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CHAPTER 5

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND THE SYMBOLIC CAPITAL OF CULTURE: AZERBAIJAN AND TÜRKİYE

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Abstract

The relationship between information warfare and diplomacy is increasingly being discussed in modern times. Diplomacy is analysed through the prism of the problems of information warfare, as it serves as a tool of this war. Public diplomacy is now seen as a multilevel, efficient system of interaction between states and foreign societies that seeks both political and ‘enlightenment’ objectives. It is carried out by state institutions at home and abroad in the form of digital and cultural diplomacy. Digital diplomacy is perceived as a ‘soft power’ component of the state, including as a tool of Information Warfare. Digital resources and digital power are leading to a new confrontation between states, determined by the lines of control over ‘territories’ in the network. All this predicts the division of the Internet space and a new stage in the development of international relations and foreign policy. The information sphere is characterized by the struggle for cultural values, which actualizes the role of cultural advantages in the information society. National mentality and culture are the main geopolitical potential of a state exposed to information influence. As the geopolitical potential of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, the symbolic capital of their national cultures becomes actual in the changing global order. In the mentioned context, cooperation of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the field of diplomacy, which have common cultural codes and historical roots, plays an important role in the information war. Shared values, cultural components and politics form the basis for the common ‘soft power’ of the Turkic states, the so-called ‘Turkic soft power’.

Keywords

Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Digital Diplomacy, Information War, Symbolic Capital

Introduction

In modern times, the relationship between information warfare and diplomacy is increasingly being discussed. Diplomacy is analysed through the prism of the problems of information warfare, as it serves as a tool of this war.

The third millennium is marked by changes in all the basic parameters of international security. Today, the primary importance lies not in the balance of military forces, the level of conflict, the threat of world war, or agreements on arms limitation and reduction, but in countering ‘non-traditional’ threats such as international terrorism, transnational crime, illegal migration, and information warfare (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 126).

Digital resources and digital power are leading to a new confrontation between states, determined by the lines of control over ‘territories’ in the network. All this predicts the division of the Internet space and a new stage in the development of international relations and foreign policy, determined by the conditions of a divided Internet (splinternet). (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, pp. 178-179). Thus, we observe a fragmented political reality, which is the result of the division of the Internet into national clusters, the concentration of ideologies and values in separate groups and social networks, and the filtering of information according to political preferences (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 175).

In the modern era, political struggle is shifting to virtual information spaces, taking on new, post-traditional virtual forms (Vasilenko, 2010, pp. 61, 87, 124, 126). So we are observing the rapid spread of digital technologies and the constant expansion of their scope of application, as well as the improvement of information transmission methods (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 54).

In the current situation, the diplomatic activities of each country are becoming particularly important. In the context of international security, which includes such important components as information and ideological security, strategic cooperation between countries is particularly relevant. From this perspective, the model of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye can be analysed both retrospectively and prospectively.

The fact that Türkiye-Azerbaijan relations have attracted attention as an exemplary model in terms of regional integration and joint development stems from their unique nature and the stability of these relations (Xalq qazeti, 2025). The 4th Antalya Diplomatic Forum (ADF) on the theme of ‘Empowering Diplomacy in a Fractured World’ reaffirmed that Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations are an exemplary strategic partnership model at the regional and global levels. The main pillars of these relations are the increase in trade turnover, joint initiatives in energy security, partnership in the reconstruction of Karabakh, and economic integration in the Turkic world.

1. Azerbaijan-Türkiye Diplomatic Relations: A Historical Overview

The rich historical past of Azerbaijan-Türkiye diplomatic relations has reached its peak today and is expressed in the principle of ‘One nation, two states’. These relations were continued after the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which gained its independence on May 28, 1918, signed its first treaty with the Ottoman Empire a week later, on June 4. In October 1921, the embassy of the Azerbaijan SSR was opened in Türkiye, later the consulate of the Azerbaijan SSR in Kars, and the diplomatic representation of the government of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye in Baku (Azərbaycan – Türkiyə diplomatik münasibətləri – 30, 2025).

On the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Azerbaijan’s state independence, the Consulate General of Türkiye was opened in Baku on May 25, 1991. After Azerbaijan restored its state independence on October 18, 1991, Türkiye was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan’s independence. On January 14, 1992, Azerbaijan-Türkiye diplomatic relations were established (İsmayılov, 2011, p. 5).

