

The Role of Media and Communication as Soft Power in Activating Diplomacy A Foresight Reading on the Duality of Industry and Marketing

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Summary:

Diplomatic relations between countries are considered a manifestation of sovereignty and international positioning. Diplomacy for the international community is the driving force of international life and an effective tool for achieving its objectives, enabling it to occupy a leading international position. Media and communication play an important role as soft power in achieving diplomatic communication and are an effective tool for creating and marketing a positive image of countries. After the communication and information revolution in our contemporary world, the way was paved for the emergence of a new era known as the digital age, which impacted significantly the way diplomacy is implemented and activated at the level of performance and representation. Accordingly, the importance of this study lies in the conceptual and analytical review of the role of media and communication as soft powers in diplomatic practice, starting with traditional diplomacy and then linking it to the digital revolution that has produced what is now known as "digital diplomacy" as a new model. Finally, we reach the foresight stage regarding what diplomacy will be in the future in light of the duality of "industry and marketing" through media and digital platforms.

Keywords: Media and Communication ; Soft Power ; Traditional Diplomacy ; Digital Diplomacy Industry and Marketing

I- Introduction :

Communication and information have become among the most important factors and means that contribute to the creation of countries' soft power, as the success of communication and information influences the enhancement of diplomatic relations and shapes the positive image of countries and supports countries in achieving political, economic, and cultural influence and provide the ability to exchange information and persuade others of their values and interests. They are an auxiliary diplomatic arm in building and strengthening foreign relations, striving to achieve understanding and cooperation between countries and enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations, where diplomats communicate, exchange information, and discuss important issues.

In a time when traditional media and digital platforms shape international public opinion and convey prominent messages and issues to the international community, they play a pivotal role in spreading culture and international values to enhance reputation and provide channels for communication and interaction with the global audience. They are also in shaping and marketing the positive image of countries, in addition to promoting their economic and political interests, with the use of media messages, advertisements and campaigns, in addition to diplomatic communication to attract foreign investments and achieve multi-dimensional development.

Soft Power is a concept coined by **Joseph Nye** from Harvard University to describe the ability to attract without coercion or the use of hard power tools as a means of persuasion to influence others in non-military or economic ways. It means that it is the ability to attract and persuade others through appeal rather than coercion or threats, relying on strongly influential factors like policies, reputation, culture, and values by leveraging their communicative and media capabilities to enhance their influence and global presence, and promote their policies, ideas, and cultures. The concept of soft power has evolved and become a means of success in international politics, which led to classifying the power of media including radio, television,

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newspapers in both paper and digital formats, as well as digital platforms, as influential soft power in diplomatic practices within the framework of international relations.

This study is significant as it adopts **an analytical and foresight approach** to clarify the comprehensive and decisive role of information and communication means as soft power for countries in diplomatic communication, achieving cultural, political, and economic influence by relying on their ability to communicate, exchange information, and convince the public of their credibility and values. Therefore, **countries need to develop information and communication strategies to achieve independence and effectiveness in international relations in the long term** by activating and improving diplomatic practices. Based on the aforementioned, the fundamental question can be posed as follows:

What is the role of information and communication as soft power in activating diplomatic work and its impact on the visibility of countries on the international level?

I.1. First Subtitle

1.1. Concept of Diplomacy:

Diplomacy is a term that dates back to the **Greek era**, referring to the repository of documents and treaties concluded between two parties. It is also considered the document or folded paper agreed upon between two parties. **In Latin**, it means the official certificate or document that includes the envoy's status and the mission assigned to him, and the recommendations issued regarding him by the ruler. These certificates or documents were pieces of paper held by pieces of iron, called "diploma," and **in Roman**, it referred to the envoy or ambassador's characteristics, and it also referred to documents and treaties concluded between two parties.

In the current era, diplomacy has spread as part of international relations that interconnect countries, including all mutual commitments between any two independent states, making diplomacy an essential part of international policies and a cornerstone of dealings between the world's peoples (**Djamal Barakat, 1985, p. 17**). One of its most important duties and tasks is to enhance relations between countries, which are built on various commercial, service, and educational fields, among others, in addition to participating in the events that happen in them, such as national holidays, and forming alliances between groups of countries, like the conclusion of joint defense agreements.

