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EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume represents concerted calls within and outside Africa on the need for multidisciplinary collaboration and research output. Specifically, papers were drawn from all disciplines and research focuses, which has further increased the quality of research and collegial engagement. Hence, topics covered in this volume cut across the areas of economics, politics, security, ICT, indigenous knowledge, development studies, finance, trade, youth engagement, agriculture, democratization, and nation-building, among others.

For instance, Thizwilondi Josephine Mudau in *African Youths and the Promotion of Sustainable Development through the Lens of Indigenous Knowledge (IKS) in the 21st Century* employed qualitative desktop research methodology in synthesizing existing literature to argue that IKS represents a dynamic body of wisdom encompassing sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, and community resilience and offers proven, contextually grounded solutions to modern challenges like climate change and food insecurity. The analysis highlights youth-led initiatives across the continent that are revitalizing indigenous crops, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with climate adaptation strategies, and using digital platforms for cultural preservation. Mudau concluded that for Africa to achieve authentic and sustainable development, a concerted effort is needed to empower youth through inclusive education, supportive policy frameworks, and intergenerational dialogue, thereby transforming indigenous knowledge from a cultural heritage into a living toolkit for a resilient future.

Masila Joshua Masipa in *Beneficiaries of Corruption? An analysis of the function of South African banks in handling and making money from crime proceeds* adopted institutional theory and the political economy of corruption and a qualitative research design that combines semi-structured interviews with compliance officers, financial regulators, and civil society actors with document analysis of Zondo Commission and Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) reports, legal statutes, and policy papers in examining how, in spite of strict anti-money-laundering (AML) and anti-corruption laws, South African banks may profit from, handle, or ineffectively stop the flow of monies associated with corruption. Specifically, with an emphasis on whether banks directly or indirectly benefit from the proceeds of crime, Masipa investigated the relationship between financial institutions and illegal financial flows within the following objectives: (1) assess the regulatory framework that oversees AML compliance; (2) examine high-profile cases of corruption in which banks are implicated; (3) evaluate due diligence and institutional accountability; and (4) suggest changes to improve ethical banking governance.

Then Sipho Patrick Bhengu-Mancosa & Andrisha Beharry-Ramraj in *Advancing Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprise Growth through Digitalized Enterprise and Supplier Development in South Africa* examined the current state of Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) in South Africa, investigated the role of digitalization in enhancing ESD, identified the challenges and opportunities in digitalizing ESD, and provided recommendations for policymakers, corporates, and Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). A qualitative secondary data approach was employed, drawing on thematic analysis of existing literature, reports, and industry initiatives. For key findings, Bhengu-Mancosa & Beharry-Ramraj indicated that ESD adoption remains limited; digitalization (Mancosa) significantly enhances market access and supplier diversity; infrastructure and skills gaps persist; and strategic digital integration can unlock growth opportunities for SMMEs.

Lere Amusan & Ebenezer O. Oni, in their study, *Disinvestment of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Developing Areas: An Assessment of Shoprite Disengagement in*

Nigeria, started by reflecting on why, at the global level, many MNCs have started to disengage from their host states. In a bid to respond to the possible reasons, Amusan & Oni pushed further into examining possible reasons that could explain why Shoprite, a large South African retailing company, disinvested from Nigeria after operating in the country for about 15 years, using secondary sources supported by primary data and personal observations. For them, the reasons range from political, economic, marketing, and legal to civil society attitudes towards their business. Employing the twin theories of neoliberalism and oligopoly that facilitate globalization, Amusan & Oni concluded that, aside from losing litigation to its erstwhile Nigerian business partners, competition from domestic and foreign retail companies contributed in no small measure to why Shoprite exited the Nigerian market.

In A sober teacher is a problem”: Unpacking Political Ideology and Emancipatory Struggles Within teacher unionism, Zwane Theminkosi Trevor & Matsepe David adopted the grounded postcolonial theory in examining how teacher unions embody and deploy political stances and ideologies to promote the emancipation and freedom of education, as well as the broader communities they aim to serve. Clearly, Trevor and Matsepe employed a qualitative interpretivist approach to analyze data from narrative interviews with unionized educators, along with further examination of public union discussions. Key findings of their research indicated four interrelated themes: (1) political consciousness as both a threat to order and a driver of democratic emancipation; (2) teacher unions functioning as a counter-hegemonic force challenging neoliberal geopolitics and political norms; (3) the ideological repositioning of teacher unions as intellectual activists rather than compliant officials; and (4) tensions between political agency and professional identity.

Douglas Nyath in Rural Youth and the Future of Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa: Revisiting the Abandonment Debate explored whether rural youth are truly abandoning agriculture or are instead redefining their involvement through diversified livelihood strategies. It examines the socio-economic, institutional, and cultural factors influencing youth decisions and analyzes how emerging hybrid forms of engagement—such as agripreneurship and part-time farming—are reshaping rural economies. A systematic desktop synthesis of peer-reviewed literature (2000–2025) was conducted using databases like Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Nyaath observed that youth disengagement from agriculture is not uniform but context-specific, and the key determinants to such disengagement include land scarcity, education, labor market structures, gender norms, and limited access to finance and technology.

Then, in ***Equal Ideals, Unequal Realities: Gender Dynamics in the Workplace of an International Religious Non-governmental Organisation in Eswatini***, Thembumenzi Jomo Ntshalintshali & Innocent Simphiwe Nojiyeza examined attitudes, experiences, and organizational practices regarding gender roles, power dynamics, and inclusivity by drawing on in-depth interviews and focus groups with 20 employees from a range of departments and hierarchical levels. The results of their findings show that male participants, who were primarily ideologically devoted to gender equality, showed conflicted feelings about shifting power dynamics. Unconscious bias, policy implementation gaps, and organizational culture were equally identified as the primary obstacles to change. The results emphasize that in order to guarantee changes in gender equality, context-specific solutions are required that go beyond the adoption of policies.

In Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Environmental Conservation Ngugi’s Petals of Blood, Thabo Prince Zondo started by reflecting on members of the impoverished and socio-economically disadvantaged community who are distressed by incessant drought and who consult

a seer and offer sacrifices to seek solutions. Using this as a point of departure, Zondo explored how text gestures and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) address the real dilemmas faced by Africans following the extensive and cross-generational crises that accompany coloniality. In this, Zondo provided an ecocritical reading of the text, drawing on relevant postcolonial/decolonial ideas to illustrate the ways in which indigenous African epistemologies can indeed boost efforts at environmental conservation and poverty alleviation in rural communities today.