The 'Joint Statement' signed on May 1-3, 1992, formed the cornerstone of strategic cooperation, defining the basic principles and development prospects of mutual relations. The tradition of mutual support has always been continued between the two countries in the international arena for 30 years.

Another document that envisages the development of a strategic alliance was the declaration "Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan", signed at Shusha in Karabakh on June 15, 2021 (Azərbaycan Prezidentinin Rəsmi internet sahifəsi, 2021). "The landmark Shusha Declaration signed by Türkiye and Azerbaijan to take bilateral relations to the level of alliance. The declaration is the first document signed between Ankara and Baku which includes the word 'alliance'." (Rehimov, 2025).

It is noted that the parties are making joint efforts to develop international relations based on peace, friendship and good neighborliness, as well as to resolve conflicts and issues of regional and global security and stability, through regional and international stability and prosperity (Azərbaycan – Türkiyə diplomatik münasibətləri – 30, 2025). Thus, "the parties in the declaration have pledged support for each other on significant issues at both international and regional levels." The Shusha Declaration emphasizes cooperation in the field of security and the implementation of preventive measures "in the case of a threat or an attack on the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of any of the parties or the security of their internationally recognized borders." "The declaration carries importance in terms of not only the relations between the two countries, but also their intent for regional cooperation". The Shusha Declaration is assessed as a "new-era roadmap for relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan." It's also described as "a guarantee that no new aggressive actions will be allowed in the region, as well as deepening regional cooperation and integration in the Turkic world." (Rehimov, 2025).

Thus, we can say that Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations are seen as a new page in strengthening regional security, strengthening mutual ties, and comprehensive integration of our countries into the world community (Azərbaycan – Türkiyə diplomatik münasibətləri – 30, 2025). One of the important factors influencing these relations is that today Azerbaijan is perceived as a reliable partner and an enterprising state not only in the region, but also globally. The importance of strategic cooperation in the geopolitical sphere is also becoming relevant today in the context of conflicts in the South Caucasus, the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The two states who act as guarantors of regional security and initiate peace and cooperation can be discussed today. They are active in the region, contributing to the maintenance of stability in a wide geography from the South Caucasus to Central Asia, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean (Xalq qəzeti, 2025).

2. Information Wars: The New Geopolitical Reality

Due to the trends of intensification of information transfer processes, the task of forming a new security architecture is becoming urgent (Volodenkov & Miteva, 2016, pp. 19-20). In the context of rapid changes taking place in the world, both Azerbaijan and Türkiye are faced with the need to adapt to the developing realities on the geopolitical plane in order to meet the needs at the regional level. This situation has become even more important, especially due to the wars that have taken place in recent times. Therefore, the adaptive and transformational potential of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, especially in the field of public diplomacy, is becoming more and more important every day. This is possible thanks to following and implementing the latest trends in this field.

There are many options for managing content today. These opportunities are also used to shape the global picture of the world. In information warfare, various methods are applied to target countries: the traditional symbolic, value and cultural space in national segments of the information space is destroyed, the population loses its orientation (direction); new symbols, values and cultural codes are introduced, which are necessary for the formation of useful models of worldview and mass behavior; existing national political regimes are discredited, trust in state institutions is undermined by the population of target countries and the world

community; large-scale information campaigns are organized and implemented to intensify political tension and create virtual revolutionary situations; the masses are mobilized for opposition protest activities in the offline space; a political pseudo-reality is formed in public consciousness that meets the interests of subjects of communication influence; states are deprived of the opportunity to conduct an independent information policy in their national segments of the Internet space, etc. (Volodenkov & Miteva, 2016, pp. 20-21).

M. McLuhan (2003, p. 394), one of the ideologists of the 'information revolution', wrote about virtual political struggle. "Information conflict is a set of relations of information protection and information competition of opposing geopolitical subjects as a form of geopolitical conflict" (Ivashov, 2002, p. 199).

It is argued that the source of victory in the information war today is the symbolic capital of culture. The importance of symbolic cultural hegemony in the information space is today compared to noospheric weapons, because it gives its owner an advantage in the information space and, therefore, on the political map of the world (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 149).

