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**DIGITALISATION AND COMMUNICATIVE BUSINESS PROCESSES IN
DIPLOMATIC INSTITUTIONS**

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1 Introduction

Diplomatic actors derive their power from internal factors such as sophisticated knowledge, administrative skills and political power. But they also rely on external factors such as the availability of information as well as access to constituent audiences and stakeholders. Especially external factors of diplomacy have been undergoing significant changes over the past 150 years. This was mostly due technological developments that have reshaped our abilities to receive and disperse information and how we communicate with others and the world around us. Such information- and communication technologies encompass tangible as well as intangible elements. The pace of technological developments has kept intensifying and reached even new levels in terms of profoundness and impact which lead to today's vivid discussions in academic literature and popular media under the terminology of *digital transformation*.

Nowadays individuals but also businesses and organizations see themselves confronted with a regularly and fast changing technological environment and new information- and communication processes. While individuals and private organizations and companies have enough structural flexibility to adapt their behavior and processes rather quickly to a new environment, diplomatic institutions often see their structures and processes to be conditioned by complex and interdependent structures of a nation state. The functionalities and tasks of diplomatic institutions is not only deeply embedded in an extensive web of processes of a multitude of state institutions, but also dependent on politically supported change processes, agendas and legislation. Due to this limited flexibility and structural rigidity, diplomatic institutions are prone to encounter very specific challenges when trying to adapt quickly to new business practices and processes. As of today, diplomatic institutions are still respected, powerful and well networked institutions with the ability to initiate and shape public discourse. However, a failure to adapt timely to current developments in regard to information- and communication practices and technologies, puts them at risk to suffer from a loss of power, influence and possibly overall relevance in the mid-to long term. This observation marks the starting point of this thesis and guides the successive section which provides a more in-depth introduction to the topic and outlines its relevancy in more detail. In the following sections, this chapter also touches upon the motivations, objectives and structure that guide this thesis.

1.1 Relevance

"My God, this is the end of diplomacy!" are reportedly the words of the British foreign secretary Lord Palmerston once he was introduced to the electric telegraph in the 18th century (Hocking & Melissen, 2015, p.14). This instance underlines that diplomacy and information- and communication processes have been standing in close context to each other from early on. Palmerston's fear may have had a certain legitimacy in

the sense that the telegraph was indeed disruptive to diplomatic practice, but today we know, that it has not rendered diplomacy obsolete. However, the electric telegraph did not only revolutionize the speed by which messages and information could be received and dispersed, but also significantly lowered the costs of doing so (Hocking & Melissen, 2015). It was not long until diplomats moved on from the initial shock towards becoming early adopters of the electric telegraph (Winston, 2002). At some point it even became questionable if and to what extent non-governmental actors would be allowed access to the technology. In the view of some, the electric telegraph was considered “*an instrument so powerful for good or evil*” which could not “*with safety be left in the hands of private individuals*” (Winston, 2002, p. 27). Some politicians and state actors suggested to make the electric telegraph an exclusive tool for the conduct of the state, for the benefit of the public naturally (Winston, 2002). Even though eventually no restriction resulted in terms of public access to the international telegraph network, the debate foreshadowed subsequent discussions about protection of power and change driven by technology (Winston 2002). Despite critical debates and concerns by some, the installation of the first transatlantic cable in 1858, enabling long-distance communication via electric telegraphs, was considered a big milestone and celebrated accordingly by the political community including Queen Victoria and the American President James Buchanan (Müller, 2016). Many political actors of the time considered it as the start of a reconfiguration of the geopolitical landscape, with consequences beneficent in removing political misconceptions all over the world (Müller, 2016). But the electric telegraph was not only useful in terms of its long-distance communication capabilities. In fact, many fundamental diplomatic functions rely on some sort of communication. Diplomats are to represent and keep up conversation with their appointed host countries, local politicians, decision makers as well as foreign publics and diasporas (Keller, 1956). Furthermore, important developments have to be reported back to the home country (Keller, 1956). The fulfilment of all these functions relies and is supported by effective communication and were supported by the electric telegraph and later the telephone.

It was also not long before information- and communication technologies became recognized to hold some interesting propositions for more self-serving reasons. For example, foreign ministries and diplomats found technologies such as the television which became popularized in the first half of the 20th century (Computer History Museum, 2019). The television was recognized to entail other interesting opportunities for nations to uphold and curate a desired image and reputation by airing and producing appropriate content. This also served the image and brand building abroad through international broadcasting. Mentioned technologies in a sense greatly changed the processes of diplomatic conduct but at the same time they kept important diplomatic value proposition, such as the principle of discretion and bilateral conversations, in tact (Ramaprasad, 1983). However, the progression of ICT in terms of functionality and complexity soon started to place new demands upon the practice of diplomacy. Mostly with the uprising of microchips and computers in the aftermath of the second world war, the impact of information- and communication technologies on society became so profound,

that individual scholars did not hesitate any longer labelling it as a “*revolution*” (Hamilton & Langhorne, 2011, p.94). Especially towards the end of the 1990s, one can notice a major shift in discussions towards digital considerations in the field of diplomacy towards stronger embeddedness and considerations of information- and communication processes (De Kerckhove, 1997; Nickles, 1999; Marshall, 1999). This goes in hand with a period when computer technologies have also started to become available to a broad amount of people. The Mosaic Web browser brought many people online for the first time (Computer History Museum, 2019). The Digital Video Disc (DVD) format got introduced, Microsoft’s launch of the operation system Windows 95 and IBM’s Deep Blue chess computer ‘s victory over the world champion Garry Kasparov (Computer History Museum, 2019). These are only a few examples of significant technology related societal impacts during the 90s. Also, by the end of the decade in 1999, the number of internet users had grown from virtually zero to almost 250 million people (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2019). Through such a significant increase in accessibility and use cases of the internet, more and more people started forming an understanding for the technology and thus applications became increasingly commoditized. The 1990s were also a time when the interrelation between technology and diplomacy started to become a major subject of discussion for researchers. An abundant amount of commentary on the impacts of technology on diplomacy started to emerge. A early and noteworthy effort to advance the discussions in the subject matter was made by the *United States Institute of Peace* which launched the *Virtual Diplomacy Initiative (VDI)* in 1995 (United States Institute of Peace, 2015). The initiative found its purpose in exploring the role of information- and communication technologies for the conduct of foreign affairs with a particular focus on peacekeeping (United States Institute of Peace, 2015). Up to the late 1990s, the discussion about the interrelation of information- and communication practices was mostly shaped by academia. However, in the late 1990s diplomatic opinion leaders and practitioners stated to wake up to the discussion ever so abrupt. Early practice oriented writers such as diplomat James Rosenau, wrote urging and alarming pleas addressed to the diplomatic community (1999). Rosenau predicted “*severe challenges*” for diplomacy (1999, p.7). He also issued doubts about the capacity of diplomats to quickly adapt to new circumstances and expected that the current evolutions of technology would not be easily welcomed in the world of diplomacy, mostly due to their potential to disrupt long established ways of conduct (Rosenau, 1999). Richard Burt et. al did call for “*reinventing*” the conduct of diplomacy to allow for participation of publics in international relations as they now had unprecedented access to information (1998, p.7). Burt et. al., also described an environment in which classical hierarchies in diplomacy should make way for network oriented structures and that new values such as openness and transparency is to replace secrecy and exclusivity (1998). They saw the needed for this change the internet that started linking millions of individuals with each other without any central control (Burt et. al., 1998). They further proposed to clearly define stakeholders and constituencies online and also to create a clear statement of visions and values (Burt et. al., 1998). Gordon Smith called out a “*revolution in diplomatic affairs*” suggesting major changes were afoot and that traditional diplomatic practitioners refusing to adapt new information technology would be “*in*