Also, **Rendani Tshifhumul** in *Exploring the Role of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Healing Practices and Resilience During the COVID-19 pandemic in Thohoyandou*, presented a narrative inquiry into the experiences of individuals who survived COVID-19 without requiring hospitalization, based on in-depth interviews with three respondents. For Tshifhumul, among the identified practices were the inhalation of steam treated with stones and salt, as well as the application of various herbal concoctions, including *Tshiumbeumbe*, *Musese*, *Mufula Musudzungwane*, *Miora*, and *Mubomo*, guava leaves, and lemon grass tea, including a mixture that comprises onion, ginger, lemon, honey, and garlic. Therefore, Tshifhumul concludes that these findings not only shed light on the adaptive strategies employed by individuals in response to the pandemic but also underscore the significance of traditional healing practices in the context of contemporary health crises. Khulisile Judith Nkuna & Sikhumbuzo Sibuso Khoza, in their work, *Capturing Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Poetic Elements of Domesticated Animal Praise*, carried out an analytical analysis of the lyrical components found in the praises of Siswati domestic animals. Nkuna & Khoza observed that expressing gratitude to animals for their contributions to human life remains a significant goal of animal praise. Reflecting on case studies, they noted that the Nguni people view domestic animals as very close environmental companions, particularly for those who live in rural areas. Praise poetry's primary goal is to commemorate great men's accomplishments. However, the reverse is the case for the Swati people, who have a tradition of honoring non-human animals in their poetry, including the wild animals they encounter in their environs as well as the domestic livestock they raise.

Intaher M. Ambe, Ellsworth C. Jonathan, Phathutshedzo D. Lavhelani,* and David H. Selby, in their study, *Exploring the landscape of demand management practices in the public health sector in the Gauteng Province, South Africa: An Empirical Analysis*, employed secondary sources in determining what demand management practices are employed within Gauteng, South Africa, and public health sector institutions. Findings in their study revealed substantial obstacles in organizational structure, demand management techniques, budget, and alignment between demand planning and strategic goals, as well as supply chain management (SCM) rules, regulations, and specifications. They conclude that the paucity of demand management implementation in public sector organizations reveals a misalignment between strategic goals, demand management, and demand planning, resulting in a loss of value for public sector organizations.

Aderinsola E. Kayode, Shalini Sing, & Patricia P. Badenhorst's research, *ICT for Indigenous Knowledge Dissemination and Education in Africa: A Systematic Review*, conducted a systematic review of literature published between 2015 and 2025 to examine how ICT tools and platforms have been deployed to support indigenous knowledge dissemination and education in African contexts. The findings of their research indicated that ICT can enhance indigenous knowledge preservation, improve youth engagement, facilitate intergenerational learning, and broaden global visibility of African knowledge systems when implemented with community participation. However, challenges remain regarding digital access, cultural sensitivity, intellectual property rights, and the sustainability of technology-driven initiatives.

In ***Donald Trump-Twitter Diplomatic Disruptions And Impact On The Post-World War II International Order.***, Ndivhoniswani Aaron Tshidzumba & Puseletso Nthate examine how President Donald Trump's unprecedented use of Twitter as a direct channel for foreign policy communication disrupted established diplomatic norms inherited from the post-World War II international order. Through content analysis of Trump's social media communications, examination of foreign policy outcomes, and comparative analysis with traditional diplomatic practices, Tshidzumba & Nthate demonstrated that Trump's social media presidency constituted a significant departure from institutional diplomacy and contributed to broader challenges facing the established international order. Further findings reveal that digital direct engagement by heads of state bypasses institutional constraints, undermines multilateral consensus-building, and creates new vulnerabilities in international relations.

Furthermore, in ***Determinants And Effect Of Small-Scale Livestock Production On Household Income In Malawi: Evidence From Fifth Integrated Household Survey***, Gladson Andrew Chipala, Christopher Chombo & Hannah Dunga examined the determinants and effects of small-scale livestock production on household income among farmers in Malawi, using cross-sectional data from the Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) with a sample of 8,795 households. Their key findings indicate that household size, access to credit, access to extension services, landholding size, distance to the market, and location in the Northern region significantly increase the likelihood of participation in livestock production. Notably, households engaged in livestock production earned, on average, an additional MWK 36,405.76 compared to non-producing households, demonstrating its important role in improving economic welfare.

In ***Navigating Artificial Intelligence Personalization and Consumer Privacy in Digital Marketing across South Africa and Global Contexts***, Suraksha Moothura and Andrishya Beharry-Ramraj critically examined how AI-driven hyper-personalization in digital marketing influences consumer privacy, with a specific focus on its ethical implications and regulatory challenges in South Africa in comparison to global standards using desktop literature review methodology. Moothura & Beharry—Ramraj observed that ethical concerns such as manipulation, algorithmic bias, and reduced consumer autonomy were found to be inadequately addressed in South Africa, where legal instruments like POPIA lack the specificity and enforcement capacity evident in global standards like the GDPR. Taleat, Bisiriyu Abiodun & Lukamba, Muhlya Tshombe's article, ***Energy Sustainability and Sustainable Development Agenda: The Role of Public-Private Partnership in South Africa***, investigated the role and effectiveness of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in South Africa's energy development towards sustainability using a qualitative desk research methodology to analyze secondary data from policy documents, scholarly literature, and government publications. For Abiodun & Tshombe, key findings demonstrate that PPPs have attracted a substantial amount of private investment and benefited the economy through job creation and community development. However, institutional and systemic barriers, e.g., Eskom monopoly, regulatory uncertainty, grid integration constraints, and institutionalized dependency on coal, impede the full implementation of PPPs in accelerating the energy transformation. Hence, they recommend policy stability, energy regulation reform, enhancing financial methods, and ensuring that social equity consideration is factored into PPP structures.

For Olukayode Idris Lasisi in ***The Governance–Development Nexus in Nigeria: A Conceptual Synthesis of Good Governance and Policy Discourse Theories***, a qualitative, conceptual, and desk-based review approach was employed, relying on the literature, policy documents, and theoretical frameworks in reevaluating the governance development interface in Nigeria in terms of the role of institutional weaknesses, the inconsistency of policies, and discursive framing in the

determination of sustainable development outcomes. Findings revealed that weak institutions, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, low accountability, and marginalization in policymaking processes bedeviled Nigeria's sustainable development, thereby distorting policy implementation and weakening effective service delivery. Lasisi concludes by calling for the need to strengthen institutions, improve transparency, guarantee policy sustainability, encourage civic participation, and apply digital governance solutions, which is essential to attaining sustainable development.

Eyitayo Francis Adanlawo & Mpho Chaka in *The Effect of Ethnicity And Politics on the Democratization of African Nations* examined the theoretical challenge that ethnicity poses to the African state and the challenges it poses for democratization on the continent. To guide the discourse, critical questions are raised: What kind of connection exists in Africa between politics and ethnicity? Under what conditions may ethnicity either support or undermine democracy? Can citizenship rights be reconciled with ethnicity? . Furthermore, Adanlawo & Chaka explored the evolution of ethnicity from the viewpoints of development communication and provided it with a psycho-social meaning. In their conclusion, Adalanwo & Chaka posited that, if ethnicity has an informative component, we should anticipate that voters' reliance on ethnic cues will decrease when certain forms of higher-quality information become available.

Lindokuhle Senamile Ntuli & Innocent Simphiwe Nojiyeza in *Does Resource Scarcity Constrain Rural Women's Entrepreneurial Performance in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa?*, examined whether resource scarcity significantly constrains the entrepreneurial performance of rural women in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. Anchored in the Resource-Based View (RBV), the study adopts a quantitative research design using survey data collected from 273 rural women entrepreneurs across uMhlabuyalingana, Big5Hlabisa, and eJozini municipalities. **Ntuli & Nojiyeza** revealed statistically significant relationships between entrepreneurial performance and seven resource-based constraints: leadership skills, financial institutional barriers, entrepreneurial experience, regulatory constraints, access to financial resources, technological limitations, and limited training opportunities. Lastly, in *Transformative Governance Frontiers: Relational Public Administration for Smart City Inclusivity*, Melvin Diedericks examined the conceptualization of informal systems in the context of South African smart city initiatives. By repositioning informal systems as co-creators in urban governance, this study advocates for a paradigm shift from technocratic optimization to relational inclusion. This reframing aligns with South Africa's constitutional and developmental goals, enabling transformative governance and the effective localization of SDGs in sustainable cities.