Today, in the conditions of mediatization and virtualization, the main goal of information activity is the struggle for the minds of society representatives (Volodenkov, 2016b, p. 6). The term 'Smart CyberWar' is used to refer to soft information war.

The world of symbols is rapidly expanding in modern times. We observe how cyber-simulacra representing various political interest groups in the Internet space actively struggle and compete with each other for the dissemination of public consciousness and ideas, symbols, values, meanings, behavioral models, and political ideas (Volodenkov, 2017b, p. 19). For those who consume information from Internet sources, this is fraught with the risk of the disappearance of national characteristics and traditional valuable, symbolic and semantic spaces in states in the future due to the global nature of modern network communications (Ilyin, 2009, pp. 304-310). In the conditions of information warfare, the preservation of the controllability and sovereignty of the national information space becomes relevant in order to minimize risks (Volodenkov & Miteva, 2016, pp. 19, 31).

Ensuring information security as the most important task of modern political management is of particular importance. In order to solve the problem of security of national segments of the global network information space, it is necessary to protect the sovereignty of the national space of political communications, including national segments of the Internet (Volodenkov & Miteva, 2016, pp. 19-20). In the context of global information warfare, the fragmentation of the information space into national Internet segments protected by each state is observed in order to ensure its own information security and counter active attempts by external influences on public consciousness (Volodenkov, 2017a, p. 154).

The projection of the assumed image of the nation and high trust and mutual understanding between states imply the enhancement of the country's image, its cultural presence in other countries, which is achieved through public diplomacy (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 59). In this case, the goal is a positive image of the country beyond its borders and ensuring international security through digital diplomacy channels (Zinovyeva, 2013, pp. 213-229).

3. Public Diplomacy And 'Soft Power'

Diplomacy is currently changing as it is a tool for foreign policy for states (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 370). Today, public diplomacy is understood as a multi-level effective system of interaction between states and foreign societies that pursue both political and 'enlightenment' goals. It is carried out by state institutions at home and abroad in the form of digital and cultural diplomacy (Mishina & Pobedash, 2017, p. 143). New technologies are currently used as a mechanism for public diplomacy. Digital diplomacy is perceived as a 'soft power' component of the state, including as a tool of Information Warfare (Khlopov, 2022, p. 11; Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 55).

In this context, the diplomatic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye is exemplary for other Turkic states in terms of solidarity, a common security system and a model of joint development. This strategic partnership and strengthening of relations is also important in that it directly affects the fate and future of not only the two countries, but also other states of the Turkic world (Əsgərov, 2024). From this perspective, expanding cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the field of public diplomacy is a pressing issue.

According to Joseph Nye (1990, p. 336), public diplomacy is usually defined as an integral part of the ‘soft power’ of the state, with the help of which a positive image of the country is created abroad. Values, culture and politics are noted as the sources of the ‘soft power’ of the state. Information about these sources is disseminated through public diplomacy.

From one point of view, public diplomacy and propaganda are identified. The use of public diplomacy as the main means of achieving foreign policy goals in the information space is especially activated during acute crises and conflicts, which is associated with the struggle for the perception of information by the public. To this extent, diplomacy practically becomes propaganda or self-promotion. Propaganda is defined as a one-sided, deliberate attempt to influence perception and public opinion by manipulating people’s minds and behavior in order to elicit a desired response from a target audience (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2006, p. 426). At the same time, diplomacy is defined as a synthesis of values, propaganda, image, and marketing technologies (Mishina & Pobedash, 2017, p. 144).

From another perspective, public diplomacy and propaganda are perceived as different concepts. In this context, public diplomacy is viewed as a positive tool and a distinction is made between the concepts of ‘public diplomacy’ and ‘propaganda’ (Mishina & Pobedash, 2017, p. 144).

Clarification is one of the tasks of diplomacy (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 59). Public diplomacy is the process of communicating with foreign societies aimed at explaining one’s country’s ideas, ideals, institutions, culture, and political goals to a foreign audience (Melissen, 2005, p. 12). In this sense, it is almost completely identified with soft power and is considered its central component (Manor, 2019; Khlopov, 2022, p. 6). As a component of ‘soft power’, public diplomacy acts as a positive tool in the implementation of state policy. Its development is associated with the development of information and communication technologies, and, accordingly, with the modern realities of the system of international relations (Mishina & Pobedash, 2017, p. 145).

