE country and this opportunity can be reached to the nations in the poor countries and open a field of cultural and economic interactions".

- Recommendation 3: In addition, Dr. Janardhan a Senior Fellow at Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA), recommends the need to study the audience in order to convey the right messages as well as increase connectivity. Technically, he called for increased speed of connectivity through the adoption of technologically advanced tools such as the 5G system which is faster.

Third: Fakes News from Hostile Sources

With the rapid changes to digital tools and especially social media. It became hard for audience and countries in general to trust the information that is being handle through internet. Countries try to respond to any accusation that comes in its way, However, the rapid hostilities from terrorist group, countries, individual make difficulties for the right information to pass to public without interfering in faking some facts to it. Which make is a challenge for countries to find the right mechanism to respond.

- Recommendation 4: According to Dr. Copeland (Former Canadian Diplomat), the most important is to have rapid response mechanism. The Indonesian model of a crisis response center to anticipate and counteract any negative digital information is worthy of emulation and adoption.

- Recommendation 5: According to Dr. Mansoori, in order to reach a wide population, there is the need to direct messages in other languages apart from Arabic and English as well use other media/ digital platforms to reach out to bigger audience.

Fourth: Personnel challenge

- Recommendation 6 is for the government entities to educate the public. This way will be cost-efficient when using social media platforms to raise awareness about the personal challenges. Another act is to enforce laws similar to EU where Social media platforms would face fines if they did not delete extremist content within an hour. The EU also introduced the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which set rules on how companies, including social media platforms, store and use people's data. Previous legislation has only required the platforms to take down such content if it is pointed out to EU. Also, Russia is considering laws of using social media requiring platforms to take down offensive material within 24 hours of being alerted to it and imposing fines on companies that fail to do so (BBC news, 2019).

Fifth: For Negative Regional Perception Challenge

- Recommendation 7 is to use think-tank in order to gather information about the perception received by the audience on UAE and find out solutions to combat the negative perceptions. Meanwhile NGOs across the globe provide indexes that measures different aspects of countries. And one is the index for corruption perceptions. According to the transparency organization site, it shows the UAE ranked 23 among 180 countries (Transparency International Organization, 2019). The above index is ranked the UAE to be transparent country when it comes to corruptions. But in finding the result of the index a necessity to find out the type of sources been used in their results is urgently needed for any country to work on it is reputation and have a good perception.

Sixth: For Challenge to State Secrets and Censorship

- Recommendation 8 is to follow china's footsteps in monitoring and censorship. According to BBC news (2019), Chinese authorities have also had some success in restricting access to the virtual private networks that some users have employed to bypass the blocks on sites. The Cyberspace Administration of China, announced at the end of January of 2019 that in the previous six months, it had closed 733 websites and "cleaned up" 9,382 mobile apps. However, those are more likely to be illegal gambling apps or copies of existing apps being used for illegal purposes than social media. China has hundreds of thousands of cyber-police, who monitor social media platforms and screen messages that are deemed to be politically sensitive. Some keywords are automatically censored outright, such as references to the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. New words that are seen as being sensitive are added to a long list of censored

words and are either temporarily banned, or are filtered out from social platforms (BBC news, 2019).

The managerial implication offers the remarks and suggestions for further research and practical service. Illustrate and sell your results. Demonstrate your suggestions and recommendations…. Reference example of thesis/dissertation (Akawi, December 2013), conference paper (Barcellos, 2000) and e-monographic material (Al-Suwaid, July 2005).

5.2 Conclusions

To conclude, the research focuses on digital diplomacy and its use to conduct UAE foreign policy, the benefits of digital diplomacy, challenges and recommendation to overcome. The research also surveyed the evolution of UAE's foreign policy, regionally and internationally as well as provided background definition on digital diplomacy, public diplomacy and the difference between them. Digital diplomacy is playing a role in deepening globalization in terms of "the intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990:21). Globalization has played a huge part in diplomacy by enabling the spread of new means of technology (Internet) and the development of the concept of "digital diplomacy".