for a rude shock” (1999, p.1). He also predicted that scarce resources would initially be misspent, opportunities missed, and results judged as unsatisfactory by the diplomatic community (Smith, 1999). Another development he predicted, was that rapid technological changes would diminish the power of nation states and pave the way for nonstate actors to play stronger roles (Smith, 1999). He assumed that the spread of information- and communication capabilities would eventually result in a total commonization of diplomatic instruments (Smith, 1999). John Ronfeldt & David Arquilla agreed with Smith and others and similarly expected non-governmental to gain influence as stakeholders in international conflict resolution (1999). They therefore suggested an improved coordination of efforts among a multitude of government and international agencies to address this issue (Ronfeldt & Arquilla, 1999).

Viewing from today’s perceptive we know that such predictions and warnings did not miss the point by much. We do indeed live in a networked society, where everyone has the potential to be connected with each other at unprecedented scale, reach and speed, with only marginal transaction costs. New networks, known as *social media* combine billions of people onto new digital spaces where people communicate with each other, receive information through different forms of media and form opinions about issues and policies. Traditional gatekeepers to international information- and communication practices, such as the traditional media and diplomatic actors are challenged in their influence by social media as they lost their exclusive power and control over information. The growth in volume, variety and speed of communication through social media has been reshaping everybody’s connectedness and is able to span over global timely and physical borders with ease. Social media also pose significant challenges on established working routines of diplomatic actors. Once primarily connected through foreign ministries, diplomats and politicians are now linked as individuals directly with each other and can take direct influence on discussions, issues and policies. Social media are far from being a fading phenomenon, ever increasing access to the internet keeps their user bases growing. These observations mark the starting point of this thesis and convince the author of this thesis of the high relevance of the ongoing discussion

1.2 Objectives & topic delamination

The fundamental aim and objective of this thesis is to contribute towards an understanding how digital transformation affects diplomatic actors in their understanding and behavior in regard to information- and communication processes. Especially in today’s fast changing contemporary context it seems more interesting and relevant than ever to investigate how the unique structural conditions of diplomatic actors affect their responses to new technologies. Even though this thesis will be discussing social media, it should not be understood as the thematic focus or fundamental interest but rather as an exemplary case of contemporary ICT. The subject of social media will therefore also not experience particular theoretical or literal framing. This

thesis rather deploys an interest towards internal processes, behaviors and decision-making processes of diplomatic actors in regard to information- and communication processes in general.

1.3 Structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The first part provides an historical account of existing literature in both ICT and diplomacy separately as well as combined field of academic inquiry. The scope of current discussions is reviewed and finally concluded by the identification of a research gap and formulates the specific research question. The second part of this thesis builds the theoretical foundation by reviewing theoretical concepts of power sourcing, affordances, technology acceptance and politics and deduces an appropriate framework and hypotheses which support further empirical research. The third section outlines the philosophy of science, methodology and methods applied in investigating the research question. In addition to methodology and data collection processes also representativeness and limitations of the thesis are discussed. Chapter five holds the results of the empirical analysis which were collected based on several interviews and grouped with coded variables collected through the interviews. A sixth chapter holds the analysis in regard to the theoretical framework whereas the seventh chapter summarizes and discusses overall learnings and results of the thesis. The eight chapter holds the empirical evidence as well as the references.

2 Literature review

Diplomacy but also the area of information- and communication technologies are two themes which have been shaped by and shaping significant changes in contemporary society. Literature surrounding the two themes is diversified, vast and constantly developing. The aim of this literature review is to build a base for understanding how digital transformation shows in the behavior and processes of diplomatic institutions in regard to social media. I believe in order to enable a substantial discussion and findings about an intersectoral dynamic between diplomacy and information- and communication technology, it is also necessary to have some understanding of the two areas independently from each other. Hencefore, the following section will focus first on providing a brief introduction into separate accounts of literature in information- and communication technology and diplomacy, before considering the two areas through a combined body of texts. As laid out in the introduction, the development of the relationship between information- and communication technologies and diplomacy is considered to evolve over a historical timeframe. The following literature review is structured in a way that in accounts for such historical composition, which is hoped to increase the contextual understanding of the subject matter but also to reveal how relevant discussions have evolved over time. The chapter will conclude in an identification of a specific research gap and a specified research question for the development of a more detailed analysis.

2.1 Digital Transformation

As noticed in the introduction, diplomatic institutions face specific challenges in interacting with people that are part of an increasingly interconnected society through sophisticated information- and communication processes and technologies. *Digital transformation* has become a critical term to describe and discuss such processes in a contemporary context. A Google Trends analysis reveals, that over the past 5 years alone, the number of searches concerning *Digital Transformation* have quadrupled and continue to trend upwards (Google Trends, 2019). But what do we actually know and understand by this terminology which is apparently raising people's attention and desire to find answers about? Neither the Oxford nor the Cambridge dictionary define the terminology in their dictionaries. The only way to capture a sense of the literal definition of the concept is to dissect the terminology into its two components, which is *digital* and *transformation*.

2.1.1 "digital"

The official dictionaries of Oxford and Cambridge offer the following definitions concerning the term *digital*.

"recording or showing information in the form of numbers, esp. 0 and 1"
(Cambridge University Press, 2019).

"(of signals or data) expressed as series of the digits 0 and 1, typically represented by values of a physical quantity such as voltage or magnetic polarization"

(Oxford University Press, 2019).

Both definitions refer to information (signals, data) being showed and expressed through numbers like 0 and 1. However, these definitions are obviously abstract and lack context. In an official blogpost, the Oxford dictionary further explains that the term *digital* has been developing for hundreds of years (Holden, 2010). The earliest known understanding of the term apparently dates back to the fifteenth century and was defined as “*designating a whole number less than ten*” (Holden, 2010). Later, in the 1930s and 1940s, the term started to be considered in regard to inventions of mathematicians and engineers (Holden, 2010). New machines, capable of conducting computations through data represented as a series of digits. This challenged *analogue* devices using continuous quantities to compute the desired quantity by analogy (Holden, 2010). A Google Ngram search confirms, that the term has also started to appear in literature and increased in popularity during the 1950s in tango with the first commercially produced computers (“Google Ngram Viewer”, 2012). The used sequences of digits, being collectively called *data*, and machines using such digits to producing data, became considered to constitute a *digital process* (Holden, 2010). In the late 1970s, communication devices and electronics started to make increased use of digital processes such as converting text, pictures, or sounds into data which can be processed by computers.

“Many types of information gained a digital equivalent; a laser disc could store a film as ‘digital video’ and ‘digital sound’, a ‘digital recording’ could be purchased on a CD, and filmless cameras could be used to produce ‘digital photographs’”

(Holden, 2010).