In the above context, a parallel can be drawn between the potential for cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in this area and its use as ‘soft power’ in the Turkic world. Shared values, cultural components and politics form the basis for the common ‘soft power’ of the Turkic states, the so-called ‘Turkic soft power’.

Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the field of public diplomacy serves the interests of not only the two states, but also the Turkic world as a whole. The existence of forces opposing this cooperation necessitates the development of appropriate mechanisms in the security policies of the states and the increase in the effectiveness of joint action. Joint action on security issues is important in terms of contributing to regional and global stability (Əsgərov, 2024).

4. The Symbolic Capital Of National Culture In The Postclassical Landscape Of The Political World

The information sphere is characterized by the struggle for cultural values, which actualizes the role of cultural advantages in the information society. National mentality and culture are the main geopolitical potential of a state exposed to information influence (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 126). It is evident that global network resources influence the formation of a particular worldview and behavior in individuals (Volodenkov, 2017a, p. 152).

In modern times, the borders of national segments of virtual space often do not coincide with the borders of the territorial spaces of states, which is one of the manifestations of the virtualization of modern politics. In general, the absence of borders in the virtual communication space stems from its global nature. This situation leads to certain risks associated with the replacement of territorial identity with virtual identity as an integral part of national identity (Volodenkov, 2017b, p. 20-22). From this point of view, it is particularly important for the Turkic world to preserve its national identity, at least within the framework of its geographical boundaries.

Control of cultural space in the information society primarily involves the management of information to control the worldview and worldview of peoples. The postclassical era is characterized by the aggression of information against culture with the aim of forcing other peoples to accept the programmed information landscape of the world, thereby subordinating its entire system of governance (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 127-128).

Regarding the spatial characteristics of national segments of the Internet, it can be noted that the dominance of national traditional values, symbols, and meanings determines the boundaries of national segments (Volodenkov, 2017b, p. 21). Thanks to rapid virtualization, people are beginning to communicate with images, signs, symbols, and stereotypes (Gadzhiev & Primova, 2012, p. 134).

As part of the political mainstream, symbols have a strong ideological charge (Pavlyutenkova & Markova, 2017, p. 143). The semantic formation of socio-political reality is carried out through symbols. Political symbols determine the interpretation of political reality by public consciousness, as well as the reconstruction of the political space in both ideological, political, and practical terms. The significant communicative potential of the symbol allows it to convey more content than other signs (Solovei, 2013, p. 108-109).

In the postclassical landscape of the political world, these symbols move into the virtual realm as the symbolic capital of national culture (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 125). Symbolic capital includes collective memory, public goals, projects, cultural symbols and the spiritual sphere of society (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 101-103). In political history, symbolic capital in geopolitics is gained in two ways: the symbolism of culture and the symbolism of ideology. At the same time, symbolic capital faces the threat of destruction in the virtual space through a negative image in the eyes of the world community, which makes the task of forming its positive image in the information space extremely urgent (Vasilenko, 2010, pp. 130, 135).

For every society, the attractiveness of the symbolic capital of its culture, transmitted through global communication channels, is important. Archetype, myth, stereotype, and symbol act as important elements of the political psyche (Borisov, 2006, p. 8). We can speak of the symbolic nature of political thinking.

The mental characteristics of the people, their historical destiny, ethnogenesis features, political experience, religious, geopolitical and other factors give each political community its own political culture, which requires an analysis of the characteristics of the mentality of the society in order to understand (Borisov, 2006, pp. 12-13). In this context, using the common values, traditions and historical potential of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, transforming the information and media sector into an ideological weapon serves the purpose of forming a vision based on the challenges of contemporaneity.

An example of strategic cooperation in the fields of information and communication is the “Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation in the Media Field between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye”, signed on December 10, 2020. This memorandum envisages further strengthening of cooperation between the relevant agencies of the two countries in the fields of information, communication and public diplomacy, and, within this framework, continuous close consultations and exchanges on information between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Azərbaycan – Türkiyə diplomatik münasibətləri – 30, 2025).

5. Digital Diplomacy As A Cluster Of Digital International Relations

The main clusters of digital international relations include data diplomacy/digital diplomacy, cybersecurity, information security and cyber diplomacy, global Internet governance, and finally, digital electoral technologies (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, pp. 174-175, 192). Our focus is on digital diplomacy as one of the elements of international digital relations, which is part of the digital space.