In general, the concept has not undergone significant change since the Vienna Convention of **1961**, revolving around the subject and concepts of ceremonies, receiving dignitaries, invitations, table manners, and national holidays of countries. **It is both a science and art of representing states and negotiation**, considered a **tool of the state in the external environment**. It is also known as a strategy and tool of the government to achieve foreign policy goals, influencing external bodies, countries, organizations, and institutions to gain their support and achieve its objectives in any field.

Diplomacy is a primary tool for achieving foreign policy goals by influencing external states and groups to win their favor and support through various means, some of which are persuasive while some others are covert (**Dario Battistila, 2003, p. 31**). Some see it as the natural path of communication between one state and another or between political groups themselves, as diplomacy is considered both science and art due to the deep study required of the existing relationship between states, their mutual interests, historical records, and treaties and agreements from the past and present.

Hence, diplomacy is merely a process or tool used by the state to implement its foreign policy in dealing with other states and international persons, and to manage their official relations within the international system.

Therefore, it is clear that it is a concept and tool for implementing foreign policy entrusted to the foreign or diplomatic corps.

While **foreign policy** is synonymous with the state's goals in the international community, it is a set of goals and commitments through which states, using constitutionally defined authorities, interact with all foreign states and international political problems using influence and power. Some see it as a process of converting inputs into outputs, a system of activities developed by societies to change the behaviors of other states and align their activities with the international environment.

As for **Ernest Satow**, he defined diplomacy as "**the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments,**" or as a practical exercise to facilitate foreign affairs. Diplomacy is based on flexibility, patience, a serious desire to achieve defined goals, and a keenness on the durability and continuity of relationships without interruption, with wisdom and intelligence. From this perspective, the phenomenon of diplomacy has gained great importance and occupies a prominent place in the development of international relations.

The difference between diplomacy and foreign policy is that the latter **is formulated by constitutional institutions within the state**, while **diplomacy is a tool for implementing foreign policy and achieving its goals**, alongside other tools and aspects (**Houcine Boukara, 2012, p. 99**).

In light of the development witnessed in international relations, the phenomenon of diplomacy has become the primary tool in preparing and implementing a state's foreign policy, becoming the main entry point through which the state's strategy is achieved during times of peace and war, and ensuring the protection of the interests of states and individuals.

1.2. Diplomatic Media:

Throughout different eras, the concept of diplomacy has been linked to the study of ancient documents related to international relations. The term "diplomacy" has also been used to denote international communication as a method involving international dealings through representation, report preparation, negotiations, and discussions. This evolution in the concept and methods of diplomacy has led to the emergence of the concept of diplomatic media, which is the art of negotiation and managing relations between countries. The power of media-diplomacy is the state's ability to control information and how to use it to influence peoples in shaping their mental image. Media, in this context, is generally known as the speaking tongue of politics and its influential tool across all segments of society, extending beyond internal boundaries to become regional and international depending on the strength and type of the event. Consequently, media and diplomacy have a direct impact on internal and external public opinion, always cloaking diplomacy in the guise of media and digital platforms to conceal its political elements (**Suleiman Al-Saleh, 2014, p. 36**). The digital revolution has also provided new means for diplomatic media to achieve what is now known as "integrated diplomacy" by employing the internet and new communication technologies to interact with external audiences and convey foreign policy objectives.

1.3. External Media:

The concept of external media has been defined in various ways. **Carter Martin** defines it as **the communication activity through which the state uses various means of communication and media to enlighten the external audience about the current situations and affairs within the state**. **D. F. Robert** views it as the objective expression of facts, realities, and issues concerning the state by explaining and clarifying facts and information to the external audience to influence their mentality in a way that serves the state's issues and interests (**Emad Anan, 2022, p. 46**). Thus, it is the activity undertaken by a state through its media outlets to

broadcast or disseminate facts and information about its civilizations and progress, or its problems and issues, or to explain its foreign policy on the international scale.

