Parahyangan Catholic University

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Department of International Relations

Accredited A

SK BAN –PT NO: 451/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/S/XI/2014

Digital Diplomacy: A Twitter breakthrough between Iran-US relations in the JCPOA agreement

Thesis

By

Nurul Amirah Binti Mohd Yunos

2015330193

Bandung

2019

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Thesis Validation

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Title   : Digital Diplomacy: A Twitter breakthrough between
                          Iran-US relations in the JCPOA agreement

Has been examined in the Undergraduate Thesis Defense Examination
On Friday, July 19th 2019
And thereby declared **PASSED**

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Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

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I, as followed:

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                               between Iran – US relations in the JCPOA
                               agreement

       Hereby state that this thesis proposal is based on original work and has not been previously submitted to obtain academic degree by another student. Any information, quoted journals or opinion used in this thesis are cited in accordance to the research standard requirements.

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Bandung, 08 July 2019

Nurul Amirah Binti Mohd Yunos

ABSTRACT

Name : Nurul Amirah Binti Mohd Yunos

Student ID : 2015330193

Title : Digital diplomacy: A Twitter breakthrough
between Iran-US relations in the JCPOA agreement

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Diplomacy between Iran and the United States has been significantly hampered since the severing of diplomatic ties in 1980. Hostilities are ingrained in their relations and the nuclear dispute between the two nations further worsened such conditions. Given the difficulties of high-level diplomatic engagement between Iran and US, traditional diplomacy could not serve its purpose in resolving the nuclear issue. However, advancement in technology brought a new form of diplomacy known as digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy provides another option for communication between states. It involves the use of social media platforms such as *Twitter* as diplomatic tools in the pursuit of their foreign policies. *Twitter* enables the possibility of countries with severed diplomatic ties such as Iran and US to engage and form dialogue for diplomatic outreach. Furthermore, digital diplomacy tools are useful for management of incremental change. Thus, this research aims to understand on how *Twitter* serves as a diplomatic tool for Iran and US in the case study of nuclear agreement. Diplomacy theory of R.P. Barston and G.R. Berridge as well as the theory of digital diplomacy by Marcus Holmes will be used as a conceptual basis to support analysis. The method of data collection used in this research is qualitative content analysis in case study research. This research concluded that *Twitter* can be used as an alternative diplomatic tool for communication between states in particular with a severed diplomatic tie and also, a strategy for management of incremental change.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Iran, United States, Twitter, Nuclear

ABSTRAK

Nama	: Nurul Amirah Binti Mohd Yunos
NPM	: 2015330193
Judul	: *Digital diplomacy: A Twitter breakthrough between Iran-US relations in the JCPOA agreement*

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Diplomasi antara Iran dan Amerika Serikat terhambat sejak terputusnya hubungan diplomatik pada tahun 1980. Hubungan kedua negara semakin buruk seiring dengan masalah kepemilikan nuklir Iran. Hal tersebut membuat diplomasi tradisional tidak dapat menjadi sebuah sarana dalam mengatasi masalah. Meskipun demikian, kemajuan teknologi membawa bentuk baru diplomasi yang dikenal sebagai diplomasi digital. Diplomasi digital menyediakan sebuah opsi lain bagi negara untuk berkomunikasi yaitu melalui platform media sosial seperti *Twitter*. *Twitter* dapat digunakan sebagai sebuah alat diplomasi untuk mencapai kebijakan luar negeri. Keberadaan *Twitter* memungkinkan negara-negara dengan hubungan diplomatik yang terputus seperti Iran dan AS untuk berdiplomasi kembali. Selain itu, perangkat diplomasi digital berguna untuk manajemen perubahan sifat secara berkala. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini akan berfokus pada pengunaan *Twitter* sebagai alat diplomatik antara Iran dan AS dalam studi kasus perjanjian nuklir. Penulis akan menggunakan teori diplomasi R.P. Barston dan G.R. Berridge serta teori diplomasi digital oleh Marcus Holmes yang akan digunakan sebagai dasar konsep untuk mendukung analisis. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode analisis isi kualitatif dalam studi kasus. Hasil temuan dari penelitian tesis ini menyimpulkan bahwa *Twitter* dapat digunakan sebagai alat diplomasi alternatif untuk berkomunikasi khususnya antar negara- negara yang memiliki keterbatasan hubungan diplomatik tingkat tinggi. Lebih lanjut lagi, sebagai strategi untuk manajemen perubahan sifat secara berkala.