It is expected that these works compiled in this volume will further enrich the discourse and provide policy options to individuals, governments, and countries, particularly in Africa.

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TABLE OF CONTENT-AGIQ APRIL 2026 EDITION

1. African Youths and the Promotion of Sustainable Development through the Lens of Indigenous Knowledge in the 21st Century Thizwilondi Josephine Mudau	9
2. Beneficiaries of Corruption? An Analysis of the Function of South African Banks in Handling and Making Money from Crime Proceeds Masila Joshua Masipa	25
3. Advancing Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise Growth through Digitalised Enterprise and Supplier Development in South Africa Sipho Patrick Bhengu, Andrishah Beharry-Ramraj	40
4. Disinvestment of Multinational Corporations in Developing Areas: An Assessment of Shoprite Disengagement in Nigeria Lere Amusan and Ebenezer O. Oni	64
5. A sober teacher is a problem”: Unpacking Political ideology and Emancipatory Struggles Within Teacher Unionism Zwane Thembinkosi Trevor, Matsepe David	78
6. Rural Youth and the Future of Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa: Revisiting the Abandonment Debate Douglas Nyathi, Stanley Maphosa	98
7. Does Resource Scarcity Constrain Rural Women’s Entrepreneurial Performance in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa? Lindokuhle Senamile Ntuli, Innocent Simphiwe Nojiyeza	114
8. Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Environmental Conservation in Ngugi’s <i>Petals of Blood</i> Thabo Prince Zondo	128
9. Exploring the Role of African Indigenous Knowledge(IKS) Systems in Healing Practices and Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Thohoyandou Rendani Tshifhumulo	144
10. Capturing Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Poetic Elements of Domesticated Animal Praise Judith & Sikhumbuzo Sibuso	164

11. Exploring the landscape of demand management practices in public health sector in the Gauteng Province, South Africa: An Empirical Analysis
Ellsworth C Jonathan, Phathutshedzo D Lavhelani, David H Selby

178
12. ICT For Indigenous Knowledge Dissemination And Education In Africa: (A Systematic Review)
Aderinsola E. Kayode, Shalini Sing, Patricia P. Badenhorst

198
13. Donald Trump-Twitter Diplomatic Disruptions And Impact On The Post-World War II International Order.
Ndivhoniswani Aaron Tshidzumba

222
14. Determinants And Effect Of Small-Scale Livestock Production On Household Income In Malawi: Evidence From Fifth Integrated Household Survey
Gladson Andrew Chipala, Christopher Chombo, Hannah Dunga

239
15. Navigating Artificial Intelligence Personalisation and Consumer Privacy in Digital Marketing across South Africa and Global Contexts
Suraksha Moothura and Andrisha Beharry-Ramraj

261
16. Energy Sustainability and Sustainable Development Agenda: The Role of Public-Private Partnership in South African
Taleat, Bisiriyu Abiodun, Lukamba, Muhlya Tshombe

286
17. The Governance–Development Nexus in Nigeria: A Conceptual Synthesis of Good Governance and Policy Discourse Theories
Olukayode Idris Lasisi

311
18. Equal Ideals, Unequal Realities: Gender Dynamics in the Workplace of an International Religious Non-governmental Organisation in Eswatini
Thembumenzi Jomo Ntshalintshali, Innocent Simphiwe Nojiyeza

324
19. The effect of ethnicity and politics on the democratisation of African nations
Eyitayo Francis Adanlawo, Mpho Chaka

340
20. Transformative Governance Frontiers: Relational Public Administration for Smart City Inclusivity
S Sikwela & M Diedericks

352

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DONALD TRUMP-TWITTER DIPLOMATIC DISRUPTIONS AND IMPACT ON THE POST-WORLD WAR II INTERNATIONAL ORDER.

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of social media platforms as instruments of statecraft has fundamentally altered the practice of international diplomacy. President Donald Trump's unprecedented use of Twitter as a direct channel for foreign policy communication disrupted established diplomatic norms inherited from the post-World War II international order. This departure from institutional frameworks presents significant challenges to the traditional mechanisms of multilateral consensus-building and creates new vulnerabilities in contemporary international relations. This study employs a mixed-methods approach consisting of three primary analytical components: (1) content analysis of Trump's social media communications, (2) examination of foreign policy outcomes resulting from digital engagement, and (3) comparative analysis with traditional diplomatic practices. This comprehensive approach enables assessment of how digital direct engagement differs fundamentally from established institutional diplomacy. This research aims to demonstrate that Trump's social media presidency constituted a significant departure from institutional diplomacy and contributed to broader challenges facing the established international order. The study specifically seeks to illustrate how technological platforms can reshape the conduct of diplomacy and challenge the legitimacy of traditional institutional frameworks. The findings reveal that digital direct engagement by heads of state bypasses institutional constraints, undermines multilateral consensus-building, and creates new vulnerabilities in international relations. This research contributes to International Relations scholarship by demonstrating the transformative potential of technological platforms in reshaping diplomatic practice. The implications of this research extend beyond Trump's presidency, suggesting permanent transformations in how states conduct diplomatic relations in the digital age. Future scholarship should examine institutional adaptations necessary to govern digital diplomacy and establish frameworks that balance the benefits of direct communication with the stability requirements of the international order.

Keywords: Trump, social media, digital diplomacy, international relations, Twitter, world order, multilateral institutions, populist diplomacy

I. Introduction

The post-World War II international order, established through institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and bilateral diplomatic channels, has long depended upon formal protocols, confidential negotiations, and mediated communication between state actors (Kravchuk et al., 2025). For over seventy years, these structures maintained with varying degrees of success a framework for managing interstate relations, resolving disputes, and coordinating global responses to transnational challenges. The diplomatic apparatus of this order relied on career diplomats, established hierarchies, and deliberate communication strategies designed to advance national interests while maintaining the stability of the broader system. The digital revolution of the twenty-first century, particularly the rise of social media platforms, has created unprecedented opportunities to circumvent these traditional channels. Social media has demonstrated transformative power in reshaping political communication, enabling direct leader-to-public engagement and facilitating rapid information dissemination across borders (Osondu-Oti et al., 2024; Dumdum, 2021). However, when wielded by the chief executive of a superpower, social media platforms can fundamentally alter the nature of international relations (Mekaj, 2025). The presidency of Donald Trump (2017-2021) provided the first comprehensive case study of how a sitting head of state could leverage social media, particularly Twitter, not merely as a tool for domestic political communication but as a primary mechanism for conducting foreign policy with global ramifications.