International media refers to all aspects of media activities directed by states to other countries, peoples, and nations.

It encompasses all communication activities aimed at providing the external audience (beyond the state's borders) with facts and news about international issues and topics in an objective manner, leading to the audience's awareness and understanding, thereby contributing to forming a correct opinion about global problems. It is characterized as a form of cultural and civilizational interaction and fusion, and is an important means of foreign policy, as it transcends barriers and borders between states and peoples. It focuses on influential groups within different political systems and is directed towards other countries.

II – The Role of Media in Activating Diplomatic Media Strategy:

Traditional and new media have become integral to the rise or fall of nations, with increased influence and ability to shape events, significantly impacting how people perceive the world, and serving as an effective tool for guiding the course of events.

Modern diplomatic media aims, through various social media networks, to create communication tools based on solid and honest facts, away from distortion and manipulation, delivering information as quickly as possible, indicating professional expertise and diplomatic media savvy. Diplomatic media has thus become one of the most prominent tools for implementing and translating foreign policies of states, whether strategically or tactically. With the developments in communication and technology, media and the diplomatic role have evolved significantly, making media diplomacy the most utilized method when direct communication channels between conflicting parties are unavailable, or when one party is uncertain of the other's intentions. This type of diplomacy serves as a preliminary test for the orientations of states.

The reality has shown that media holds special importance as a powerful and influential tool for implementing states' foreign policies and achieving their foreign policy goals and protecting their interests, playing a **clear, influential, and effective role in supporting the foreign policy** of any state. Media is one of the most important tools used to explain its positions, policies, defend them, counter all elements of confusion or counter-propaganda, and respond to them.

It is clear that media and diplomacy are used in both peace and war (Bhandari. R, 2010, p. 166). In times of war, media is used to mobilize local and global public opinion against the enemy, break the enemy's morale, and gain public support for its cause. In times of peace, media is used to explain the state's policies, defend its stance, introduce itself and its achievements.

The foundations of media diplomacy have been built on models of negotiation and management of relations between governments, highlighting the ability of media to control information and use it to influence and build the state's image. This is linked to the media power of the state and its ability to leverage its resources to achieve its objectives at the level of public opinion and international relations.

To strengthen this, **soft power** created by media has become a measure consistent with what **Joseph Nye** proposed, defining it as "**the ability to make others want what you want without using coercion or inducement to make them follow you**" (**Jawaher Al-Mansouri, 2019, p. 35**). It plays a role in achieving both internal and external political objectives and maintaining national interests.

The development of media has led to a revolution in building international relations and diplomatic work, resulting in a change in the concept of power in contemporary global policies. The ability of a state to control information flow and build its image has become one of the most

important sources of power. Therefore, states work on building their media power to achieve their goals, attract audiences, and persuade them to support their policies and defend their principles and positions.

Media also plays an active role in managing conflicts and reaching solutions through negotiations and agreements, influencing public opinion by transmitting messages and proposals between parties to support these processes.

Digital diplomacy, as a major media revolution, has used media for diplomatic purposes (Walid Khalaf Allah, 2016, p. 32). It has the ability to change public and cultural diplomatic practices, planning strategies, international negotiations, and crisis management, all of which contribute to soft power. It is founded on various data that allow it to adapt to rapid changes, whether in technical fields or international domains.

Digital diplomacy is seen as soft power relying on negotiation, constructive dialogue, positive interaction, and cultural understandings, opening the way for exchanging viewpoints and enhancing social and cultural values and creativity, thus facilitating flexible communication, establishing and developing relationships.

The media scene, considered a means of transmitting news and bringing people closer, is underscored in divine laws, as stated in the Qur'an: **"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware. "** (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayah 13).