Kata kunci: Diplomasi, Iran, Amerika Serikat, *Twitter*, Nuklir

PREFACE

Thesis titled *Digital diplomacy: A Twitter breakthrough between Iran-US relations in the JCPOA agreement* is written as a requirement to achieve undergraduate degree in International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, Indonesia.

This thesis seeks to understand the use of *Twitter* as a diplomatic tool between Iran and United States during the nuclear negotiations process. Also, hopes to bring enlightenment on the study of digital diplomacy in International Relations.

The author realized that this thesis is still far from perfection and further research is needed to complement a whole understanding of the research problem. Thus, the author is open to all forms of suggestions, criticism, and recommendations to improve this research to be more comprehensive.

Bandung, 08 July 2019

Nurul Amirah

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Verily with every hardship comes ease (Quran 94:6)

With Allah's will and guidance, I have persevered to complete this journey.

This prayer is reflected as a hope for the next chapter of life.

_____

To my late mom, I hope you are proud of me and wish that I could share this moment with you.

To my father, thank you for raising me.

To my dear aunt and grandma, thank you for being my backbone and your endless prayers as well as support until today.

To my supervisor, Albert Triwibowo

Thank you for your words of encouragement, knowledge and trust throughout the writing process of this thesis. It has been a wonderful journey and I am grateful to have you as my thesis supervisor.

To all lecturers in the Department of International Relations whom have taught me during my 4 years of studies here in Indonesia, thank you for sharing your knowledge.

_____

To these people I call Home,

Syazwani Kamarulzaman, Fikriyah Ibrahim, Nazura Shahri, Bazli Bahar, Azim Mahayudin, Qawi Matsatejo, Wafi Manan

Thank you for being my support system throughout our 13 years and counting friendship. And most importantly, thank you for believing in me especially when I did not believe in myself. I would have not made it this far without you all cheering for me. My life is blessed with each one of your presence and thank you

for bringing out the best in me. I am eternally grateful to have such a powerful support system that will be there to catch me always.

To my second home,

Marisa Magdalena, Jeanet Priscila, Tania Siera, Monika Sandy, Muhammad Ficky, Esy Gracia

Thank you for being a great friend more than I could ask for, all of you have made it bearable to be less homesick. I will definitely miss our time together but I know that we will continue to keep in touch no matter where we will be.

And last but not least, to Sandi Seisario

Thank you for staying by my side for the last 4 years, your care, support, kindness and patience means a lot more than words could describe.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU   : European Union

JPA   : Joint Plan of Action

JCPOA   : Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

NPT   : Non-Proliferation Treaty

UN   : United Nations

US   : United States

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Striving for a lasting world peace remains as a common goal of every country. Today, we live in a world of complex issues including the existence of nuclear weapons that endangers humankind and threatens international peace also security.[1] Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki still resonate to this day and serve as the greatest warning of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons.[2] It was evident that states could divert the development of nuclear capabilities for weapon purposes. Thus, preventing such diversions became a central issue in the discussions within global community on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

A Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of nuclear weapons was created within United Nations framework and entered into force in 1970.[3] The treaty was intended to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and foster peaceful uses of nuclear energy in pursuit of nuclear disarmament.[4] NPT represents a continual diplomatic effort of securing an end to nuclear weapons as it precipitates conflict. In the presence of conflict, its impact often has a tendency to spill over within

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[1] Sverre Lodgaard, *Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world?* (England: Routledge,2011): 2

[2] Ingrid Piper, "Have the ashes of Hiroshima taught the world anything?", *CNN*, https://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/05/asia/japan-hiroshima-nuclear-lessons/index.html (accessed August 31, 2018)

[3] United Nations, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)", *UNODA*, https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/ (accessed August 31, 2018)

[4] Ibid.

geographic proximity.[5] For this reason, a state's diplomatic relations contribute to prevent future conflicts between nations.