A new trend in foreign policy is a new format of foreign policy activity, defined as “digital diplomacy.” (Kara-Murza, 2007). Here, information and communication processes are transferred from the traditional media space to the Internet, through which ideological influence on public consciousness abroad is exerted and propaganda is carried out (Volodenkov & Miteva, 2016, pp. 22-23).

The term ‘digital diplomacy’ is considered one of the areas of public diplomacy and aims to involve broad segments of the population in diplomatic practice (Zinovyeva, 2013, p. 85). The concepts of ‘digital diplomacy’, ‘social network diplomacy’, and ‘internet diplomacy’ characterize the open and widespread use of various information and communication technologies on the Internet to connect with target audiences in solving foreign policy problems of states (Tsvetkova, 2011a). Interpretations of this concept (digital diplomacy, internet diplomacy, twitter diplomacy, e-diplomacy, etc.) imply the use of social network platforms by official state bodies not only for foreign policy purposes, but also to gain and maintain influence in the international arena (Tsvetkova, 2020). In general, its (digital diplomacy) mission is to fulfill diplomatic tasks (Sandre, 2012).

As a result of the fragmentation of the digital space and the diversity of actors, messages, and information provocations, the analysis of the possibilities of state digital diplomacy and the problems it faces is becoming relevant (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 176). Digital diplomacy is considered a new direction of research in the fields of mass communications, peace and conflict studies, political science, and international relations (Tsvetkova, 2020). In modern times, digital diplomacy is called the ‘statesmanship of the 21st century’ (Khlopov, 2022, p. 4).

The actualization of digital diplomacy and digital international relations reveals the theoretical and applied nature of current trends in digital diplomacy and, more broadly, digital international relations (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 177). In modern times, the traditional place of states on the map of world politics is changing due to digital power as a new opportunity to regulate society, influence the political actions of other states through digital technologies, etc. (Bezrukov et al., 2021). It is noted that “international relations, as a system that combines various elements, relationships, diplomacy, etc., are increasingly digital.” (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 175).

Digital diplomacy is increasingly being used as an important tool in foreign policy to support diplomatic goals. Based on empirical data, it is increasingly argued that digital diplomacy constitutes a significant part of foreign policy and diplomacy (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 192). Political leaders and government agencies, as a reality of the global information society, have the ability to collect information and disseminate it to a wide audience at high speed. Today, in a single online space covering more than 4.5 billion people, there is a competition between state and non-state actors for influence and power (Kemp, 2021). The methods of interaction with the audience (websites, forums, social networks, podcasts, online media, etc.) can be independently changed by the user due to all kinds of Internet resources that constitute the tools of digital diplomacy. Thus, actors have the opportunity to implement the ‘right ideology’ (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 54).

We are currently witnessing the use of messaging and political agenda-setting between countries without the use of traditional diplomatic channels. Technology is a new tool for communicating, gathering information, and promoting values, both domestically and internationally, and is increasingly being used by governments alongside traditional forms of diplomacy in domestic and foreign policy (Olubukola, 2017). The main tasks of digital diplomacy are to promptly provide reliable information, refute false information, and verify information from official sources (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 371).

The term ‘digital diplomacy’, which is related to the phenomenon of digitalization, also acts as the main tool of ‘soft power’ of modern states (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 370). In this context, it is often used as “the ability to influence others to achieve a desired outcome through involvement rather than coercion or payment” (Nye, 2008) and in other countries to engage the public. It is often argued that increasing the effectiveness of digital diplomacy and soft power is achieved through a combination of hard and soft power in the form of smart power (Manor & Golan, 2020).

Global information confrontation and conflicts at the interstate level are making the geopolitical nature of digital resources relevant. This situation leads to a change not only in the perception of political reality, but also in political reality itself (Volodenkov, 2011, pp. 5-16). We can observe how the global universal pseudo-space of politics is taking shape today. In such a situation, it is particularly important to adequately reflect reality.