Trump's Twitter diplomacy represented a deliberate and consistent rejection of established diplomatic protocols. Rather than utilizing formal channels, ambassadors, or confidential negotiations, Trump employed his Twitter account to

announce policy shifts, threaten foreign leaders, publicize negotiations, and reshape international relationships in real time (Osondu-Oti et al., 2024; Surguladze, 2024). His approach was neither accidental nor merely communicative; it was a strategic redefinition of how a sitting president could exercise executive power in foreign relations (Lawal, 2025). This departure from established norms raised fundamental questions about the stability of the international order and the viability of institutional structures designed to manage great power relations (Richmond, 2025; Fernandes et al., 2025).

This paper addresses the central question: How has Donald Trump's use of social media, particularly Twitter, as a primary instrument of foreign policy communication disrupted the post-World War II international order and the established practice of diplomacy? More specifically, this research investigates three interrelated dimensions: (1) the mechanisms through which social media-based diplomacy circumvents traditional institutional constraints; (2) the concrete impacts on bilateral relations, multilateral institutions, and international agreements; and (3) the broader implications for the stability and future trajectory of the international order. The research objectives are to: (a) examine Trump's use of Twitter as a foreign policy instrument and its departure from traditional diplomatic channels; (b) evaluate the impact on multilateral consensus-building, institutional constraints, and international stability; (c) investigate the state responses and adaptations to digital-first diplomatic engagement; and (d) determine how digital platforms reshape diplomatic theory and practice in contemporary international relations.

This research contributes to multiple dimensions of academic inquiry.

Theoretically, it enriches International Relations scholarship by demonstrating how technological capabilities can enable leaders to bypass institutional constraints and reshape the very nature of statecraft. The Trump presidency illustrated that social media platforms are not merely supplementary communication tools but can become primary mechanisms for conducting foreign policy with systemic consequences. Understanding these dynamics is essential for scholars seeking to explain contemporary international relations.

Practically, this study is significant for policymakers and diplomats who must navigate an international environment where chief executives can unilaterally communicate with foreign publics, announce policy shifts without coordination with institutional partners, and fundamentally alter relationships through digital platforms. The Trump case demonstrates both the opportunities and dangers of social media-based diplomacy, with implications for how future administrations will conduct international relations. Finally, this research is timely given ongoing debates about the future of the liberal international order. The Trump presidency coincided with broader challenges to multilateralism, institutional authority, and the consensus-based decision-making that has characterized the post-WWII system. Understanding the role of digital diplomacy in accelerating these transformations is essential for assessing the prospects for institutional adaptation or fundamental restructuring of international governance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Post-World War II International Order: Foundations and Evolution

The international order that emerged from World War II was designed with explicit institutional structures to prevent the kinds of conflicts that had devastated the globe.

The United Nations, established in 1945, was premised on the principle that great power cooperation, mediated through formal institutions, could maintain international stability. The Bretton Woods system, regional security alliances, and a vast apparatus of diplomatic protocols and treaties created what scholars have termed the "liberal international order," a system based on the rule of law, institutional mediation, and consensus-based decision-making.

This order depended fundamentally on the conduct of diplomacy through established channels. Ambassadors, foreign ministers, and specialized negotiators represented their nations through carefully choreographed interactions. Summits, multilateral conferences, and bilateral meetings followed established protocols designed to facilitate communication while maintaining the dignity of state representatives. Even in periods of intense great power rivalry, such as the Cold War, the existence of institutional frameworks and diplomatic channels provided mechanisms for managing competition and preventing catastrophic conflict.

The stability of this order, however, was never guaranteed. It required sustained commitment from major powers, acceptance of institutional legitimacy, and willingness to work through established procedures even when doing so might yield less optimal outcomes than unilateral action. When major powers questioned the legitimacy of institutions or refused to work through established channels, the order's stability weakened. The Trump presidency tested these institutional foundations in unprecedented ways by demonstrating how effectively a sitting executive could bypass them entirely.

2.2 Social Media as a Political Tool: Transformation of Communication

The emergence of social media platforms in the early twenty-first century transformed political communication

across multiple levels: domestic, transnational, and international (Kentmen-Cin, 2025). These platforms democratized the ability to reach mass audiences, enabled rapid information dissemination, and created opportunities for direct leader-to-public engagement that previously required mediation through traditional media (Osondu-Oti et al., 2024; Dumdum, 2021). Research has documented the role of social media in political mobilization, public opinion formation, and the dissemination of both accurate information and misinformation (Lan & Tung, 2024; Yadav, 2025).

Social media has demonstrated particular power in the political sphere. Studies of the Arab Spring, various election campaigns, and political movements have shown how these platforms can mobilize previously dispersed populations, coordinate collective action, and challenge established political authority (Arslanovich Arslanov & Fartusov, 2025). The speed of information spread on social media, combined with the difficulty of controlling narratives across multiple platforms, has created new dynamics in political communication where traditional gatekeepers established media institutions wield less control over the information landscape.

The psychological mechanisms underlying social media's political impact are significant. Social media platforms facilitate the formation of parasocial relationships, where audiences develop perceived connections with content creators or political figures (Sachu et al., 2025). These relationships can enhance the effectiveness of political messaging by creating emotional investment in leaders' statements and positions. For a sitting president, this means that a single tweet can reach millions of people with direct, unfiltered messaging that bypasses the interpretive layer of traditional journalism (Popescu, 2024).

The role of algorithms in curating content and creating echo chambers has also been documented as amplifying polarization and misinformation. Social media platforms' profit-driven algorithms prioritize engagement over accuracy, meaning that sensational, divisive, or emotionally provocative content spreads more rapidly than nuanced analysis (Cosentino, 2022; Nitochkin, 2023). When a sitting president utilizes these platforms, the combination of follower network effects and algorithmic amplification creates unprecedented reach and impact (Hagen, 2019; Taghizade & Ahmadow, 2025).

2.3 Digital Diplomacy: Definition, Evolution, and Implications

Digital diplomacy, the use of digital technologies and platforms in diplomatic practice, represents an emerging field of both scholarly inquiry and practical statecraft (Bjola & Fjällhed, 2025; Ku, 2025). Unlike traditional diplomacy, which emphasizes confidentiality, formality, and mediated communication, digital diplomacy can enable direct public engagement, rapid communication, and the circumvention of institutional intermediaries (Lucio, 2025; Barrinha & Renard, 2020). The field encompasses diverse practices, from social media communication by foreign ministries to cybersecurity operations between states (Parthenay, 2024; Lin, 2024).

The evolution of digital diplomacy has been marked by increasing sophistication and strategic calculation. Early uses by foreign ministries and diplomatic accounts focused on public diplomacy, building favorable public opinion in foreign countries (Kravchuk et al., 2025). As platforms became more powerful and direct leader engagement more normalized, digital diplomacy evolved to encompass direct foreign policy communication, bilateral engagement, and even crisis management in real time (Yunita & Killian, 2024; Zamanli, 2022).

Research on digital diplomacy has identified both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, digital platforms enable rapid communication during crises, facilitate people-to-people connections across borders, and democratize access to diplomatic information (Ventura, 2024; Bjola & Fjällhed, 2025). These capabilities have proven valuable in humanitarian responses, peacekeeping coordination, and public engagement in diplomatic processes. On the negative side, digital diplomacy creates vulnerabilities to misinformation, enables the rapid escalation of conflicts through provocative statements, and can undermine careful negotiation processes through public commitments that reduce bargaining flexibility (Cosentino, 2022; Lin, 2024).