Such processing procedures, from analogue to digital, have become described as *digitization* (Savić, 2019). Through this format conversion, there was suddenly a lot of digital information available. But such information had to be stored, processed and worked with and traditional analog filing systems were not capable of doing so. Thus, there was suddenly and urgent need for new methodologies of storing, processing and working with digital information. In theory, digital information would enable more cost-efficient operations and increased accessibility to information and lowered physical storage needs. However, in reality it was often accompanied with large investments into new technology and expensive trial and error processes of software trying to handle the data (Savić, 2019). Even though hard-and software has been getting better and technologies more affordable and interconnected, the handling of ever-increasing amounts of data, newly available tools and the adaption of processes is still an important matter for professional as well as private actors in our society. This ongoing process is referred to as *digitalization* (Savić, 2019). The specific definition of digitalization generally varies depending on the context of use. However, the reference to its understanding as an ongoing process of adapting processes to increased amount of data and the use of technology remains.

2.1.2 **“transformation”**

The literal understanding of the term *transformation* is defined as followed:

“A complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone”
(Cambridge University Press, 2019)

“A marked change in form, nature, or appearance”
(Oxford University Press, 2019)

Through both definitions, one can discover an emphasis on *change* as well as its profoundness through form, appearance and even internal attributes of form and character. A Google Ngram search shows that transformation has been an ever-recurring part of various literature since the 1800s and it's percentual representation has been constantly increasing and trending upwards since the 1940's (Google, 2012). However, the term has not seen the same conceptual development and evolvement than the terminology of *digital* but seems to find a more constant and established used in relation to descriptions of fundamental change through a variety of thematic literature.

2.1.3 **“digital transformation”**

Through combination of the two literal definitions one can conclude, that digital transformation refers to a change towards operations and processes which rely more heavily on information in the form of data and the use of information- and communication technology. Even though this deducted definition might assist a better understanding, it lacks substance in multiple key areas such as general consensus as well as context. Digital transformation is not (yet) a clear concept and there, is as of now, no overall agreement and common understanding of the terminology. While there is no consensus about a clear conceptual definition, there is quite some agreement about one of its enabling and driving factors. Due to its technical identity, digital transformation is closely intertwined and dependent on the presence and application of technology tools and processes. Technology has become an integral part of people's everyday lives and continue to disrupt already established technologies. As of now, billions of people own information- and communication technologies such as computers, smartphones, tablets, smartwatches and actively participate on platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. These technologies have become shaping factors in today's society and part of the process which we understand as digital transformation.

2.2 **Information- and Communication Technology**

Information- and communication technologies have been extensively discussed in literature, mostly under the summarized term *ICT*. Its understanding and definition, even though broad, is mostly undisputed and consistent across multiple disciplines and timeframes. Figure 1 below offers some literal examples of the understanding of the terminology.

ICT
<i>“An umbrella term that includes all technologies for the communication of information”</i> (Lubbe & Singh, 2009)
<i>“Term that describes the general processing and communication of information through technology”</i> (DaCosta et. al 2011)
<i>“All kinds of electronic systems used for broadcasting, telecommunications and computer-mediated communication”</i> (Dutton, 2004)
<i>“All tools enabling transmission or idea exchange using equipment, tools, or networks”</i> (Level & Hoseth, 2008)
<i>“Refers two components: information technology (IT) and communication technology (CT)”</i> (Mamun, Danaher & Rahman, 2017)
<i>“Consists of all technical means used to handle information and aid communication”</i> (Ramesur, 2012)

Figure 1: Definitions of ICT

When thinking about ICT, it might be obvious to refer to smartphones, tablets or social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. But even though these physical and virtual ICT's have been heavily dominating public and academic discourses, it would be inadequate to consider the area of ICT and its representation in academia as a new field of research. In fact, ICT and its significance in literature looks back to a relevant time frame of about 150 years. Texts concerned with the beginning stages of ICT oftentimes use the appearance of the electric telegraph in the early 1800s as starting point for further exploration of the subject matter. Texts concerned with such early ICT accounts often point out market-oriented, functionalist and instrumental character of the discussion (Harvey, 1990; Juhász, & Steinwender, 2018; Freemann & Louça, 2002). The promise of progress and the standardization of knowledge and production were major arguments for adopting these early ICT solutions (Harvey, 1990). Juhász & Steinwender's investigate the concrete impact the electric telegraph had on product value chains and find that it enabled coordination of production and economies of scale (2018). They employ the example of the cotton textile industry which profited, like many other industries, from the increased codifiability through the electric telegraph (Juhász & Steinwender, 2018). Another benefit was that product specifications could be communicated at a never seen speed over long distances using only words, as alternative to inspecting a sample of the product in person (Juhász & Steinwender, 2018). But not everybody was immediately convinced by the promise of such benefits. Freemann & Louça started out their inquiry by studying the economic contribution and effectiveness of ICT but found that its adoption was often met with significant reservations and adoption hesitance (2002). Also, Winston, who offers a very detailed timeline and development of ICT in regard to the last 150 years, agrees that ICT, in the late 1800s and well into the early 1900s, stood in constant play-off between euphoria and suppression (Winston, 2002). Nevertheless, such considerations in the realm of social sciences had remained the exception

from a predominating economic narrative. If societal influences were considered, then mostly in the context of how they influenced the development and dispersion of ICT rather than vice versa (Freemann & Louça, 2001; Winston, 2002).

The interest of academia to evaluate the social impact of ICT is focused on technologies that appear in the aftermath of the Second World War. In fact, the more advanced and sophisticated ICTs became, the more researchers seemed driven to disrupt the economic and technocentric narrative and replace the functionalist focus with an emphasis on social impacts, politics and communication behavior. Martin Heidegger's voice stood representative for a thinking that started seeing a bigger impact of ICT on society beyond functionalist considerations (Heidegger, 1977). Great examples are also Jean-François Lyotard's contributions which focus on an information-based society and a dramatic social and political transitions driven by ICT (1984). Lyotard praised new technologies for their potential to produce and disseminate knowledge for human benefit, but identified limitations to the extend knowledge can be coded through ICT (Lyotard, 1984). He further issued concerns that a continuation of growing ICT complexity, might eventually shut out a broader public so that technologies only remain available to very few highly educated people (Lyotard, 1984). Castells further develops that thought by differentiating between a "*noble, alphabetic communication*" for example through books or newspapers and a "*sensorial, non-reflective communication*" through radio and television (Castells, 1996, p. 356). Castells was also among the first to describe an integration of various modes of communication into a network that integrates written, oral and audio-visual elements (Castells, 1996). He saw such a system to "*fundamentally change the character of communication*" in the future (Castells, 1996, p. 357) Also, in the view of Castells, communication was a mediator to culture and therefore also had the power to produce "*systems of beliefs and codes*" (Castells, 1996, p. 357).

Castells research foreshadowed of what dominates the contemporary discussions about ICT, which are the participatory possibilities that they offer in terms of written, oral and audio-visual elements. Besides the continuing appearance of new physical ICTs such as sophisticated sensors, smartphones and virtual reality headsets, it has become apparent, that discussion of contemporary ICT literature is well integrated with social sciences. It mostly focused on the impact it has on our life and how it is personalized towards human habits especially those related to interpersonal communication. In his extensive work, *Machines that become us: The social context of personal communication technology* James Katz impressively demonstrates the extensiveness of current discussions contemporary ICT systems initiate in our society. His book brings together multiple influential experts, explaining the heavy assimilation of ICT into people's lives, bodies, and homes in form of Internet of Things, Smart applications, sensors, social networks and Artificial intelligence (Katz, 2017).