Along with the positive impact of the use of digital technologies on the field of public diplomacy, possible dangers can also be noted (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 53). Acceleration and simplification of diplomatic activities through digitalization help to promote the national interests of the state and ensure communication with the audience in real time (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 370). Today, the need to use digital networks in public diplomacy is increasingly emphasized. The digital plane is becoming the basis of electronic diplomacy (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 57). At the same time, the opportunities for state entities, their diplomatic agencies and leaders to use the potential of social networks are fraught with risks. In particular, for digital diplomacy, the digital space contains new ‘technological’ problems: cyber threats, information leakage, hacking, etc. (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 370). In the network, which consists of various communication channels, people are faced with extremism and terrorism, the application of dissident ideology and foreign policy propaganda, cyberwars. In various fields of activity, including political activity, electronic resources and digital platforms are used for disinformation (Sinchuk et al., 2022, pp. 55-56).

The challenges of digitalization include the leakage of personal data or complete control over identity, which is expressed in the contradiction between digitalization and the privacy of human life, as the most important problem of the modern era. Another important aspect of this challenge is the competition of non-state actors with traditional actors – states in international relations, which indicates structural changes in world politics (Leonov, 2021). At the same time, the emergence of new threats as a result of the use of digital platforms is often associated with a disregard for the norms of diplomatic behavior. “The emphasis on prevention and response is deeply rooted in national security thinking.” (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 57). The global scale of challenges and threats to digital diplomacy includes the fragmentation of the information sphere, the disruption of the orientation of the national component in the information sphere, and the separation of the ‘national’ from the ‘regional’ (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 58).

However, digital diplomacy as a tool is today a key component of the foreign policy of the modern state. Today, the global network, perceived primarily as a tool for progress and development, is an important component of the diplomacy of the developed countries of the world, despite the cost of cybercrime and cyberterrorism and its controversial role in political protests, including the ‘Arab Spring’. The above-mentioned presupposes the use of the latest digital technologies and the newest opportunities by the leadership of states and foreign affairs agencies to promote the interests of their countries in the international arena and minimize the risks of digitalization (Rostovanova, 2021, pp. 370, 373).

Thus, it can be noted that the use of digital technologies, the Internet and social networks in the foreign policy and diplomacy of modern states potentially creates both opportunities and risks (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 373). In this context, the optimal solution is to find diplomatic constructive solutions to problems, which is often digital diplomacy, since it is impossible to distance oneself from international problems.

Issues of cybersecurity, cybercrime, trust building, online freedom of expression, media freedom, and internet governance are on the agenda of cyber diplomacy. Full or partial forms of cyber diplomacy are

bilateral formats of diplomats' meetings or multilateral forums. International cyber stability, as well as economics, trade, and other international obligations, depend on effective cyber diplomacy (Sinchuk et al., 2022, pp. 54, 58-59).

“Cyber Foreign Policy” is defined as a critical foreign policy issue that requires countries to develop their cyber diplomacy capabilities. (Rostovanova, 2021, p. 371). When national legislative frameworks and policies are aligned with international obligations, and local approaches to cybersecurity are aligned with international efforts, there is coherence between cyber diplomacy and a country's domestic and foreign policies. Consequently, today there is a need to combine traditional methods and processes of diplomacy and trade with the development of additional competencies and skills related to cybersecurity issues (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 59).

5.1. Digital Diplomacy and Social Networks

One of the important changes taking place in the modern world is that, in addition to the traditional presentation of information through mass media (periodicals, television and radio), digital sources that are not registered with the official media have begun to play an important role in shaping public opinion. Foreign policy issues have become the most popular topics. Social networks are an integral part of modern society as a structure that includes contacts between individuals and various information exchanges (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 56). Media content production, distribution through social networks, and the use of media logic in everyday activities can now be observed.

The relationship between digital diplomacy and social networks in the modern world is inextricable, and their use as innovative tools of public diplomacy and their influence on diplomatic processes can be observed. One of the opportunities provided by new media is the ability to communicate in informal settings. At the same time, one can note the role of social platforms in conducting digital diplomacy and as an integral part of the ‘soft power’ policy (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 56-57).

The role and importance of digital diplomacy is increasingly being emphasized by the use of digital media in foreign policy activities, in the development and implementation of foreign policy strategies, and in expanding its influence on public opinion today. The unprecedented global reach and potential for diplomatic innovation enabled by digital and social media are transforming the practice of diplomacy (Khlopov, 2022, p. 1).