International disputes can be mediated by means of diplomacy between states. Diplomacy signifies the practice of conducting negotiations and management of relations between states by peaceful means.[6] Traditional notions of diplomacy often depicted as high-level summits, conferences between political leaders or diplomats and also, via direct telecommunications.[7] Summits refers to regular annual heads of state or government meetings to discuss issues and possible decisions on matters of great importance.[8] Meetings such as G-7/8, EU, ASEAN as well as UN general assembly and global conferences.[9] Furthermore, diplomacy portrays as a peaceful conduct of relations[10] and "behind closed doors" discussions.[11] In other words, diplomacy affiliates with high-level engagement for communication between states.

Contrarily, traditional diplomacy could not serve as a medium for states with severed diplomatic relations. For example, diplomacy between Iran and United States (US) has been significantly hampered due to the absence of high-

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[5] Gary Goertz and Paul F.Diehl, *Territorial changes and International conflict* (London: Routledge, 1992): 11Top of FormBottom of Form

[6] R.P. Barston, *Modern diplomacy* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013): 1

[7] G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy Theory And Practice Fifth Edition* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 99

[8] Barston, Modern diplomacy, Op.cit., 82

[9] Ibid.

[10] Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (England: Routledge, 2011): 1

[11] James Pamment, "The mediatization of diplomacy", *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* Vol. 9 Issue.3, (2014): 264

level engagement since the severing diplomatic ties in 1980.[12] Iran's wariness about engaging with US is mainly attributable to two notable historical grievances, the CIA-orchestrated 1953 coup[13] and Iran- Iraq war of the 1980s.[14] Following the 9/11 attack, US former president Bush labelled Iran as part of the 'axis of evil' in his 2002 State of the Union speech.[15] This prompted Iran to invest substantially in its nuclear program and triggering wide-ranging concerns in the West as to the true nature and purpose of its development.[16]

Iran and US relations further exacerbated with the revelation of Iran's two undeclared nuclear facilities at Natanz and Arak in 2002.[17] The international community feared that it is intended for developing nuclear weapons capability. In response, US-led various international sanctions against Iran including from United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU).[18] Consequently, this constrained Iran's economy and partially isolating the country. The deterioration of Iran-US

[12] Ishaan Tharoor, "The key moments in the long history of U.S.-Iran tensions", *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/03/31/the-key-moments-in-the-long-history-of-u-s-iran-tensions/ (accessed August 31, 2018)

[13] Saeed Kamali Dehghan and Richard Norton-Taylor, "CIA admits role in 1953 Iranian coup", *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/19/cia-admits-role-1953-iranian-coup (accessed August 31, 2019)

[14] Michael Dobbs, "U.S. Had Key Role in Iraq Buildup", *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/12/30/us-had-key-role-in-iraq-buildup/133cec74-3816-4652-9bd8-7d118699d6f8/ (accessed August 31, 2018)

[15] Andrew Glass, "President Bush cites 'axis of evil", *Politico*, https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/29/bush-axis-of-evil-2002-1127725 (accessed August 31, 2018)

[16] Gawdat Bahgat, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Islamic Republic of Iran", *Iranian Studies* Vol.39 No.3, (2006): 308

[17] Alex Spillius, "Iran exile group claims evidence of hidden nuclear site", *The Telegraph*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/10173274/Iran-exile-group-claims-evidence-of-hidden-nuclear-site.html (accessed September 8, 2018)

[18] Josh Levs, "A summary of sanctions against Iran", *CNN*, https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/23/world/meast/iran-sanctions-facts/index.html (accessed August 31, 2018)

relations has been marred by mutual distrust and openings towards *rapprochement* were closed off by political as well as security considerations on both sides.

Considering Iran's controversial nuclear issue and series of key events post– 1979 Iranian revolution between US has cast a long shadow over any efforts at direct talks. The severed diplomatic relations of Iran and US limits them from high-level engagement upon which traditional diplomacy could not mediate their differences. However, the advancement in technology has brought a new form of diplomacy known as digital diplomacy.[19] It involves the use of digital tools such as social media platforms for communication between states.[20] Hence, digital diplomacy present as an option in particular for states with severed diplomatic relations.