Summarizing it can be said that literature on ICT has been developing for an extended time period. However, physical and virtual manifestations of ICT have been changing and replacing earlier iterations rapidly and accordingly some research failed to remain relevant. It is subject of discussion to what extent research on new sub-fields of ICT such as the role social media or smartphones, create the illusion of dealing with a fundamentally new phenomenon even though they are just a continuation of past research.

2.3 Diplomacy

The subject of diplomacy as an independent body of literature has been raising the interest of authors since the early ages. Already in ancient Greek history, diplomatic actors were mentioned as deputations and missions sent to see the world and reflect on doings, ideas and values of foreigners (Constantinou et al. 2016). By employing the terminology of the *Embassy*, as a seeking for meanings and discovery, Socrates entangled early thinking and diplomatizing (Constantinou et al., 2016). While early thinking defined the main purpose of diplomacy in the mediation of estrangement between communities, later positions during the renaissance saw sociability, court behavior and persuasive skills of diplomatic agents as central (Hill, 1987; Aandahl, 1955; Hampton, 2009). In 1436, the first textbook solely dedicated to the practice of diplomacy was published and became a fundamental text for anyone aspiring to become an ambassador (Jönsson & Hall, 2005). Similarly, the early 1600s the book *El Embajador* by Spanish scholar and diplomat De Vera became considered an essential lecture for future diplomats at the time (Aandahl, 1955). In the seventeenth-century, the concept of *continuous negotiation* became introduced to the diplomatic discourse (Berridge, 2001). Its propositions included keeping conversations alive and communication channels open, in times of peace, war and even with no possible agreement in sight (Berridge, 2001). By works of Francois de Callières and Abraham de Wicquefort, whose books became standard references for diplomatic actors in the eighteenth century, civility, tact as well as temperament and emotional intelligence were added to the demanded skillset of a diplomat (Jönsson, & Hall, 2005). Throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century, the *raison d'état* (lit. transl. "reason of the state") rose to become a founding principle of contemporary diplomacy and promoted a strategic approach to diplomacy justified on a base by which the interests of a singular nation state are primary (Kissinger, 1994). The concept has been, and still is, controversially discussed in diplomatic academia (Hampton, 2009; Constantinou, 2013). There are those who are convinced that the ends always justify the means of diplomacy, even if it means that diplomats would be lying, as long as it's in the interest of his/her nation state (Constantinou et al. 2016). Opposing voices do not approve of such methods and underline the importance of honesty and a clear set of ethics and morals as crucial for developing long-term relationships and achieving foreign policy objectives sustainably (De Callières, 1983). In today's diplomatic literature one can notice the discussion shifting away from the principle of *raison d'être* to what some call *raison du monde* ("reason of the world") (Cerny, 2010). The concept of *raison du monde*, even though not universally adopted, stands representative for a current debate about the state in context of societal and economic globalization.

Contemporary literature on diplomacy considers competitiveness in a world marketplace and a complex technological environment as crucial elements for diplomatic practice (Bean & Comor, 2018; Falk et.al., 2017; Adesina, 2017). Diplomacy encompasses but is not limited to definitions in figure 2.

Diplomacy
<p><i>"Diplomacy is an essentially political activity and, well resourced and skillful, a major ingredient of power"</i> (Berridge, 2015)</p> <p><i>"communication between strangers"</i> (Der Derian, 2001)</p> <p><i>"communication that facilitates international society, the diplomatic profession being the custodian of the idea of international society"</i> (Bull, 1995)</p> <p><i>"management of international relations by communications to include negotiations, leading to a bargain or agreement"</i> (Viotti & Kauppi, 2001).</p> <p><i>"diplomacy is the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means"</i> (Berridge, 1997)</p> <p><i>"an apparatus for managing international affairs"</i> (Marshall, 1999)</p> <p><i>"management of relations (political, security, military, economic, scientific, cultural, etc.) between states and between states and other international actors, such as global/regional organizations, INGOs, transnational corporations, etc., by negotiation."</i> (McDermott, 1973)</p>

Figure 2: Definitions of diplomacy

Diplomacy as an independent body of literature has always been challenged through extensive accounts of texts in International Relations (Avenhaus, & Zartman, 2007; Morgenthau, 1978; Kissinger, 1994). Embedding diplomacy into an international relations perspective has often raised concerns that the subject is thereby considered too holistically, and not sufficient respect is paid to the differences of individual matters such as foreign policy, statecraft and diplomatic conduct (Cohen, 1998; Sharp 1999; James, 1993). Constantinou et al. (2016) admit that a limited perspective of diplomacy as part of the international relations studies may have had more validity back when nearly all important international relations were controlled by sovereign states. However, in an increasingly economically and socially intertwined world, the subject of international relations is no longer focused on the nation state or diplomacy per se (Constantinou et al., 2016) Hans Morgenthau presents another perspective which considers diplomacy as an undervalued instrument to render international relations more efficient (1978). He sees a lot of opportunity for diplomacy to serve as a force multiplier for smaller states or constitute a morally better way of conducting international relations (Morgenthau, 1978). Also, literature in the second half of the 20th century seems to be driven towards a perception of diplomacy as an instrument to contribute productively to international relations through foreign policy along with propaganda, economic rewards and cultural influence (Holsti, 2004; Morgenthau, 1978).

But also plenty of literature outside the international relation discipline contributes to a understanding of diplomacy. Such studies contribute to the extension of scope and understanding of diplomatic practice with regard to a multiplicity of actors beyond states but also with regard to dialogue of civilizations, place-branding or communication strategy (Constantinou et al., 2016). For example, the pursuit combining humanistic studies with diplomacy in creating a world diplomacy as a means of achieving better conditions for all humanity, thereby promoting global rather than national interests (Sidy, 1992). Others offer arguments for a more imaginative and creative perception through cultural studies and reimagine what it might mean to be a diplomat and do diplomacy (Constantinou et.al, 2016). Batora and Hynek employ an organizational theory perspective to find a rapid professionalization of diplomacy that questions the autonomous decision making of ambassadors and embassies in relation of the country they represent (2014). Speaking in a similar matter, there is a literature in the subject matter of questioning the exclusive and monopolistic nature of diplomacy through the increasing power and presence of non-governmental organizations, corporations and individual non-state actors (Hoebel & Numelin, 1950; Sennett, 2012).

Concluding it can be said that literature of diplomacy is extensive and its definitions and contextual understanding much more complex than that of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This could have to do with the fact that diplomacy looks back at much larger timeframe and was therefore confronted with even larger societal changes and developments. In a more contemporary context diplomacy became increasingly linked with the discipline of International Relations but has also remained an independent area of academic wondering.

2.4 Diplomacy & ICT

The relevant timeframe in literature about the interrelations between ICT and diplomacy, spans across the entire development of ICT from the very beginnings to current developments. Literature on early instances emphasize that the mixed reactions of diplomats, including skepticism and fascination when confronted with new technology, such as the electric telegraph (Winston, 2002; Müller, 2016). However, the impact that such early ICT had on diplomatic practice was for significant and reportedly also inspired new terminologies such as the “*telegraph diplomats*” (Nickles, 1999). Nickles later also described that he believed diplomatic use of the telegraph increased the need for bureaucratization in order to be able to accommodate and work with the accelerated speed and volume of information (2003). However, such early reporting of diplomatic conduct through ICT is rare. In fact, one can notice a significant lack of relevant literature about the subject area up until the mid 1900’s. A significant increase of literature about to the interplay of ICT and diplomacy is noticeable from the 1960’s onwards, by this time the electric telegraph had been joined by many other technologies such as the radio, television as well as the first personal computers.