III- The Impact of Media and Digitalization on Enhancing Diplomatic Practices

Traditional diplomacy has faced new challenges, primarily the emergence of new actors in shaping relations between peoples and states. Previously managed by professional and qualified diplomats focusing on bilateral state relations, by the late 1980s, the role of the public in pressuring governments on global issues that traditional diplomacy could no longer handle opened the field for global diplomacy.

The importance of media as a means of foreign policy for states in their pursuit of interests is increasing due to several factors among which we mention:

- The tremendous development in science, technology, and new and traditional communication means, which have contributed to developing media work.
- The ideological conflict that has emerged on the international scene makes media a prominent tool due to its influence and lower cost compared to military means.
- Increased popular participation in different political systems, leading to the use of media to influence public opinion and gain its support.

Therefore, states seek **to build influential media organs** to expand their influence, serve their interests, and support the implementation of their foreign policy, in order to play the following **roles**:

- Maintaining friendly relations between states, gaining sympathy and support from global public opinion, and improving the state's image.
- Changing positions and attitudes, protecting state interests, and justifying its policies.
- Communicating with influential groups such as parties, pressure groups, and interest groups that influence political decision-making.

Based on the above, the following question can be posed:

How can the role of various media be activated to create and enhance diplomatic media?

Media is an effective diplomatic tool; many small countries have made their mark thanks to media despite limited hard resources. Today, wars are fought through media that weakens opponents. Diplomatic media, in its various forms, is the official spokesperson of the state, characterized by speed and credibility. Thus, **it requires skilled and experienced capabilities** in communication and expression to articulate the state's goals, interests, presence, and modernization.

In light of this, media today plays an active role in managing conflicts and contributing to their resolution through negotiations based on transmitting and exchanging messages and proposals between parties.

State leaders have developed their methods and plans for dealing with media and communication to use them in achieving their foreign policy goals, reducing the roles of traditional ambassadors and diplomats.

Over the past three decades, global television channels have played a leading role in exchanging messages between conflicting parties. However, state leaders faced problems due to quick responses to messages without careful study in some crises.

A quick response by a head of state or officials to messages can lead to the failure of diplomatic communication and failure to reach a solution to the issue. At the same time, non-response or delay in replying to the message can give a negative impression of the state as unable to reach a solution, increasing public hostility towards it and contributing to building a negative image for it.

Also, effective diplomatic media is one of the components of a state's success and excellence in supporting its strategic objectives and credibility, defined by goals far from misleading and steering. Today, the true measure of a state's weight and identity in issues of development, economy, tourism, education, environment, health, and more, is reflected through media.

Diplomatic communication enhances understanding and trust between states, achieving stability and international cooperation. Media is used to strengthen international relations, enabling diplomats to share their views and positions and inform the global audience of their country's stances, achieving a positive impact through classic media and digital platforms in terms of credibility, transparency, and the ability to present facts objectively.

To achieve the desired goals, it is necessary to activate and build relationships with media and communication personnel, continuously providing information to journalists and gaining their trust, positively influencing the global flow of information.

The state also works to develop other tools and mechanisms in formulating and planning foreign cooperation policies that open horizons for exchange and cooperation between concerned parties, such as loans, economic and technical aid, and presenting a better image of itself.

There are many tools and mechanisms adopted by states within their strategies to achieve their noble goals, summarized as follows:

- External media overseen by Ministries of Foreign Affairs (**diplomatic channels media, international media institutions**), requiring the required conditions and standards such as wide international reach, use of multiple languages, diverse content reflecting diverse audiences' interests, and significant impact on international events.
- News agencies remain important tools for serving their countries' foreign policies, especially during crises and tense relations between states.
- Media centers or offices often work in coordination with their countries' embassies to implement foreign policy strategies to achieve desired goals.
- International media which encompasses a broader scope than bilateral relations, opening media horizons to other frameworks such as international and regional institutions and organizations.

- Using international directed radio and television broadcast channels as a means of external media.
- Establishing cultural centers focusing on cultural and intellectual activities to promote their languages, cultures, and civilization values.
- Conducting economic, cultural, and artistic exhibitions to create spaces for practical and beneficial exchange, positively impacting the state's image.
- Relying on friendship and cooperation associations between countries to create effective exchange serving state interests and peoples' goals. Foreign communities and students' missions abroad also play an important role in activating relations, introducing, and attracting opportunities for their countries.