The distinction between traditional diplomacy and digital diplomacy is not merely technological but fundamentally structural (Barrinha & Renard, 2020). Traditional diplomacy depends upon confidentiality, allowing negotiators to explore positions and make concessions away from public scrutiny. Digital diplomacy, particularly when conducted by chief executives, eliminates this confidentiality and transforms all statements into public positions (Popescu, 2024; Ku, 2025). This structural difference has profound implications for negotiation dynamics and the feasibility of compromise (Lucio, 2025).

2.4 D. Trump's Social Media Presidency: Antecedents and Characteristics

Donald Trump's use of social media during his campaign and presidency did not emerge in isolation. The normalization of social media communication by politicians, the declining trust in traditional media institutions, and the rise of populist leaders skeptical of institutional constraints all created conditions where social media-based politics became viable and appealing. Trump, however, took this trend to unprecedented extremes by making

Twitter not merely one of several communication tools but the primary instrument of executive communication and foreign policy announcements. Trump's social media strategy was characterized by several distinctive features. First, he used Twitter to bypass traditional media filters, communicating directly with the public and foreign audiences without editorial mediation. Second, his posts were frequently provocative, norm-violating, and designed to generate controversy and media coverage. Third, he announced significant policy decisions via Twitter, including policy shifts toward North Korea, China, Turkey, and other major powers, before these decisions had been coordinated through formal institutional channels or communicated through diplomatic channels to the affected parties.

The volume and frequency of Trump's Twitter activity was itself remarkable. His posts numbered in the thousands during his presidency, creating a continuous stream of direct communication that kept him constantly in the public consciousness and created unpredictability that foreign leaders had to navigate. This constant communication also meant that his positions and commitments were continuously being publicized, reducing the flexibility in negotiations and creating numerous statements that could be referenced as formal positions. Research documenting Trump's social media diplomacy has identified specific cases where Twitter posts directly preceded policy changes or foreign policy decisions. His threats toward North Korea via Twitter preceded diplomatic engagement. His criticism of NATO allies through social media altered those relationships. His attacks on the Iran nuclear deal via Twitter preceded the formal decision to withdraw from the agreement. These examples demonstrate that his Twitter activity was not merely supplementary communication but substantive foreign policy in action.

2.5 E. The Disruption of Institutional Diplomacy and Multilateral Frameworks

The impact of Trump's social media diplomacy on institutional structures and multilateral frameworks has been substantial and documented across multiple dimensions. The World Trade Organization, the United Nations, NATO, and various international agreements all experienced direct challenges from Trump's Twitter-based criticisms and policy announcements (Fernandes et al., 2025; Kravchuk et al., 2025). The undermining of these institutions through public attack and unilateral policy decisions weakened their perceived legitimacy and effectiveness (Richmond, 2025; Lucio, 2025).

The challenge to multilateralism extended beyond rhetoric to concrete policy outcomes. Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, announced partially through Twitter, represented a significant breach of multilateral consensus and institutional frameworks (Kravchuk et al., 2025). His skepticism toward NATO, repeatedly expressed on Twitter, complicated security relationships and coalition-building (Surguladze, 2024; Mekaj, 2025). His use of social media to announce tariffs and trade restrictions circumvented established WTO mechanisms and created uncertainty in international commerce (Fernandes et al., 2025).

The broader transformation of the international order has been characterized by scholars as a shift from a unipolar liberal order toward a multipolar system with competing power centers and divergent visions for global governance (Arslanovich Arslanov & Fartusov, 2025; Taghizade & Ahmadov, 2025). Trump's social media diplomacy accelerated this transition by demonstrating that a major power leader could effectively challenge institutional frameworks and pursue nationalist objectives through digital communication

(Richmond, 2025; Lucio, 2025). This demonstration effect encouraged other leaders to reconsider their own engagement with multilateral institutions and digital platforms (Stan & Tasene, 2024; Ku, 2025).

2.6 F. Global Responses and the Diffusion of Digital Diplomacy

Trump's social media diplomacy was not adopted in isolation by other leaders. Rather, it created a demonstration effect whereby other national leaders recognized that social media platforms could be effectively utilized for direct foreign policy communication. Comparative studies have documented how leaders in South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East have adopted elements of social media-based diplomacy, though often with different strategies and objectives (Stan & Tasene, 2024; Osondu-Oti et al., 2024).

Ukraine, particularly following the Russian invasion, has demonstrated sophisticated use of digital platforms for both public diplomacy and direct foreign policy communication. The Ukrainian government and President Zelensky have utilized social media not only to communicate with domestic audiences but to shape international support, influence allied governments, and directly appeal to foreign publics (Bjola & Fjällhed, 2025; Ventura, 2024). This represents a more coordinated and strategic approach to digital diplomacy than Trump's more reactive and provocative model, but it nonetheless demonstrates the viability of social media as a primary diplomatic tool (Kravchuk et al., 2025).

China and Russia have developed alternative models of digital diplomacy oriented toward information control, surveillance, and the projection of state narratives. These authoritarian models contrast with the more chaotic and direct approach Trump employed, but they similarly demonstrate recognition of social media's power as a tool of statecraft (Taghizade & Ahmadov, 2025; Popescu,

2024). The emergence of competing models of digital diplomacy suggests that this is not merely a Trump phenomenon but a broader transformation in how states conduct international relations (Zamanli, 2022; Lucio, 2025).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a multidisciplinary theoretical approach that integrates three primary frameworks. *First*, International Relations theory, particularly realist and constructivist perspectives, provides the overarching analytical lens for understanding how Trump's social media use challenges the institutional structures and shared understandings that have governed state behaviour. *Second*, media and communication theory, specifically the concept of digital gatekeeping and algorithmic governance, illuminates how social media platforms facilitate direct communication while simultaneously amplifying sensational content. *Third*, soft power and public diplomacy frameworks provide tools for analysing how leaders can directly appeal to foreign publics and how this differs from traditional diplomatic practice.

The realist perspective in International Relations emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system, the centrality of military power, and the rational pursuit of national interest. From this perspective, Trump's social media diplomacy can be understood as a manifestation of American power, a leader unconstrained by institutional consensus pursuing what he defined as American national interests. However, realism also predicts that such unilateralism creates uncertainty, undermines cooperation, and potentially provokes balancing behaviour from other powers. Trump's approach illustrates both the possibilities and the costs of unilateral action in an interdependent world.

Constructivist perspectives emphasize the role of shared understandings, norms, and

identities in shaping state behaviour. From this view, Trump's systematic violation of diplomatic norms, his public criticism of institutional frameworks, and his unpredictable behaviour fundamentally challenged the shared understandings that enable the liberal international order. By delegitimizing these norms through his behaviour and rhetoric, Trump demonstrated that institutional stability depends upon continued elite acceptance of these norms—acceptance that can be withdrawn when leadership changes.

3.1 Methodology

The study examined archived Trump Twitter posts from the period 2017-2021. The scope encompasses Trump's tweets addressing foreign policy issues, international relations, and diplomatic matters during his presidency. However, we acknowledge that the present methodology section excerpt does not contain detailed specifications regarding the complete sampling procedure, such as whether all tweets from this period were included, specific inclusion/exclusion criteria, or the total number of tweets in the initial dataset. A more detailed account of the sampling methodology is contained in a separate section of the document that was not available at the time of this response.