2.4.1 Changing relation to public media

Hans Morgenthau was among the first to notice that, even though ICT such as the telegraph and the telephone were well established and vividly used in diplomatic conduct, they did not question existing meaning and tasks of diplomacy (1966). Even though telegraph and telephone allowed for significantly faster and more efficient conversations and messaging, they protected the discreet and common one-to-one format away from the public ear and eye (1966). Morgenthau further noticed a growing divergence between how diplomacy leverages ICT compared to other professional fields. He was especially interested in the ICT adoption and application by public media which had been seeing a development towards much wider and more international 24-hour reporting of information and news (Morgenthau, 1966). In fact, Morgenthau noticed a form of reporting in international affairs by public media, so sophisticated and thorough, that it started rivalling the information gathering and reporting activities of diplomatic actors (Morgenthau, 1966). Public media started to become independent from information provided by the state and diplomatic actors which also meant that the general messaging, including informed explanations of policies and international affairs, was less controlled and influenced by state actors as it used to be (Morgenthau, 1966). A significant number of academics followed recognizing this new dynamic and acknowledged that more research about this unfolding phenomenon was necessary. Hofmann described such research focus as an approximation between areas of professional diplomacy, modern mass communications and social science (Hoffman, 1968). In *The Diplomatic Persuaders: New Role of the Mass Media in International Relations*, John Lee concluded that increased availability and accessibility of ICT lowered the need for information mediators such as diplomats and allowed increased people-to-people dialogues (1968). He also acknowledges that new developments in ICT had been creating a multitude of communication channels through which enables individuals and private organizations to stay informed and communicate (Lee 1968). In congruence with Morgenthau and Hofmann, Lee noticed that media companies have particularly benefitted from such development and expanded their power over public opinion, whereas diplomatic actors lost the ability to shape and influence certain reporting and messaging in the media (1968). Rather pessimistic voices such as Zbigniew Brzezinski's, saw the faith sealed for diplomacy and predicted that through a continuing loss of relevance and influence diplomacy would eventually become largely redundant (1972). Brzezinski suggested to reduce the number of foreign missions and make the remaining ones "*operationally similar to the more efficient international corporations*" (Brzezinski, 1972, p.110). Adelman already identified concrete implications caused through the strengthened role of the media as he pointed out a significant decrease of information officers in diplomacy whose importance diminished as even diplomatic actors began increasingly sourcing information from the media instead of their own channels (Adelman, 1981). Ramaprasad attempted to investigate to which degree state actors were maintaining influence of the media and created a continuum between absolute government controlled and an absolute free press (1983). This and other texts were dedicated to an idea that became known as *media diplomacy* (Ramaprasad, 1983). Media diplomacy theoretically encompasses activities such as propagandizing or playing

a government defined role but also unbiased and critical evaluations of government policies and initiatives through the press (Ramaprasad, 1983). Numerous researches thereafter documented attempts and strategies of diplomatic actors trying to exert on the press and issued their concerns that diplomatic actors are losing their privileges on international reporting and information (Fisher, 1987; Gestrich, 1994; Smith, 1999; Griesse, 2014; Peacey, 2016). However, after a spiking of interest from the 1960's up until the 1980's, the concepts had continued losing relevance as per definition it suggested an actor's role of the press in a governmental function. A terminology suggesting a government media alliance or even a government-controlled press system became increasingly incompatible and with a western understanding of a free press environment.

2.4.2 Changing constituent audiences

Both Hoffman (1968) and John Lee (1968) came to the conclusion that the general public, whether through self-initiative or mediated through the media, will have wider access to information than ever before and therefore weight stronger on national- and international decision making in the future. Without providing information on how such concrete techniques could look like, they were among the first coining the terminology of *public diplomacy* (Hoffman, 1968; Lee, 1968). David M. Abshire saw an opportunity in public diplomacy to escape from a routine that bases predominantly on bilateral exchange between diplomats (Abshire, 1976). Also Adelman points out that the "*virtual invisibility outside the diplomatic community and antipathy on the part of many within*" could be set for a change through "*the evolving global communications network*" (1981, p.914). He noticed that "*for better or worse, the masses are the subjects and no longer merely the objects of historic change*" and offers multiple examples of grassroot initiatives such as the labor and farmer opposition in Poland (Adelman, 1981, p. 915). Fisher (1987) contributes to the discussion by emphasizing the importance for diplomacy to no longer only address government officials but to similarly cater to individuals and private institutions abroad. He insists that tailoring diplomatic messaging to different audiences is important when trying to address and evoke positive reactions from a broad segment of society (Fisher, 1987). Deriving from approaches of earlier research, Gifford Malone chose the structural organization rather the techniques and conduct of diplomacy as a departing point of his research (Malone, 1988). The goal of *public diplomacy* in his view, should be to impact the behavior of a foreign government indirectly by influencing the attitudes of its citizens and such communication would not have to be of political nature (Malone, 1988). Malone's ideas about non-political messaging was rather new to diplomacy. Even though the above-mentioned texts considered ICT as an important influence factor in fostering a more public approach to diplomacy, they prioritized traditional and political practice of diplomacy over other kinds of messaging.

But there have also been critical voices about public diplomacy. Smith (1999) points out that public diplomacy does not offer answers which significant changes diplomacy needs to respond to a modified ICT environment. Holmes insists that public diplomacy ignores much of the power and capacity that ICT has for diplomacy (2013). Also. Richard Grant concurs by explaining that public diplomacy has no use in helping to the formulate

policies in regard to ICT and emphasizes that “*Government-to-Government negotiation will continue to require the services of state agencies*” (2004, p3). Public diplomacy appeared to be limited to considerations about results of communication in terms of audiences, goals and impact, more so than implications on diplomatic practice.