In order to advance its foreign policy and reputation internationally, the UAE is increasingly utilizing digital diplomacy through myriad of digital strategies. Most of the strategies are developed based on social media tools (Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook) and websites.

The results and conclusions of the research were derived from the in-depth personal interviews that were conducted with participants that were made up of Emirati Scholars and diplomats on one hand and Expatriate Scholars and Diplomats on the other. It was clear from the interviews that these digital tools function differently in the UAE. For example, YouTube was found to have the least number of users in the UAE and most of its users were youngsters. Hence, it implies that UAE can make better use of such Social Media platform. The opportunity exists for UAE government entities and embassies to make use of these tools the promotion of cultural, social, political, and economic interests. This can be achieved basically through sharing videos reflecting an appealing image of UAE for other nations. On the other hand, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram were observed to be used in higher percentage compared to other platforms and appear to be saturated with limited margins for growth.

In the UAE, the Twitter platform is mainly used for sharing political announcements by top leaders. This mode of usage has intensified because the Arab Spring was primarily fueled through social media and it offered the UAE leadership a powerful tool for rapid rebuttals and engagement with Citizens. Since then, the leadership of the country has been proactive by using social media as a platform to send governance messages to the public in order to promote transparency and accountability for any action taken by the leaders. Also, this demonstrates that UAE leaders are connected and responsive to the needs of its people. Indeed, UAE's leadership usage of Twitter for citizen engagement now serves as model for leaders in the region who have mostly joined the platform as well. As social media is a free public platform, any announcement easily reaches a large audience and it is easily accessible. At the time of Arab Spring, there was a need for clarification and intervention from

higher authority to minimize the chaos that ensued, and social media as a digital tool was very helpful.

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the UAE got affected due to a terrorist movement in the region that sought to disturb the public's mind. This movement sought to propagate fake news or misleading ideas through unsuspecting social media accounts of the public. Hence, it was imperative that the UAE government counter this move via active digital engagement to negative any poisonous ideology.

While Facebook played a major role in the Arab Spring phenomenon in the region, its political impact in the UAE was minimal. This is because in the UAE, Facebook is mainly used for marketing, personal entertainment or private needs of other nationalities. Hence, Facebook was not used for political influence or announcements by leaders in the UAE. On the other hand, Instagram was found to be used for promotion by UAE embassies. A careful analysis shows that Instagram is widely used for the promotion of foreign policies, cultural and economic diplomacy.

The positive impact that the UAE derives from its use of digital diplomacy is possible because of the country's excellent infrastructure. The ongoing boycott of Qatar and the war in Yemen has also made UAE more active in its use of digital diplomacy in order to counter any false narratives from hostile elements.

In spite of the benefits and efforts undertaken by UAE government for effective use of digital diplomacy, the research identified a few challenges. These challenges includes: personnel challenges, negative regional perceptions, problem of identifying target audiences, generational issues in the use of technology, fast paced media environment, fake news from hostile sources, usage by non-state actors, state secrets

and censorship challenge, culture of anonymity, risk of cyber-attacks and organizational culture. Briefly, the research made the following recommendations to address identified challenges:

1. Give effective training and orientation provided constantly for UAE diplomats and UAE professionals within the foreign policy media.

2. Provide internet access and technical assistance that would help in getting direct contact with the local citizens.

3. Understand the audience in order to convey the right message as well as increase connectivity through social media.

4. Bring in technological advancements such as the 5G speed.

5. Have rapid response mechanism for faster feedback.

6. Direct messages with other language not only Arabic and English.

7. Use other media/ digital platform to reach out to bigger audience such as YouTube, Flicker, extra.

8. Raise awareness among audience of the risk that comes along with social media.

Finally, future research can utilize quantitative methodology to collect data around the world to find out global opinion about specific UAE foreign policies. The results of such research can better inform UAE digital diplomacy and guide UAE foreign policy in general.