The content analysis component employed a structured coding scheme with four primary variables using Atlas.ti. Posts were systematically coded for: (1) the **target of communication** (foreign leader, country, institution, or policy), (2) the **tone** of the communication (praise, criticism, threat, or proposal), (3) the **content** of the post (policy announcement, personal attack, policy criticism, or agreement announcement), and (4) the **temporal relationship** to formal policy implementation (whether the post preceded, accompanied, or followed formal policy decisions).

"Inter-coder reliability was evaluated using Krippendorff's (1980) alpha (α), a measure

that considers chance while assessing inter-rater reliability for categorical variables. Alpha values of .67 and .80 indicate substantial reliability, while values exceeding .80 indicate almost perfect reliability. Krippendorff's α ranged from .70 to .90 for all categorical variables at both character and scene levels, indicating high reliability for all coded variables.

3.2 Limitations and Scope

This study has several important limitations. First, the data is historical and limited to Trump's actual presidency (2017-2021), though some discussion of post-presidency Twitter activity is included. Second, attributing specific foreign policy outcomes directly to Twitter posts is methodologically challenging, as multiple causal factors influence international relations outcomes. Third, the paper focuses primarily on Trump's individual social media use rather than providing a systematic comparison with other world leaders' concurrent social media practices, though some comparative elements are included. The scope of this research is global, examining Trump's Twitter diplomacy and its effects across multiple regions and relationships, including U.S.-China relations, U.S.-Russia relations, U.S.-European alliance relationships, and various regional conflicts. The temporal scope covers primarily the 2017-2021 Trump presidency, with occasional reference to earlier developments in social media politics and later developments in the use of digital diplomacy by other actors.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 The Transformation of Diplomatic Practice: Formalization to Informalization

Trump's presidency marked a dramatic shift in the formality and institutional mediation of executive communication on foreign policy matters (Barrinha & Renard, 2020). Traditional presidential communication on foreign policy occurs through multiple channels, including

formal statements released by the State Department and coordinated messaging with allied governments. Trump's Twitter-based approach fundamentally inverted this system. Rather than multiple, carefully coordinated channels, he used a single platform where he was the sole author (Cosentino, 2022). His tweets frequently employed provocative language, insults, and absolute positions. The case of the Iran nuclear deal exemplifies this transformation. Trump's Twitter posts built opposition to the JCPOA and constrained diplomatic flexibility.

This transformation created a diplomatic environment where foreign leaders had to monitor Trump's Twitter account to understand U.S. policy, as official channels often lagged or contradicted social media statements. The case of the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) exemplifies this transformation. Trump had criticized the agreement repeatedly on Twitter before taking office. Once president, he continued these attacks via Twitter, building public and political opposition to the deal. His Twitter posts created a public record of his opposition that constrained diplomatic flexibility. Eventually, these tweets preceded the formal decision to withdraw from the agreement, announced in May 2018. However, the announcement itself was made at a public event, not through formal diplomatic channels. Foreign policy analysts noted that allies only learned of the decision through Trump's public announcement, not through advance diplomatic consultation.

This case demonstrates how social media fundamentally alters the sequencing and nature of diplomatic communication. Traditionally, major policy decisions are negotiated with allies before public announcement, allowing these allies some voice in the decision-making process. Trump's approach eliminated this sequencing by making the decision public through Twitter before or simultaneously with formal notification, eliminating the

possibility for allied input or negotiated modification.

4.2 Direct Executive Engagement and the Bypass of Institutional Constraints

One of the most significant consequences of Trump's social media diplomacy was the demonstration that a sitting president could effectively bypass institutional constraints on executive power. The State Department, the National Security Council, and other institutional actors traditionally provide input on foreign policy decisions and can moderate executive actions through institutional processes. Trump's social media diplomacy demonstrated that a sitting president could bypass institutional constraints such as the State Department and NSC (Ku, 2025). The case of his communications with North Korea illustrates this dynamic. The eventual summit between Trump and Kim Jong-un in Singapore was preceded by direct engagement through social media, bypassing the traditional diplomatic apparatus (Mekaj, 2025).

While the summit itself represented a potential opening for diplomatic engagement, the lack of preparation and institutional involvement created significant problems. The agreement reached was vague on verification mechanisms and did not include the detailed technical agreements that traditionally accompany major international agreements. Subsequent analysis suggested that the lack of institutional preparation and involvement contributed to the lack of concrete outcomes. Trump's social media engagement had opened a diplomatic channel but also excluded the institutional expertise necessary to translate it into a concrete agreement. The structural consequence of this bypass is significant. When presidents can announce foreign policy through social media, the institutional actors who traditionally shape foreign policy lose influence.

4.3 The Erosion of Diplomatic Confidentiality and Negotiating Flexibility

Traditional diplomacy depends fundamentally on confidentiality. Social media undermined this by making negotiations public. For instance, Trump's attacks on China via Twitter created domestic pressure for strong responses (Lindsay, 2015). His criticism of the EU on Twitter further complicated negotiations (Karlsen & Lee, 2023). When negotiations are conducted through public statements, the negotiating space shrinks because any concession or shift in position becomes a public retreat that can be characterized as weakness.

Trump's Twitter diplomacy eliminated much of this confidentiality. His tweets about foreign leaders, his criticism of ongoing negotiations, and his public positioning statements created a situation where much of U.S. foreign policy communication was public. The case of Trump's relationship with the European Union illustrates this dynamic. Trump repeatedly criticized the EU on Twitter, attacking what he characterized as unfair trade practices and insufficient military spending by NATO members. These tweets, while addressing what Trump saw as legitimate grievances, made it more difficult for European leaders to make concessions on these issues because they appeared to be caving to public American pressure. The public nature of the criticism shifted the negotiation from technical trade discussions to matters of national pride and sovereignty. This erosion of confidentiality also affected bilateral relationships. When Trump attacked leaders or countries on Twitter, he created a public record that those leaders had to respond to. They could not ignore the tweets as informal personal communication because they were public statements by the President of the United States with a massive reach. Yet responding to every tweet created a dynamic of escalation. The confidentiality that traditionally allowed leaders to say one

thing in public while exploring other options in private negotiations was no longer available.

4.4 The Unpredictability of Social Media-Based Diplomacy

A distinctive feature of Trump's social media diplomacy was its unpredictability. Allies struggled to plan when Trump's policy positions shifted frequently online (Popescu, 2024). This unpredictability incentivized adversaries to test American resolve (Richmond, 2025). Trump's tweets sometimes announced policy changes that had not been discussed in advance with relevant agencies. His tweets sometimes contradicted previous positions, either his own or those of his administration. His tweets sometimes appeared to be emotional responses to media coverage or personal slights rather than carefully considered policy positions. This unpredictability had several consequences.