2.4.3 Changing diplomatic practice

Practitioners of diplomacy took longer to acknowledge the profoundness of changes their profession has been facing but their awakening to it was even more so abrupt. Malone questioned whether the organizational setting and hierarchies of diplomacy were actually fitted to conduct that was more oriented towards education and culture (Malone, 1988) Allen Hansen’s work marked a waypoint towards a stronger consideration of changes in fundamental diplomatic practice rather than considerations of outcomes and targets and offers a discussion about practical implications of ICT-mediated communication activities within diplomacy (Hansen, 1989) Some practitioners held dramatic pleas urging fellow diplomats to change. In 1998, Burt, Robinson & Fulton, all American diplomats, released a conjoined report stating that “*diplomacy faces unacceptable performance gaps between its outdated practices and the requirements of the new age of information*” (1998, p.10) They recognized ICT as a “*prime mover of change*” in diplomatic conduct and suggest “*sweeping changes*” to the practice of diplomacy (1998, p.10). They plea for drastic adjustments and reorganization in terms of “*diplomatic priorities, professional standards, leadership, infrastructure, resources, telecommunications, computers, media deployment, and relations with the media, business, and NGO communities*” and conclude that “*without change, our diplomacy is threatened with irrelevance*” (Burt, Robison & Fulton, 1998, p.10). Ronfeldt and Arquilla stated that diplomatic actors would soon start “*to feel the heat of competition*” from nonstate actors which they agreed would be strengthened by the new opportunities of ICT (1999). Gordon Smith, a former Canadian deputy foreign minister, similarly calls out a “*revolution in diplomatic affairs*” (1999, p.1). In agreement with the proposition of changes in the environment of diplomatic actors, Smith calls for increased sensitivity in diplomatic practice as he feared that a prevalent culture of diplomacy suggests too much conservatism and tradition through well-established ways of doing things (1999). In order to be able to accommodate such changes, Diplomacy would have to learn to get comfortable with instability and uncertainty (Smith, 1999). Smith was the one coining the term of *virtual diplomacy* and described it as “*the conduct of what in the past has been regarded as classical diplomacy but that is now an activity being practiced in a different way both because of changes in technology and because it is being practiced by a broader range of people, including many who are not professional diplomats*” (Smith, 1999, p.2). His research but also other contributions in the subject area around the turn of the millennium were formative for later discussions and virtual diplomacy remained a terminology included in many attempts to reconcile diplomacy with ICT during a period of extreme growth in the use and adoption of the internet and related ICT’s in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s (Der Derian, 2000; Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1999; Rosenau, 2000; Brown & Studemeister, 2001; Martin, 2001). Brown & Studenmeister go as far as calling lacking and insufficient ICT adoption of diplomatic

actors a danger to national security. (2001) and Grant sees large significance in how ICTs have changed the conditions under which diplomacy is operated especially in terms of speed, capacity, and costs (Grant, 2004). He sees the rise of something he calls “*event-led diplomacy*” arguing for more flexibility and less bureaucracy in diplomatic practice. But at the same time he stresses one should “*not confuse the message and the messenger*” emphasizing on his proposition that even though practices and means must change (messages), diplomacy in its core does not (messenger) (Grant, 2004, p.7). On the other hand, Grant sees new possibilities emerging for individual Embassies and Ambassadors “*to be at the centre of its own ICT-supported network*” and therefore creating new role for themselves and gaining power and relevance within a state system (Grant, 2004, p.2). But for the new individuality and independence to actually take place, he sees the need for new techniques, processes and adjustment of mentalities by diplomats (Grant, 2004). Overall, he has ambivalent opinions as he views increasing speed and immediacy of information and communication as an asset to diplomacy by enabling decisions to be taken on the basis of a large amount of current information, similarly he sees a danger to the diplomatic principle of caution and prudence (Grant, 2004). Betz & Stefens argue in a similar direction by pointed to a new “*paradox of opportunity and vulnerability*” created by ICT that “*the very technologies that empower us to lead and create also empower those who would disrupt and a better informed society and governmental counterparts destroy*” (Betz & Stefens, 2011, p.10). Holmes tunes in on the voices that regard the core aspects of traditional diplomacy unquestioned by ICT but he identifies an fundamental practice- the personal meeting – being affected by ICT (Holmes 2013). He questions whether costly tête-à-têtes meetings will still be relevant in times where meetings could also be held over video calls. However, he stresses that face-to-face interpersonal meetings “*are most valuable for managing change that occurs through exogenous shock, typically in crisis situations, though can also be helpful for incremental change under certain*” (Holmes, 2013, p.4).

In subsequent years, it became apparent that virtual diplomacy and event-led diplomacy only marked at the beginning of a whole set of upcoming terminologies. Cyber diplomacy (Potter, 2002; Vickers, 2004), *E-Diplomacy* (Holmes, 2013) and Digital Diplomacy (Lichtenstein, 2010; Bjola & Holmes, (2015) is a non-exhaustive listing of terminologies applied to describe identical or very similar matters.

2.4.4 Changing meaning of diplomacy

The current discussion in literature about the interplay of ICT and diplomacy is often led by considerations of new meanings of diplomacy that go beyond its original definitions and purpose. Sundar, Xu, and Dou see increased sophistication of ICT to facilitate the quality of organization–public relations and generate positive outcomes such as increased trust, an observation that can also be derived for diplomacy (2012). Also Ian Manor stresses a relational understanding of diplomacy that is backed by a philosophy of collaboration and dialogue rather than persuasion of constituencies for one’s own advantage (2016). He points out the ability of ICT to mediate such collaborations and dialogues especially through the use of participatory communication tools

such as social media (Manor, 2016). Social media are in fact a central element of discussion in recent literature about ICT and diplomacy. Social media are seen to enable diplomatic actors to explore new forms and formats of conduct at a marginable cost and through the collaborative affordances of social media to enable a unprecedented feedback loop (Pang et.al.,2018; Pamment, (2018) (Bjola, 2018). Twitter and Facebook with their constantly growing user base, seem to be establishing themselves as valuable forms of interacting with not only the broad public, but instead various specific constituent audiences (public, politician, economic decision makers). However, Ian Manor stresses that the flocking of diplomatic actors to social media does not guarantee that their practices become automatically more interactive (2016). It depends on the willingness of diplomatic actors to engage and they need the capacity to recognize technological affordances (Manor, 2016). James Pamment, believes that diplomatic actors increasingly need to bring thinking and ideas from outside the close diplomatic circle into diplomatic core business to create solutions (2016). He proposes that ICT is facilitating a borderless collaboration and hyper-connectivity of issues such as global terrorism, climate change that are impossible to address for single stakeholders require the support of multiple stakeholders to be successful (Pamment, 2016). In his view, diplomacy is in the best position to be playing a leading role in such international collaborations but has to step up to the challenge or otherwise losing its power to other actors (Pamment, 2016). Shin et. al., (2015) concur that ICT helps providing constituent audiences with information about what an organization represents creates openness and transparency and cultivates relationships. They additionally note an increasing fragmentation of the ICT environment and suggest adopting and coordinating multiple digital contact points for optimal impact (Shin et. al., 2015). However, diplomatic actors should deploy self-awareness in terms of their resources and know how as stakeholder management or mismanagement is closely tied to organizational image (Pang, Shin, Lew, 2018). Hamilton Bean & Edward Comor suggest that diplomatic actors consider using ICT in ways that go well beyond message dissemination for example by informing and supporting cultural initiatives from their countries (2018). Pang et al. (2018) regard interactions with audiences through social media as no different than offline negotiations or exchange of ideas and urges diplomatic actors to engage in open, honest, and ethical relationship with a broad online public to hear from the public and adapt to the public's needs. In the view of multiple researchers, the building of interpersonal relationships through ICT have the potential to elevate to the same quality of offline interpersonal relationships but organizations must learn to talk with their stakeholders instead of talking at them (Pang, Shin, Lew, 2018; Tam, 2018). Ian Manor even sees the uprising of a new form of society that is predicated on online dialogue instead of earlier online-monologue (2019). Members of a digital society are believed to not merely absorb information; they comment on it, edit it, redistribute it, and engage with its authors (Spry, 2018). Considering such influencing factors can offer support and guidance to a diplomatic organization to receive a clearer picture and understanding of their current situation and the environment surrounding it. Bjola (2018) goes so far to wonder whether the online migration and adaption of digital tools by diplomatic actors would not only amend the way diplomacy is practiced but in fact challenge its very DNA.