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Appendix

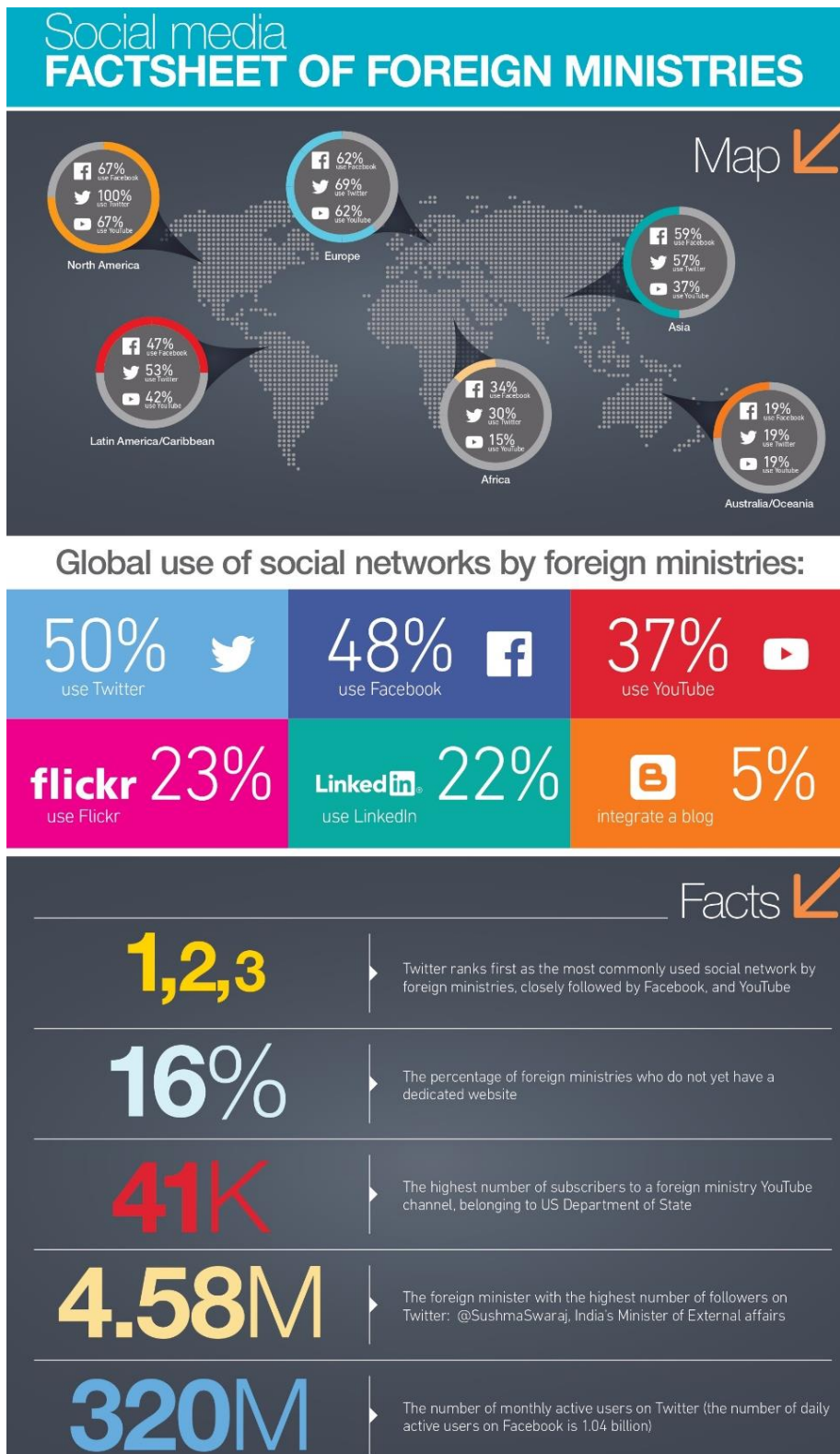This infographic (Figure 7) is from Diplo foundation website:

Figure 7: Social Media Factsheet of Foreign Ministries

The number of active users on social networks has increased exponentially over the past few years. If we take Facebook and Twitter, for instance, the number of monthly users surpasses the one billion mark (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Diplomats have long realized that in public diplomacy, they need to be where the audience is. Five years ago, many of today's top e-diplomacy practitioners were recognizing the importance of social media, and started engaging with non-state actors directly on social networks. From experimenting with platforms to integrating e-tools, some foreign ministries today are advanced and active users of social networks with their own fair share of followers (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Throughout these years, we have been following the trends in social media use by foreign ministries, embassies, international organizations, and diplomats. We've observed the pace at which foreign ministries were quick to jump on board; how e-tools were being integrated into institutions' online presence; which were the most popular platforms over time; and what the level of engagement with citizens was (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

The infographic on the right summarizes current findings related to foreign ministries from DiploFoundation's ongoing study of e-diplomacy trends, and reveals interesting tendencies. For instance, despite Facebook's resounding popularity among online users, it is Twitter which is the most widely used platform among foreign ministries. At the same time, a number of foreign ministries are yet to have their own dedicated online presence (Figures 8 and 9) (Diplo Foundation, 2018).

Figure 8: Total Number of Global Affairs Canada's English-Language Accounts in Each Region
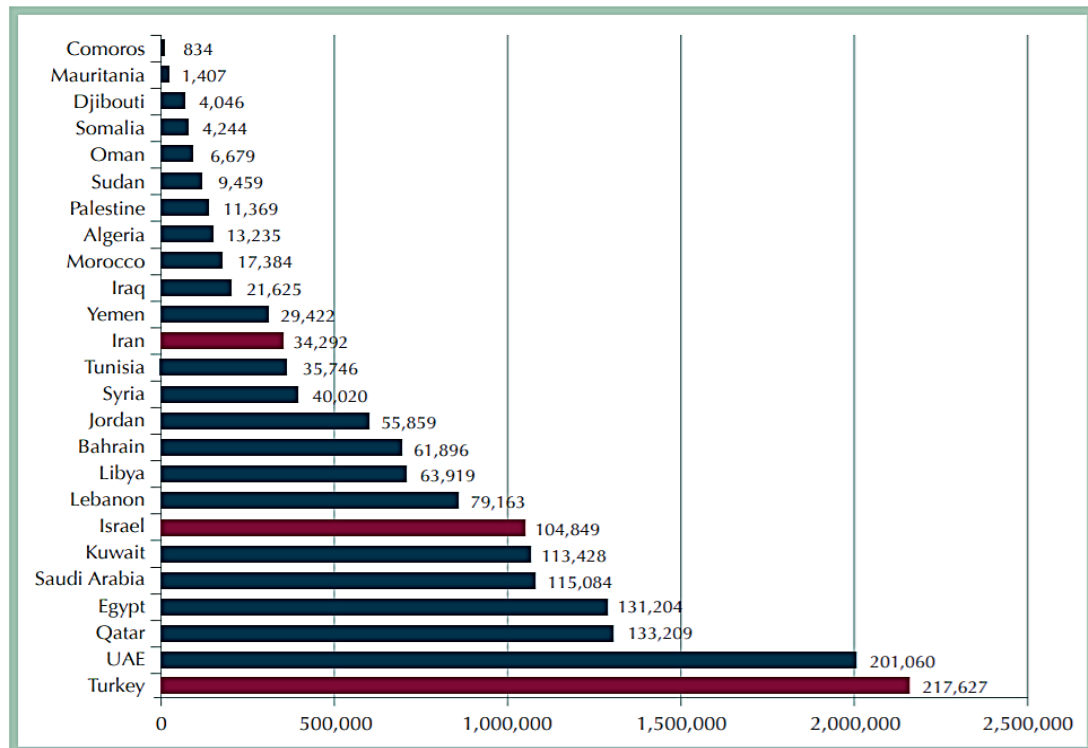Source: (Dierkes et al., 2016)

Figure 9: Number of Active Twitter Users in the Arab Region Plus Iran, Israel and Turkey (Average Number between January 1 and March 30, 2011)
Source: (Mourtada, 2011:16)