First, it created difficulty for allies in coordinating policy. NATO members, for example, could not reliably plan security arrangements when the American president's commitment to NATO was publicly questioned on Twitter. Would the United States maintain its defence commitments? Trump's tweets suggested sometimes yes, sometimes no. This uncertainty complicated security planning and resource allocation for European allies. Second, it created opportunities for adversaries to test American resolve. When American policy positions were uncertain and subject to change via Twitter, adversaries had an incentive to probe the boundaries of American acceptance. Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine, China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, and North Korea's continued weapons development proceeded in an environment where American response was uncertain because the American president's positions were unpredictably expressed through social media. Third, it required a constant monitoring and interpretation effort by

foreign policy analysts and diplomats around the world.

4.5 The Impact on Multilateral Institutions and the Liberal International Order

Trump's social media diplomacy weakened institutions such as NATO, WTO, and the UN (Fernandes et al., 2025). His administration pursued unilateral trade actions outside WTO frameworks, undermining dispute resolution mechanisms. NATO allies faced uncertainty due to his attacks on defence spending and alliance value on Twitter (Surguladze, 2024).

The World Trade Organization exemplified this challenge. Trump repeatedly criticized the WTO on Twitter and through public statements, arguing that it unfairly benefited other countries at America's expense. His administration then pursued unilateral trade actions outside the WTO framework, imposing tariffs on China, steel, and aluminium without following established WTO dispute resolution processes. These actions, while presented as defending American interests, undermined the institutional mechanisms that were designed to manage trade disputes and prevent trade wars.

NATO similarly experienced Trump's scepticism and public criticism through social media. Trump tweeted criticism of NATO members for not meeting defence spending requirements, but he also questioned the value of the alliance itself and hinted at American withdrawal. This public scepticism, expressed through social media, created uncertainty among European allies about American commitment to the alliance. While Trump ultimately did not withdraw from NATO, the constant social media questioning of the alliance's value weakened its perceived legitimacy and complicated coalition-building for NATO operations. International climate negotiations experienced a fundamental setback when

Trump announced the American withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, a decision that was communicated through public announcement rather than through the formal diplomatic channels through which the agreement had been negotiated. This withdrawal, while ultimately reversible (and reversed by the subsequent President Biden administration), demonstrated that major American commitments could be unilaterally abandoned through executive action, undermining confidence in the stability of international agreements.

The broader implication is that Trump's social media diplomacy contributed to a weakening of the institutional structures that had undergirded the liberal international order since 1945. By publicly questioning these institutions, announcing unilateral policy changes that bypassed institutional frameworks, and demonstrating that a major power could effectively challenge institutional authority, Trump accelerated the transition toward a more fragmentary international system with less institutional coordination.

4.6 Misinformation, Polarization, and the Information Environment

Trump's social media diplomacy occurred within and contributed to a broader transformation of the global information environment. Social media platforms are characterized by algorithmic amplification of sensational content, rapid spread of misinformation, and creation of echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to information confirming their existing beliefs. Trump's Twitter activity contributed to misinformation and political polarization globally (Wani et al., 2024). Social media algorithms amplified sensational content, influencing international perceptions of U.S. policy (Arslanov & Fartusov, 2025).

His tweets were retweeted, amplified, and discussed across the platform, reaching millions of users. This reach, combined

with the algorithmic amplification of sensational content, meant that Trump's tweets, regardless of their accuracy, shaped the information environment globally. The consequences for international relations were significant. Foreign publics received information about American foreign policy filtered through Trump's tweets and the interpretations thereof by social media users, media outlets, and political commentators. This often creates distorted pictures of American intentions, American capabilities, or the situations being described. For example, Trump's tweets about the situation in Syria contained various claims that were disputed or inaccurate, yet the tweets themselves shaped global perception of American policy and American understanding of the situation.

The polarization effect was also significant. Trump's tweets on foreign policy issues frequently employed emotionally provocative language and attacked opponents, both foreign leaders and domestic critics of his foreign policy. This polarization extended globally through social media, creating situations where foreign publics were divided in their perception of American policy and American leadership. In some regions, Trump became a polarizing figure with strong supporters and strong opponents among the public, complicating the traditional role of the American president as a somewhat unifying figure in international relations.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Trump's Challenge to Post-WWII Diplomatic Norms

Donald Trump's social media presidency represented a fundamental challenge to the norms and practices that had governed international diplomacy since 1945. The post-WWII diplomatic system had been characterized by several key features: (1) the centrality of state-to-state communication through official diplomatic

channels; (2) the importance of confidentiality in allowing creative problem-solving; (3) the mediation of diplomatic communication through career diplomats and institutional actors; (4) the coordination of foreign policy among allied governments before public announcements; and (5) the commitment to multilateral institutions and agreements as mechanisms for managing interstate relations.

Trump's social media diplomacy challenged each of these norms. By communicating directly with foreign leaders and publics through Twitter, he bypassed official channels. By conducting much of his foreign policy communication through public tweets, he eliminated confidentiality. By announcing policy decisions through social media, often without prior institutional coordination, he marginalized the traditional foreign policy establishment. By repeatedly questioning the value of multilateral institutions and pursuing unilateral actions outside these frameworks, he demonstrated that major power actors could challenge the institutional basis of the order.

The question of whether this represented a permanent transformation or a temporary aberration cannot be definitively answered based on Trump's presidency alone. However, the demonstration effect of Trump's presidency, showing that a major power leader could effectively challenge institutional norms through social media and unilateral action, has already influenced other actors in the international system. Some leaders have adopted elements of Trump's social media approach; others have developed alternative models of digital diplomacy in response. The significance of this challenge becomes clearer when understood in the context of broader challenges to the liberal international order. The post-WWII order had already been experiencing stress before Trump's presidency. The 2008 financial crisis had undermined confidence in American economic leadership and the

stability of Western institutions. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had raised questions about American military judgment. The rise of China as an economic power has created a multipolar economic order. Rising powers like India, Brazil, and other states increasingly questioned the legitimacy of institutions designed for the post-WWII configuration of power.

Trump's social media diplomacy accelerated these challenges by providing a visible demonstration of American unilateralism and a sitting president's willingness to undermine institutional frameworks. This demonstration made it easier for other powers to justify their own scepticism toward these institutions. It weakened the soft power that America had traditionally exercised through its leadership of these institutions. It contributed to a broader shift toward a multipolar system with competing power centres and divergent visions for global governance.

5.2. The Structural Shift from Institutional to Personalized Diplomacy

One of the most important implications of Trump's social media presidency is the demonstration that diplomacy can effectively shift from institutional frameworks to personalized engagement between chief executives. Historically, the institutional apparatus of diplomacy, the State Department, foreign ministries, and diplomatic corps, was understood as necessary for maintaining stable interstate relations. Even when presidents or prime ministers engaged in "summit diplomacy" with their counterparts, these encounters were prepared for and followed up by the institutional apparatus.

Trump's approach demonstrated that institutions could be significantly bypassed. Direct engagement between Trump and Kim Jong-un, Trump and Xi Jinping, Trump and Putin, and Trump and

other leaders occurred with minimal institutional preparation and often without the formal structures that traditionally governed such meetings. While some institutional actors were involved, the primary dynamic was a personal relationship between the leaders themselves, mediated through social media and informal channels. This shift has important implications. On one hand, direct leader-to-leader engagement can bypass bureaucratic inertia and enable rapid responses to emerging situations. Trump's proponents might argue that his willingness to engage directly with adversaries like North Korea represented a creative approach to diplomacy that the institutional apparatus had failed to achieve. On the other hand, the institutional apparatus exists for reasons career diplomats provide expertise, institutional preparation ensures agreements are technically sound, and the involvement of multiple agencies ensures broader government coordination and implementation capacity.