Regarding **the levels of diplomatic work**, they can be categorized into: traditional bilateral diplomacy, conference diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy, summit diplomacy, and public diplomacy. The latter is undertaken by non-governmental organizations and unions, employing a direct approach and often referred to as "media diplomacy," even though it operates outside the known diplomatic channels (**Saad Tiyaiba, 2017, p. 87**). Recently, there has been discussion about the latest level of diplomacy, which is digital diplomacy. **Vargas Hanson** defined its objectives as follows:

1. The concerted efforts of all countries to manage their various resources to achieve national interests abroad and increase their soft power.
2. Maintaining communication with audiences in the virtual world and benefiting from the massive and continuous flow of information in policy and strategy formulation.
3. Establishing digital mechanisms at the level of embassies and consulates to leverage external expertise and resources to achieve national goals.

To ensure the factors controlling the success of external media in parallel with diplomatic work, the following is required:

- The necessity of scientific and organized planning for external media and diplomatic work, which must be based on the language of interests and devoid of emotions and impulses.
- The necessity of linking and coordinating it with other supporting tools such as cultural and educational policies, and the process of multifaceted and multi-dimensional cultural-civilizational exchange and cooperation.

IV- Diplomatic Media in Algeria: Vital Roles and Expected Prospects:

Like other countries, Algeria uses its media and communication means in its foreign relations with all countries of mutual interest. **Media plays a vital role in enhancing Algerian diplomacy and highlighting Algeria's cultural and civilizational message regionally and internationally**, as a source of soft power supporting political work, achieving its goals, and supporting its image and reputation amid challenges that necessitate addressing citizens to clarify its paths and constants in a world full of threats and turbulent reality. This requires an active strategy used by the state to achieve its political, economic goals, and interests, or to enhance its image.

Algerian media is the only window to know what the Algerian Foreign Minister is doing, especially regarding recent Algerian-African relations, such as Algeria's role in the Sahel, its plan to resolve the Mali crisis, and Algeria's attempts to restore security and stability in Libya. All this is due to the effective role played by Algerian media in presenting a positive image of Algerian diplomacy.

When media and communication are effective, they leave no room for error in making correct decisions, which is the pinnacle and goal of political work. People rely on them to form opinions, attitudes, and different positions.

Framing media-communication strategies for diplomacy enhances Algeria's empowerment in its international and regional environment through paths of influence and attraction. Having international radio or television channels, newspapers, or magazines (like AL 24, International Radio Channel, African FM Channel) in our national media adds a significant qualitative contribution to the path and deep vision of media diplomacy accompanying state foreign policy to defend national interests. There are other platforms that touch on rapid transformations and pressing challenges to maintain Algeria's influential and attractive position.

Digital diplomacy is also an important tool in the arsenal of smart powers, contributing to increasing the state's social capital and shaping its strategies by involving media and digital platforms in managing its diplomatic affairs, employing them as parallel diplomacy to influence other states' policies.

Having a strong, qualitative, and professional institutional media system that efficiently and responsibly markets the state's policies and its fixed and strategic positions in the regional and international sphere enhances the desired position and influence, building an effective media system strategy that conveys Algeria's voice and image regionally and internationally, reflecting the leadership's and state's positions on various global issues and coalitions. **The dual of media and diplomacy** must be a single entity that strengthens Algeria's position and serving as a platform that effectively clarifies the state's direction to both national and international public opinion.

In the context of studying Algeria's experience in building a new relationship between diplomatic media and state foreign policy, one of the foundational principles of this relationship is the role of media in building relationships with peoples. Media contributes to the success of all activities related to public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, thus positioning public diplomacy centrally among all types of diplomacy.

The study of Algeria's experience highlights that the relationship between media and government bodies evolved due to the awareness of media's importance in building a new image for Algeria and its international relations. Strengthening the relationship between institutions and media professionals enables them to perform their role in building the regional and global standing of a country representing the African continent and the Global South, defending their rights and interests.