2.5 Conclusion and research gap

This literature review has been considering contributions in the separate areas of ICT and Diplomacy before dedicating attention to a combined body of texts. It has made apparent that ICT is a field that has been developing over the past 150 years and even though constantly evolving and changing in focus, its basic definitions and assumptions are largely undisputed. While in its beginning stages mostly considered through a functional and economic perspective, ICT has recently become considered in close context to social sciences and its impact on human life and society became studied more extensively. Diplomacy on the other hand has a much longer history and is up to this day, subject of various interpretations and different understandings. While in its early stages being associated with the gathering of knowledge and better understanding of humans and culture, it had been instrumentalized as a force multiplier of the state and governmental agencies. Only recently it has been brought back to the realms of broader societal considerations. The combined body of texts has made apparent, that diplomacy and ICT have been developing alongside and in constant exchange since the first ICT occurrences. The matter of diplomatic conduct with ICT should therefore be regarded as an evolvement of an existing debate rather than a new field of research. Due to the fast evolving of technological advancements and multi-faceted tasks of diplomacy & fast changing capabilities of ICT, existing literature and studies are characterized by their extensive heterogeneity. In an attempt to structure the ongoing debate, four historic main developments were identified that embody and support discussions in relation to a specific time period of diplomacy and available technologies. Figure 3 shows the identifications of four timelines representing how discussions concerning ICT have been impacting the context of diplomacy. The figure aims to emphasize the fact that discussions in literature have started from external considerations but increasingly moved towards emphasizing more internal implications ICT has on diplomacy.

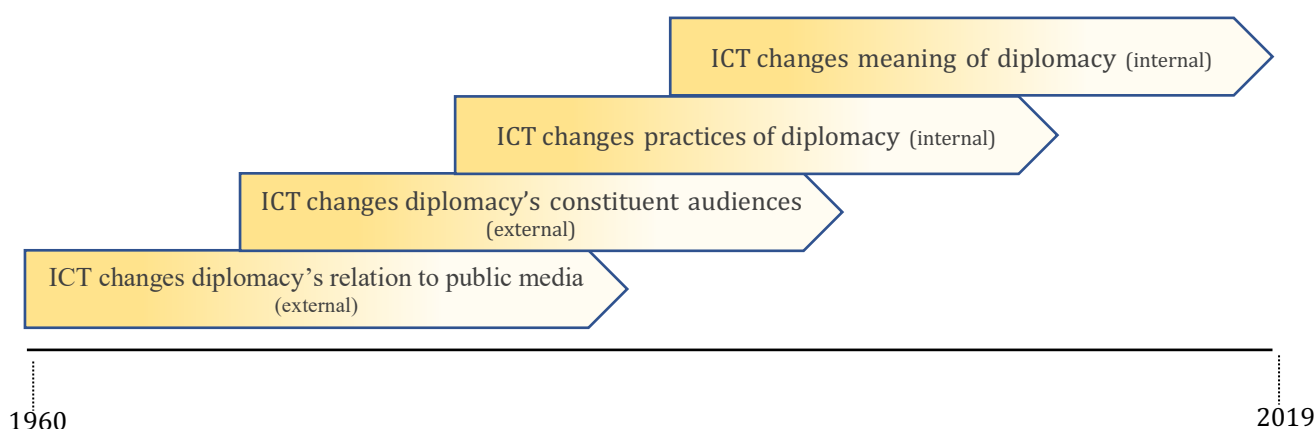


Figure 3: Impact of ICT on diplomacy

Thematic focus areas in research concerning the impact of ICT on diplomacy are often short-lived. New ICT propose regularly new consequences for diplomacy and it seems only natural, even necessary, for researchers

to adjust their approach and focus. This has led to the consequence that despite a growth in interest about the interplay between ICT & diplomacy, the phenomena is still insufficiently understood. There is striking non-convergence among the wide range of perspectives and research studies discussed above and the fragmented research activities have made it impossible for a holistic theory to develop and. Academics as well as practitioners have contributed towards the account of literature that has been undergoing a permanent problem re-evaluation in view of new technologies. Research is often either descriptive or prescriptive which could explain that the subject area generally lacks substantial theory building. A first research gap is identified therein that only a very limited amount of research was conducted in relation to specific diplomatic entities and specific technologies. Diplomatic actors were mostly considered from a holistic perspective rather than specific entities (ambassadors, embassies, foreign ministries etc.). Also, there is a specific lack in considering specific human behaviour when it comes to applicative processes of contemporary ICT. There seems to be very little general understanding how human actors consider and integrate ICT's in their daily work environments. Furthermore, most studies in the field apply a perspective that is focused on quantitative outcome mechanisms and performance measures of information- and communication activities rather than qualitative results based on individual human behavior. This is surprising insofar as they are the ones managing the applications and putting strategies into action on a daily basis. Driven by the purpose to bridge the gap between commonly broad considerations about the impact of ICT on the diplomacy and everyday behavior by individual human diplomatic actors in terms of specific ICT applications, this thesis raises the following research question:

Research question: *How is digital transformation shaping the behavior and attitudes of individual human diplomatic actors in regard to social media?*

3 Theoretical framework

The previous section reviewed literature with a focus on giving context to the separate and combined bodies of literature in ICT and diplomacy. The review revealed a branched field of research which, even though showing some thematic overlap, comes to disparate conclusions when to the combination of the two spheres. In general, the intersectoral literature of ICT & diplomacy was identified to lack a holistic theoretical substance and therefore offers only very limited support towards creating a framework to support the process of gathering information on the behavior of diplomatic actors in regard to ICT. A particular lack of attention was found to be devoted to effects digital transformation has on individual diplomatic human actors in regard to ICTs. In view of these circumstances, this section focuses on introducing theoretical concepts and combining them into a framework that is seen as contributing towards answering the specified research question and research gap. This section aims to introduce relevant theories and combine them into a research specific format. The choice of concepts was guided by the findings of the literature review. The following sections will introduce the four chosen theories and explain how they are put in relevance to each other through an overall framework. A combination of those theories fields is foreseen to mitigate the absence of preexisting theory concepts in the intersectoral literature of ICT & diplomacy. The theoretical framework will conclude with outlining the intended contributions of the underlying thesis. This includes the goal to be able to apply the introduced theories into a research design which supports the analysis and explanation of the behavior of individual diplomatic actors in regard to ICT.

3.1 Power in diplomacy

The literature review showed that diplomatic actors are per definition are associated with a certain power that they source through their appointment of the state (Keller, 1956). An individual's opinion and perception about power is therefore expected to be a guiding factor when it comes to one's attitude and behavior in relation to social networking sites.

3.1.1 Power through structure

One departing point for theorizing the concept in relation to diplomatic actors is the political school of realism which emphasises the structural role and power of the state for national interest (McKercher, 2012; Britannica, 2019). Political realism differentiates international from national politics by the absence of a centralized authority (Jönsson, & Hall, 2005). For the purpose of maintaining an international balance of power between states, but also in fostering national power abroad, realism considers diplomacy as fundamental tool and alternative to war (McKercher, 2012; Britannica, 2019). In the words of Hans Morgenthau, a pioneering thinker of realism, *“the conduct of a nation's foreign affairs by its diplomats is for national power in peace what*

military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war” (Morgenthau, 1966, p.139). Realism views the state and its diplomatic actors (e.g ministries, embassies, diplomats) as fundamental tools of power and develops theory through investigating systems, processes and patterns evolving from their status through a bottom-up perspective (Morgenthau, 1966). Related to the philosophy of realism is the concept of *realpolitik* which promotes the idea of prioritizing the achievement of national interest over other ends and values (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014). Realpolitik stands for a pragmatic view on power based on considerations of national advantage rather than ethical and moral considerations (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014). Realpolitik also prioritizes the power of state institutions and derives rules and understandings from established structures similar to realism (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014). Overall, realism as well as realpolitik describe diplomacy as an important tool to shape and advance interests that best serve the nation state in an international context. The power of diplomacy is thereby sourced and assigned through the structure of the state.