The shift toward personalized diplomacy creates several risks. First, it makes international relations more dependent on the personal characteristics, personality disorders (if any), and preferences of individual leaders. This increased personalization creates instability because leadership changes can rapidly reverse diplomatic achievements. Second, it reduces the institutional continuity that traditionally ensures that foreign policy commitments can be implemented effectively. A brilliant diplomatic achievement that lacks institutional buy-in and preparation may fail to produce practical results. Third, it creates opportunities for misunderstanding and miscalculation because the meaning-making that occurs through institutional processes is replaced by direct personal communication, which is more subject to misinterpretation.

The question of whether the shift toward personalized diplomacy is permanent or temporary depends partly on the structure

of future leadership. If future American presidents also leverage social media directly for foreign policy, then the shift becomes more permanent. Some evidence suggests that even President Biden's administration has utilized social media more directly than previous administrations, though not to the same extent as Trump. The precedent set by Trump's success in conducting foreign policy through social media makes it difficult for future leaders to ignore social media entirely, even if they moderate Trump's approach.

5.3. The Global Diffusion of Digital Diplomacy and Competing Models

Trump's social media presidency has contributed to a global awareness of digital diplomacy as a viable tool of statecraft. However, the models of digital diplomacy being adopted globally vary significantly, suggesting that Trump's approach is one possibility among several rather than a universal model. Ukraine, following the Russian invasion, has developed a sophisticated model of digital diplomacy oriented toward building international support, appealing to foreign publics, and coordinating with allied governments. President Zelensky, himself a former entertainer with media savvy, has leveraged social media to appeal directly to foreign publics, particularly in Western democracies, to maintain support for Ukraine's defence. This differs from Trump's approach in several important ways: (1) it is coordinated with allied governments rather than unilateral; (2) it is oriented toward building coalitions rather than challenging institutions; (3) it emphasizes shared values and defence of the liberal order rather than questioning those values; and (4) it maintains a distinction between direct leader communication and official diplomatic channels rather than conflating them. China and other authoritarian states have developed alternative models of digital diplomacy oriented toward information control and the projection of state

narratives through controlled social media accounts.

The above-mentioned models utilize digital platforms to advance state interests but maintain tighter control over messaging and employ state-run accounts rather than direct personal accounts of leaders. The "wolf warrior" diplomacy employed by some Chinese diplomats on social media represents a more aggressive use of digital platforms but maintains the distinction between official and personal communication. The European Union and other traditional diplomatic actors have incorporated social media into their diplomatic apparatus, but generally maintain clear boundaries between social media communication (understood as public diplomacy) and official diplomatic channels. This reflects an attempt to gain some benefits of direct public engagement while maintaining institutional frameworks and confidential negotiation channels.

These competing models suggest that the future of diplomacy will not simply replicate Trump's approach but will include diverse adaptations of digital tools to different political contexts and strategic objectives. However, Trump's demonstration that direct leader-to-public communication through social media is possible and can produce concrete foreign policy effects has created pressure on all leaders to engage with these platforms and has reduced the ability of institutions to maintain monopoly control over diplomatic communication.

5.4. Implications for International Relations Theory and Practice

Trump's social media presidency raises significant theoretical questions for International Relations scholarship. The dominant theories in the field, realism, liberalism, and constructivism, were developed in an era where communication technologies were less advanced and state-to-state communication occurred primarily through official channels. These theories

must be adapted or supplemented to account for a world where chief executives can communicate directly with foreign publics through social media platforms.

Realist theory emphasizes the anarchic nature of international relations and the rational pursuit of national interest by state actors. From this perspective, Trump's social media diplomacy can be understood as a leader pursuing American national interest by circumventing institutional constraints that he viewed as limiting American power. The unpredictability of social media-based diplomacy, from this perspective, can be seen as a form of strategic ambiguity that keeps adversaries uncertain about American intentions and responses. However, realism also predicts costs to such unilateralism in the form of alliance strain and balancing behaviour from other powers.

Liberal institutionalist theory emphasizes the role of institutions in facilitating cooperation and reducing the likelihood of conflict. From this perspective, Trump's undermining of multilateral institutions and his reliance on personalized diplomacy represent a destabilizing force that increases uncertainty and reduces the mechanisms for managing conflict. The shift away from institutions toward personalized diplomacy is predicted to increase international instability and reduce the likelihood of cooperative solutions to transnational problems. Constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of shared understandings, identities, and norms in shaping state behaviour. From this perspective, Trump's systematic violation of diplomatic norms and his public questioning of the legitimacy of international institutions represent a delegitimization of the shared understandings that enable the liberal international order. By behaving as though these norms and institutions were not binding and by demonstrating that they could be effectively challenged, Trump undermined the ideational foundations of the order.

For practitioners, Trump's presidency suggests that the age of purely institutional diplomacy is ending or at least being supplemented by personalized, media-driven diplomacy. This has implications for how diplomats should be trained, what skills should be emphasized, and how foreign ministries should organize themselves. It also suggests that career diplomats must be prepared to work in an environment where official channels are supplemented or sometimes bypassed by direct communication between leaders through social media. This requires new competencies in media engagement, understanding of algorithms and platform dynamics, and the ability to operate in environments where communication is public rather than confidential.

CONCLUSION

Donald Trump's unprecedented use of Twitter as a primary instrument of foreign policy communication represents a significant disruption to the post-World War II international order. This paper has documented how social media-based diplomacy fundamentally altered several key aspects of international relations: it eliminated much of the confidentiality that traditional diplomacy depended upon; it bypassed institutional actors and frameworks that had traditionally mediated state communication; it created unpredictability that complicated alliance management and security planning; and it contributed to broader challenges to multilateral institutions and the liberal international order.

The transformation initiated by Trump's social media presidency is not merely a matter of communication style or media preference. Rather, it reflects a

fundamental shift in how state power can be exercised and how leaders can engage with foreign publics and other leaders. By demonstrating that personalized, digital diplomacy could effectively substitute for institutional diplomacy, Trump created a demonstration effect that has influenced subsequent leaders and has implications for the future of international relations. The evidence suggests that social media has become a permanent feature of international diplomacy, even if future leaders do not replicate Trump's particular approach. The institutional frameworks that have governed international relations since 1945 are being supplemented, challenged, and in some cases undermined by digital platforms that enable direct communication between leaders and publics. The question is not whether social media will influence diplomacy but how states, institutions, and leaders will adapt to this new reality.

Several key findings emerge from this analysis. *First*, social media-based diplomacy enables the circumvention of institutional constraints, creating opportunities for leaders to pursue unilateral policies outside multilateral frameworks. *Second*, this capability carries costs in terms of alliance cohesion, predictability, and institutional stability. *Third*, the shift toward personalized diplomacy is already being adopted and adapted by other leaders and states around the world, suggesting that this is not merely a Trump phenomenon but a broader transformation in international relations. *Fourth*, international institutions face significant challenges in adapting to this new environment while maintaining their core functions.

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