The new diplomatic trend is associated with the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, social networks in which individuals actively participate (Tsvetkova, 2011a). For example, in this context, the creation of the US ‘Public Diplomacy 2.0’ program, aimed at encompassing social networking sites and other Internet tools to win the ‘war of ideas’, can be noted (Hallams, 2011).

The achievement of state goals and the conduct of diplomatic activities are carried out through new tools, such as global social networks Twitter and Facebook (Khlopov, 2022, p. 1). For example, information dissemination has begun to be carried out through ‘Twitter diplomacy’, integrated into the digital system. In this context, it can be noted that 98% of UN member states have official accounts on the Twitter social network (as of 2020). (Tankovska, 2025). The events of the ‘Arab Spring’ in 2011 and the subsequent unrest, expressed in the use of social networks by young activists to “spread dissident discourses around the world, shape narratives, and create revolutions in live broadcasts,” led to a more serious attitude towards social networks (Kinas, 2019, pp. 74-79).

Thus, it can be noted that the spread of communication and information technologies led to the transformation of the means of social protest and further strengthened the revolution in diplomacy (Adesina, 2017). Networking as a type of activity began to form the basis of diplomatic practice (Hocking & Melissen, 2015).

The above has shown the re-emergence of digital diplomacy, which is mainly expressed in the use of social networks for diplomatic purposes and in adapting to the situations and conditions of the world system

(Manor, 2015). However, in the modern world, digital diplomacy is not limited to the use of social networks in political and diplomatic activities, but also has its impact on world politics. The expansion of the personal capabilities of a political actor and the increase in the efficiency of governance depend on the application of digital diplomacy mechanisms (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 57).

5.2. Digital Diplomacy and Big Data

The content of socio-political processes depends on traditional values and meanings, which makes the formation and protection of value-semantic spaces one of the most important tasks of political governance (Volodenkov, 2016a, p. 16). The processes of datafication, characterized by the emergence of various actors on the Internet and the spread of big data analytics used for political purposes and creating a number of new problems in relations, affect the mentioned components. That is, in today's digital reality, both users of social networks as the main consumers of synthetic information, and states as the main actors of the traditional system of international relations, are under the influence of big data and sophisticated analytics (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, pp. 174-175).

The impact of digital traces and data on a person, politics, and international relations as a whole is one of the current issues today (Tsvetkova, 2011b, pp. 84–89). Due to the need for access to big data to complete the picture of the balance of political forces in social networks, this issue becomes one of the main issues for studying the phenomenon of digital diplomacy. (Tsvetkova 2020, pp. 45-46). Using big data analytics, the effectiveness of digital diplomacy and the policy of attracting the target audience are analyzed (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 181).

Big data is obtained through data collection and machine analysis, while small data is expressed in a limited number of posts and tweets, manually or by machine, from social networks (Sytnik, 2022). Small data has long been used in the field of international relations because of its suitability for the analysis of digital diplomacy. In this context, it can be noted that the successful implementation of digital diplomacy is linked to constant analytics of big data and the use of special algorithms to disseminate information (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, pp. 180, 191).

Today, conducting full-scale information campaigns is expressed in the implementation of any theory, agreement, law, idea, concept of 'hard power', its application in practice and the use of Big data methodology to access the necessary information about the audience of social networks, the relationships between account holders, groups, communities, and political leanings of people. The above allows, based on the analysis, to create target audiences based on interests, geographical location, age and other parameters, and subsequently use them to influence them in one's favor (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 55). 'Hard power' is more effective when it transmits information obtained using complex analysis (sentiment analysis, network analysis, etc.) and computer algorithms that can work with big data (Leonov, 2021).

Thus, the above indicates humanity's transition to the era of Big Data diplomacy (Leonov, 2021). In practice, the use of the method called 'data diplomacy' is manifested in the formation of digital diplomacy strategies, the creation of effective posts, messages, and the immediate identification of sources of disinformation (Tsvetkova, 2020, p. 45). In this context, the impact of datafication and related challenges on the development of digital diplomacy can be noted.

In the classical sense, digital diplomacy acts as a key object of datafication and the changing system of international relations (Tsvetkova, 2020, pp. 37-47; Bjola, C. & Holmes, 2015). Big data analytics at all levels, namely international organizations, foreign ministries, digital platforms for international media broadcasting, and public diplomacy actors, have conditioned the transformation of digital diplomacy into data diplomacy (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 176).