1.2 Problem Identification

Digital diplomacy is a new phenomenon of digital use within the dimension of diplomacy. It facilitates another means of communication between states through social media platforms. The use of social media such as *Twitter* enables states to engage and form dialogue.[21] Exchanges on *Twitter* occurs in front of a global audience as opposed to "behind closed doors", providing an added level of scrutiny that is unique to this form of communication.[22] In addition, the instantaneous nature of social media also accelerates the pace of diplomatic

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[19] Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes, *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 4-5
[20] Olubukola S. Adesina, "Foreign policy in an era of digital diplomacy", *Iranian Studies* Vol.39 No.3, (2006): 3
[21] Constance Duncombe, "Twitter and Transformative Diplomacy: Social Media and Iran- US Relations," *International Affairs* Vol. 93 No.3, (2017): 546
[22] Ibid., 547

communication.[23] In other words, diplomacy pursued through social media channels allows states to conduct diplomatic outreach.

Conventional practice of traditional diplomacy through face-to-face interaction has limitations in the context of states with a severed diplomatic relation. Digital diplomacy could serve as an alternative medium for communication on which states can engage. As an example, Iran and US relations was arguably built through sustained *Twitter* communication during the nuclear negotiation process.[24] In 2015, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* (JCPOA) agreement was the positive outcome of a better relation between both countries.[25] Iran and US actively used *Twitter* to convey their messages on resolving the nuclear issue.[26] This illustrates vividly the growing use of digital tools within which diplomacy unfolds.

Technology does not affect the core aspects of traditional diplomacy but perhaps contributes new approaches of conducting diplomacy.[27] In addition, digital diplomacy is also perceived as a diplomatic tool for change management.[28] This enables possible openings towards *rapprochement* through incremental

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[23] Olubukola, Foreign policy, Op.cit., 7

[24] Duncombe, Twitter and Transformative Diplomacy, Op.cit., 546

[25] Julian Borger, "Iran nuclear deal: world powers reach historic agreement to lift sanctions", *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/14/iran-nuclear-programme-world-powers-historic-deal-lift-sanctions (accessed March 27, 2019)

[26] Chelsea J. Carter, "It's a three-decade first: Presidents of U.S., Iran talk directly, if only by phone", *CNN*, https://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/27/politics/us-iran/index.html (accessed March 31, 2019)

[27] Marcus Holmes, "Digital Diplomacy and International Change Management", in *Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice*, ed. Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015): 13

[28] Ibid.

change with respect to the opponent through diplomacy.[29] Put simply, the use of digital tools such social media can be utilized as a strategy of managing change. Therefore, it can be examined as another vehicle of information to be understood as sources of changes that occur between state relations.

1.2.1 Scope of Research

In this research, the writer solely focuses on the use of *Twitter* as the social media platform of communication during the JCPOA nuclear negotiation process that steered to a better outcome of Iran and US relations. It will also only be focused on the use of digital diplomacy within state-to-state relations. Furthermore, this research examined a content analysis of *Twitter* posts by Iran and US specifically related to the nuclear deal negotiations. In addition, the timeline of this research is in the period of 2013 to 2015, under Iran's president Hassan Rouhani and US President Obama. The chosen research timeline is based on the year of 2013 which was the first historic phone call in 30 years between US and Iran head of states[30] and until 2015 in which the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* (JCPOA) was established.[31]

1.2.2 Research Question

How *Twitter* serves as a diplomatic tool for Iran and US during the nuclear negotiation process between 2013 to 2015?

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[29] Ibid., 23

[30] Dan Roberts and Julian Borger, "Obama holds historic phone call with Rouhani and hints at end to sanctions", *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/27/obama-phone-call-iranian-president-rouhani (accessed September 9, 2018)

[31] Mark Landler, "Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal He Long Scorned", *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html (accessed September 9, 2018)

1.3 Purpose of Research

This research seeks to fill a gap in the study of digital diplomacy by examining Iran's and US *Twitter* posts in the lead up to the 2015 nuclear deal. Undertaking this research will gain a new understanding towards digital diplomacy on the use of social media platforms particularly *Twitter* as a tool for diplomatic engagement. The growing use of *Twitter* to facilitate dialogue between states has not yet been given sufficient attention. Furthermore, social media have become a significant platform on which diplomats and political leaders can communicate particularly when high-level diplomatic interaction are limited.