The key pillars for countries, including "Algeria", for activating their dossiers in using media and digital arsenal as a soft power alongside their diplomacy in accordance with "the dual of industry and marketing" can be summarized in:

- Supporting education, research, and innovation, and encouraging scientific and cultural exchange with other countries, demonstrating the strength and ability to find solutions to challenges in technology and innovation.
- Producing and exporting media, digital, artistic, and sports content, such as films, series, music, games, and sports, to shape consumer trends worldwide and market entertainment and cultural industries. This includes producing films, showcasing culture, heritage, and artistic achievements, inspiring artists, and encouraging cultural exchange. Brands and trademarks also serve as global symbols of culture and soft power.

- Utilizing international media and communication outlets, including international radio stations, television channels, and newspapers, and promoting renowned universities and museums that attract students and tourists from around the world.
- Investing in developing local media to enhance its competitiveness internationally, promoting its culture through music, cinema, drama, and artistic achievements.
- Planning optimal use of media and communication to build a positive image of the state as a tool of public diplomacy, explaining its foreign policy continuously, and engaging with global audiences to achieve public diplomacy goals and build relationships with peoples worldwide.
- Encouraging the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase the flow of news and information from Algeria to the world and contribute to regional and international event coverage.
- Promoting its rich culture and long history, utilizing it significantly in cultural promotion through museums, art exhibitions, and festivals (current and future projects).

The **Algerian experience** highlights the importance of the state working to build its image based on meeting the needs of peoples, especially those in difficult circumstances, aligning with the cultural context of its regional depth, and building themes like cooperation, participation, economic, and social development. This approach presents Algeria as a leading state working for the interests of states and peoples needing its assistance and services, through activities, seminars, and conferences that turn into news disseminated by media and communication as influential power.

Diplomacy, in its simplest concept, is the political activity of a nation or people in order to achieve political goals in an international setting. This activity depends on media and methods between the diplomat and the center, which may be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the majority of countries. The use of media diplomacy came as it is the right arm of the foreign policy of countries. This gives a strong indication of the extent of integration between diplomatic and media work, as media diplomacy is an important means of clarifying information and conveying the image to the public.

The media and public diplomacy are now prepared to deal with the changes of the new era in the world to create an appropriate cultural, intellectual and economic climate. International media is considered one of the functions of the diplomatic corps, which in turn adopts a quick and concise media strategy, in which the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Culture, Information, Higher Education, and other relevant parties participate. To reformulate the media map, and attempt to advance the internal and external media sector, within a balanced media approach committed to the principles of preserving identity, and to appoint qualified and specialized media attaches in embassies, who can undertake the tasks of naturally linking print, audio and visual media and diplomatic work.

- Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that media diplomacy is an active strategy used by states to achieve political and economic goals, serving their interests and objectives, and enhancing their image as a powerful force among states, reflecting their specific values and interests in every issue. Despite this, media and communication, under the digital platforms, must exert significant effort and contribution to better control variables and achieve success amid regional and international challenges. Media and communication play an essential role as soft power in activating comprehensive diplomacy at all levels, creating a positive mental image of states and marketing them positively, especially after employing digitalization, which has given rise to what is called "**digital diplomacy.**" This employs new technology and the internet for fast and effective news transmission and exchange within the framework of developing diplomatic

relations, which have become the driving force of foreign policy and an effective tool for achieving its goals.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the following **proposals** can be suggested:

- Developing the sciences of media diplomacy, training media professionals and correspondents to perform diverse functions with high professional quality. Media colleges should prepare media leaders, and universities should aim to train academically and professionally qualified leaders to represent their societies.
- Re-training diplomats to teach them how to deal with media and communication, influencing international public opinion directions, and building a positive image of the state.
- Focusing on live broadcasting in diplomacy due to its impact on decision-making, especially during conflicts and crises, where leaders are compelled to make quick decisions and handle events and their implications.

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