Datafication has contributed to the transformation of digital diplomacy into data diplomacy or data-driven diplomacy as a separate mechanism in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of various countries since 2010.

Data diplomacy, which involves the implementation of foreign policy goals using big data analytics, is a tool actively used in the foreign policy arsenal of various countries today. The need for digital diplomacy or data diplomacy in crisis situations is related to its purpose, which is to anticipate and react to events, offer its own interpretation, and immediately influence different groups (clusters) of users and their influencers in the network using algorithms, codes, and programmers (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, pp. 177, 179).

5.3. Artificial Intelligence and Digital Diplomacy

The rapid and uncontrolled access of various actors to artificial intelligence technologies to influence target audiences through effective information campaigns, filtering, synthetic media, and the creation of deepfakes has marked a new stage in the development of digital diplomacy. Digital diplomats have come to the conclusion that the development of a digital information campaign or the influence on target audiences is impossible without the use of analytics (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 178). In modern times, the collection and analysis of information received from a large number of users as Big Data (hashtag analysis, user reaction assessment, identification of key bloggers, content analysis of posts and comments, etc.) is provided by advanced computer software and artificial intelligence (Leonov, 2021).

The results of analyzing user data are expressed in a model of their preferences, in the ‘unique reality of the individual’ – in an information vacuum (Sinchuk & Kashirina, 2021, p. 87). At the same time, today we are talking about the entanglement noted by A. Vendt and J. Der Derian, which is a result of the continuous increase in the number of participants, the spread of cyberattacks, the expansion of information campaigns and Twitter protests. (Der Derian, 2011). The current state of digital international relations is increasingly interpreted by Der Derian through the concept of quantum diplomacy. This situation is characterized by the intertwining of seemingly unrelated events between reality and the digital representation of politics, the need for diplomacy to respond to all information challenges in conditions of uncertainty and continuous information flash mobs against state leaders or the state in general (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 178).

In the future, thanks to artificial intelligence, these methods of data analysis and their use to analyze the digitalization of international relations will become more effective (Tsvetkova, 2020, p. 45). Taking digital diplomacy to a new level involves actively funding the development of digital products using artificial intelligence (Sinchuk et al., 2022, p. 57).

Conclusion

Thus, we can note both the negative impact of datafication on the effectiveness of state digital diplomacy, as well as the positive impact that opens up new opportunities as a result of the proper use of big data. At the same time, it should be noted that the specifics of the political and socio-cultural context in which user actions occur play an important role in interpreting the obtained indicators (Spry, 2022). This means that the formation of results requires not only machine and discourse analysis, but also an understanding of the context (cultural and political). (Tsvetkova et al., 2022, p. 181).

The field of international relations has been influenced by social networks, including the global social networks Twitter and Facebook, which have contributed to the use of digital technologies as foreign policy tools by states. Thus, digital diplomacy, as a new phenomenon in international relations, is used in addition to traditional diplomatic communication channels. At the same time, it should be noted that digital resources act as an additional form of public diplomacy.

The activation of the system of national priorities in the minds of people and the creation of a vivid image of the national idea provide the opportunity to be ‘aggressively effective in the modern information world’ and an advantage in information warfare (McLuhan, 2003, p. 394). The core of the symbolic capital of culture is the national idea, which participates in the formation of a bright foreign policy image of the state. It represents a value system consisting of the self-awareness of society and personal and national

development goals from a historical perspective. While the system of national priorities, ideas and customs is perceived by the majority as more important than informational influences and temptations from outside, the proposal of a bright symbolic project of the national idea in the information space provides the country with cultural hegemony. In this regard, the current level of diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan is relevant not only because it serves the interests of these two states, but also because it makes a significant contribution to regional and international peace and prosperity (*Azərbaycan – Türkiyə diplomatik münasibətləri – 30, 2025*).

According to the new information paradigm of geopolitics, information dominance in virtual space will determine the fate of spatial relations between states, which indicates the strategic geopolitical importance of symbolic cultural capital in the information space (Vasilenko, 2010, p. 8). In this sense, the symbolic capital of the national cultures of Azerbaijan and Türkiye constitutes geopolitical potential in the changing global order. Thus, we can note that the diplomatic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, which share common cultural codes and historical roots, plays a significant role in the information war.

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