The use of *Twitter* as a communication platform has the potential to mediate a political change between a severed diplomatic tie of two states or more. *Twitter* enables possible opening for dialogue particularly when high-level diplomatic engagement is difficult to attain. Yet, there are limited consideration of the tools which diplomats employ in their day-to-day engagement with others. Understanding the use of social media as a tool of diplomatic practice provides an insight into the growing use of digital tools within which diplomacy unfolds.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

There will be three main concepts to form the basis of this research. Namely, Diplomacy, Digital diplomacy and National interest. It is sought to support of understanding the underlying research problem.

Diplomacy is one of the fundamental concepts in international relations and subject to constant change from time to time. According to Ronald Peter

Barston, Diplomacy relates to the management of relations between states and also between states and non-state actors.[32] In the event of potential or existing bilateral and wider conflict as well as dispute, diplomacy involves reducing tension, clarification and seeking an acceptable outcome.[33] This can be conduct through personal interaction or bilateral and multilateral relations. Geoff Raymond Berridge also stated the main purpose of diplomacy is to enable states pursue the objective of their foreign policies in peaceful means.[34] Thus, diplomacy can mediate disputes or conflict and prevent the spread when they occur.

In addition, Adam Watson emphasize upon which diplomacy does not always occur under the condition of peace. It is an effort to manage conflict by persistent persuasion in the midst of ongoing changes.[35] This implies that diplomacy can be refer to as an instrument to influence decisions of foreign governments. States articulate their foreign policy objectives by means of diplomacy and to secure agreement.[36] In other words, diplomacy is a means of communication between states in furthering foreign policy and resolving conflict through negotiation.

As technology advanced, a new form of diplomacy began to emerge known as digital diplomacy. Ilan Manor and Elad Segev refers digital diplomacy as the use of social media platforms carried out by state in pursuit of state's

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[32] Barston, *Modern diplomacy*, Op.cit., 1
[33] Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, Op.cit., 4
[34] G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy Theory And Practice Fifth Edition* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 1
[35] Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The dialogue between states* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1984): 223
[36] Berridge, Op.cit.

foreign policy goals.[37] Olubukola S. Adesina describe that world leaders and diplomats are increasingly adopting social media such as *Twitter* in particular, to engage and communicate to the audience they seek to influence.[38] In an increasingly connected world, policy leaders has the ability to share information to a global audience and set political agendas beyond traditional channels.[39] The use of digital tools has brought new methods of conducting diplomacy and projecting a state's foreign policy.

Based on Marcus Holmes, digital diplomacy can be defined as a strategy of managing change through digital tools and virtual collaborations.[40] Holmes delineates two type of changes in the international system which are top-down exogenous shocks and bottom-up incremental endogenous shifting.[41] Digital diplomacy in particular are more favorable in managing incremental shifting.[42] Incremental change is characterized by subtle changes in day-to-day practice upon which it requires the ability to synthesize and analyze large amount of data to determine changing trends.[43] This conveys that digital diplomacy is useful in managing incremental changes between state relations through alterations in daily practice over time.

[37] Ilan Manor and Elad Segev, "America's selfie: How the US portrays itself on its social media accounts", in *Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice*, ed. Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015): 89

[38] Olubukola, Foreign policy, Op.cit., 5

[39] Ibid., 7

[40] Ibid., 15

[41] Ibid.

[42] Holmes, International Change management, Op.cit., 21

[43] Ibid., 24

The concept of diplomacy and digital diplomacy are affiliated with achieving foreign policy. According to Niccolò Machiavelli, the main responsibility of rulers always seeks the advantages and defend the state's interest in conducting foreign policy.[44] This is to ensure the state's survival against the interests of rivals and competitors. Kenneth Waltz also believes that each state plots the course it thinks will best serve its interests.[45] In other words, diplomacy and the use of digital diplomatic tools by states act accordingly to its national interest in pursuit of foreign policy.

In line with this research, states engage in diplomacy to pursue their foreign policy for peaceful purposes. It is also to resolve disputes or conflict without resort to force but through negotiations. However, there is a new form of diplomacy which involves the use of digital tools. This can be used to set political agendas beyond traditional channels and as a strategy of managing changes in a state's diplomatic relations. Digital tools such as social media provide another platform for communication between states. Therefore, it serves as an alternative medium of resolving dispute or conflict.

1.5 Literature Review

Diplomacy is changing and states are adopting new ways to conduct relations and interact globally to achieve their goals and defend their interests. Social media have been increasingly utilized by states as a platform on which diplomats can communicate. There is an emerging body of work contributes to the

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[44] Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations Theories and Approaches*, (United Kingdon: Oxford University Press, 2013): 75
[45] Ibid., 81

understanding role of social media that has been growing in the realm of contemporary diplomacy. Social media as a tool of diplomatic practice has enabled communication that often constraint between diplomats and states.

An article written by Shumin su and Mark Xu on *Twitplomacy: Social Media as a New Platform for Development of Public Diplomacy* expressed on the modern information technologies is altering the traditional way of communication in society.[46] Digital technologies has also added new players to be include in political decisions.[47] One of various measures of soft diplomacy that has emerged was micro-blogging-based diplomacy and *Twitter* as an example of social media network that enables two-way communication.[48] The author highlights *Twitter* can be used to create contacts and develop dialogue with foreign audiences as well as introduces state's foreign policy goals and priorities.[49] However, this article did not elaborate on the consequences of *Twitter* that changes the way diplomacy is conduct. Overall, the authors primarily focus more towards on how *Twitter* is used in public diplomacy and its benefits whereas the implications on the use of *Twitter* in traditional diplomacy is just as significant.

Following, an article written by Ausra Dumciuviene in line with the view of previous article above. The author underlines the significance of "Twiplomacy" as a new phenomenon is undeniable. Numerous state leaders, governmental institutions and diplomats have accounts in *Twitter* which is utilized to shape a

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[46] Shumin Su and Mark Xu, "Twiplomacy: Social Media as a New Platform for Development of Public Diplomacy," *International Journal of E-Politics* Vol. 6 No.1, (2015): 99
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 98
[49] Ibid.

positive image of state and promote foreign policy goals.[50] *Twitter* provides

opportunities such as creating dialogue amongst politicians and to influence

foreign opinions in relation to their country in wider audiences.[51] Social networks

such as *Twitter* is useful for transmitting short messages and receiving feedback

form other users.[52] The author comprehensively evaluate the use of *Twitter* as

effective tool for public diplomacy implementation. Although it considers a

positive impact of "Twiplomacy" on the implementation of foreign policy

objectives, the article was limited on the consideration towards the balance of

decision-making power includes civil societies profoundly affected by

technology.

On the other hand, an article on *The Communications and Internet*

Revolution in International Relations written by Elnur Hasan Mikail and Cavit

Emre Aytekin argues that technology and their effects has always had influenced

on international relations and politics.[53] It has multiplied number of voices to the

decision-making and often forced decisions to be taken more rapidly.[54]

Furthermore, the rise of global communication provides transparency to wide

audiences making it difficult for countries unilaterally make national policy

decisions in the context of global problems.[55] The author further elaborates on the

fundamental of modern international system and ways of state behavior in

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[50] Aušra Dumčiuvienė, "Twiplomacy: The Meaning of Social Media to Public Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Lithuania," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* Vol. 35, (2016): 92
[51] Ibid., 98
[52] Ibid., 97
[53] Elnur Hasan Mikail and Cavit Emre Aytekin, "The communications and Internet Revolution in International Relations", *Open Journal of Political Science* Vol.6 (2016): 346
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 347

bilateral relations and also in international system was based on no high authority principle.[56] Regardless the article has focus more towards technology and their effects on international relations, it is lack of discussion on the effects of technology towards the role of state in diplomacy.

Constance Duncombe wrote an article on *Twitter and transformative diplomacy: social media and Iran–US relations* examined *Twitter* as a tool diplomat employ in their engagement with counterparts. The author argues that *Twitter* has the capacity to frame representations of state identity.[57] Ignoring this aspect in the practice of diplomacy may overlooked the state interest which is the key to effective negotiating strategies. The author further emphasized on the use of *Twitter* to express particular concerns through representations of identity may provide an element of distance that helps to reduce tension before it become a crisis.[58] The space restrictions of *Twitter* forced targeted communication around an issue of interest to a desired audience. Thus, diplomacy pursued through this channel becomes a public resource, as opposed to the traditional view of diplomacy as "behind closed doors". This article manages to explore *Twitter* as an option for political leaders to communicate, although the author did not analyze to what extent.

To sum up, all four articles explain meticulously on the revolutionary advancement in communications and technology as a significant driver that changes the way diplomacy unfolds. It also further elaborates on the use of social

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[56] Elnur Hasan Mikail and Cavit Emre Aytekin, The communications and Internet Revolution, Op.cit., 349
[57] Duncombe, Twitter and Transformative Diplomacy, Op.cit., 551
[58] Ibid., 554

media as a diplomatic tool to influence wider audiences in attaining foreign policy objectives. Despite that, there was limited considerations on the role of communication and technological developments plays a determinant role in the conduct of diplomacy. Furthermore, the use of *Twitter* diplomacy as a platform of dialogue between state leaders to create *rapprochement* was only reviewed in an article. Thus, this gap regarding the potential of *Twitter* as a tool of diplomatic engagement in the nature of hostilities between states will further examine by the writer.

1.6 Research Methodology

Based on the thesis topic, the author will carry out qualitative research as the most preferable method of data collection. It will focus on gathering multiple forms of data such as documents and audiovisual materials.[59] The researcher will mainly retrieve the data through documents such as newspapers and scholarly journals related to the issue.[60] Furthermore, audiovisual materials may take in the form of collecting online messages from *Twitter*.[61]

Data will be reviewed to make sense out of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.[62] According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey, researchers need to "winnow" the data.[63] In other words, focusing in on some of the data while disregarding other parts of it. This will be done through content analysis in

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[59] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches, 4th Edition* (California: SAGE Publications, 2014): 653
[60] Ibid.
[61] Creswell, Research Design, Op.cit., 658
[62] Ibid., 672
[63] Greg Guest, Kathleen M. MacQueen and Emily E. Namey, *Applied Thematic Analysis* (California: SAGE Publications, 2012): 50

qualitative method upon which data will be organized into words and themes to draw out meaning or interpretation of the data.[64] The research will then continue the process of coding all of the data for analysis.[65] Coding is the process of segmenting data into categories and labelling the categories with a term.[66] To that end, the researcher will interpret to construct a holistic understanding of the issue with support from all the data collected.[67]

1.7 Thesis organization

The first chapter of this thesis will begin with an introduction on the background of traditional diplomacy practices and its evolution as technology advances. The use of digital tools in diplomacy such as social media in particular *Twitter* has been increasingly used amongst politicians. An example of case study will be included to further illustrate on the use of *Twitter* as a diplomatic tool. In the context of this thesis, it will focus on the nuclear deal negotiations between Iran and United States.

In the second chapter of this thesis will further elaborate on the emergence of digital diplomacy practice due to the advancement of technology. Social media particularly *Twitter* provides another platform for dialogue between states. This medium can accommodate politicians to communicate when traditional face-to-face diplomacy is limited. *Tweets* posted by political leaders can make particular foreign policy options possible and rule out others.

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[64] Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 2012): 2
[65] Creswell, Research Design, Op.cit., 673
[66] Gretchen B Rossman and Sharon Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (California: SAGE Publications, 2012): 282
[67] Creswell, Research Design, Op.cit., 672

The third chapter will be an overview of Iran and US relations and the nuclear deal negotiations process. A brief history of their relations will be included as well as Iran and US's interest regarding the nuclear agreement. Furthermore, the *tweets* between Iran and US throughout the negotiation process from 2013 to 2015 will also be highlighted in this chapter.

Next, the fourth chapter will draw on the correlation between the use of *Twitter* as a diplomatic tool on Iran and US relations in regards to the P5+1 nuclear negotiation process prior to the establishment of JCPOA agreement. The author has undertaken a content analysis of *tweets* posted from Iran and United States on the nuclear deal negotiations process. Based on the data collected, the author will then select important *tweets* that indicate positive changes in their relations. Lastly, chapter five will underlined the conclusion on the use of *Twitter* transforming the diplomatic relations between United States and Iran relating to the nuclear agreement in 2015.