3.1.2 Power through processes

The *English School* offers a complementary perspective on power and the role of the state. The *English School* applies a top-down perspective on power, meaning it studies how external developments and circumstances affect the practices, discourses, institutional character of the state rather than vice versa (Jönsson & Hall, 2005). The *English School* therefore considers power to arise through a certain practice and processes of diplomacy rather than considering it as sourced through the structural and institutional character of the state (McKercher, 2012). Hill speaks within the margins of the English schools, as he theorizes diplomacy within functions rather than concrete and established structural meanings (1987). In his view, diplomatic functions are prone to change and always have been (Hill, 1987). The ideologies of the *English School* and its proponents are reflected in an approach to political statecraft that is known as *noopolitik*. This approach emphasizes the process of deriving power from information- and knowledge gathering as well as communication with public constituencies (Arquilla, et.al, 1999). Its originals lie in the Greek word *noos* which means *the mind* but the term *noosphere* was derived only later by scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in 1915 (Teilhard et. al., 1965). Chardin was driven by a moral rather than an economic compass, a circumstance that was accounted for in subsequent theorizing about the *noosphere* by emphasizing the idea of collective- and shared thinking as well as a global ethics and consciousness (Snow & Taylor, 2008). Teilhard De Chardin points out that the creation of a global *noosphere* has been primarily formed by non-state- and other private actors but proposes that also state actors should contribute towards the sphere (Teilhard et. al., 1965). He founds his proposition in the belief that the *noosphere* holds a lot of power arising from processes of engagement with a variety of actors conjointly through a shared mindset (Teilhard et. al., 1965). *Noopolitik* asks for clear separation from *realpolitik*, which stresses the hard dimensions of power and on an approach that sees the relationship between diplomacy and ICT mainly unilateral controlled by the structural power of the nation state (Arquilla et. al., 1999). Where realpolitik would regard ICT rather as an adjunct to other dimensions of diplomacy, *noopolitik* embraces the idea of treating intangible assets such as information-and communication processes as a basis for a distinct

dimension and purpose of statecraft (Arquilla et. al., 1999). For those means, it is also acceptable to *noopolitik* to accept a certain external influence on diplomatic goals and conduct whereas *realpolitik* remains closely bound to the notion of applying power and control towards clearly defined diplomatic goals for national advantage (Arquilla et. al., 1999). Power can be equally uniting and dividing to the spheres of *realpolitik* and *noopolitik* and often it is a central element to understand diplomatic action. Theorist Joseph Nye added to the theory of power by arguing that power is generally seeing a shift from stressing power of structure and resources towards sourcing power from initiating behavioural change (Nye, 1990). The execution of power in more tangible terms of resources, Nye calls a “*directive/commanding method*” by applying “*hard command power*” through threats or rewards (Keohane & Nye, 1998, p.86). On the other hand he sees a “*co-optive method*” through “*soft power*” which sources from the ability to present one’s ideas and values in a way that makes it desirable for others to strive towards so they adjust their behaviours accordingly (Nye, 1990, p.181). The effectiveness of soft power relies heavily on the ability to make one’s values and desired messages heard but also resonating with a moral and mindset of desired constituencies. In this regard he points out, that in strongly information- and communication based societies are expected to create a better environment for the application of co-optive methods of power rather than more coercive hard commanding methods (Nye, 1990).

Summarizing it can be said that there is a noticeable polarization about the perception of power in international relations and diplomacy. On the one hand, there are the perspectives of political realism and *realpolitik* which consider diplomacy an important international tool which sources power from the structure of the state. On the other hand, there are the ideas of the English School and *noopolitik* which consider power to arise from processes in diplomatic conduct which base on ethical and meaningful international collaborations and relations. Furthermore, the review of texts from Joseph Nye revealed that in societies strongly influenced by information- and communication processes, co-optive “*soft power*” is generally expected to be more effective than directive “*hard command power*” (Nye, 1990, p.181). What this means in regard to this thesis is that individual human actors in diplomatic institutions are expected to have a tendency towards either one of those the two perceptions of power (structure or process) and thereby to be influenced in their opinions about using Social Media for their purposes. Individuals leaning towards a perception of power through processes are expected to show a higher inclination to adopt Social Media as it allows them to engage and collaborative with a variety of constituencies for various purposes. Such connections are expected to reflect in a readiness assessment according to the ADKAR model which is explained in following part.

Hypothesis 1:

A perception of power arising through structures weakens an individual’s awareness about change

Hypothesis 2:

A perception of power arising through processes strengthens an individual’s attitude about change

3.2 A model for change

Another learning from the literature review was that digital transformation, ICT and diplomacy are areas united by the characteristic shaped by constant change. For example, the field of ICT has expanded from rather simple physical singular media devices such as the electric telegraph towards highly sophisticated non-physical trans-media applications of the likes of social networks. The role of diplomacy and its actors has been reinterpreted and redefined since ancient times and digital transformation is similarly a field constantly being discussed in view of new technologies. The process of change is therefore considered to be a significant factor in analyzing the impact of digital transformation on the behavior and attitudes of individual diplomatic actors in regard to ICT. The ADKAR model was singled out to be a particularly suitable theoretical concept since it aims to facilitate understanding of change on an individual level but also to extend to government agencies (Hiatt, 2006). The ADKAR model is constituted by five building blocks of which all must be in place for a change to be realized (Hiatt, 2006).

The ADKAR Model	
A	Awareness of the need for change
D	Desire to support and participate in the change
K	Knowledge of how to change
A	Ability to implement required skills and behaviour
R	Reinforcement to sustain the change

Figure 4 The ADKAR model, adapted from Hiatt, 2006

3.2.1 Awareness

This first building block marks the beginning of an ADKAR lifecycle and refers to a person's understanding of the nature of change, why it is necessary and the risks that are involved if the change is not executed. Awareness also includes internal and external factors that created the necessity of change in the first place as well as an understanding of the person about personal benefits and consequences (Hiatt, 2006).

3.2.2 Desire

Desire as the second building block refers to the willingness of a person to support and be active in the process of change. It includes a personal change and motivation that vary depending on the person to help driving change forward (Hiatt, 2006).

3.2.3 Knowledge

The third building block, knowledge, represents the know-how, information and training how to change. Among other factors it talks to the needed job roles, techniques, processes, skills and systems needed for making change successful (Hiatt, 2006).

3.2.4 Ability

This fourth building block represents the practical execution of change. Ability is proven when demonstrated by a person or group to perform a change and maintain a desired level of performance (Hiatt, 2006).

3.2.5 Reinforcement

The fifth and last building block of the model represents factors that help to make change sustainable and lasting. It could include celebrations, rewards or recognition or only a person's satisfaction with his or her achievement (Hiatt, 2006).

The sequence of the model's buildings blocks – A,D,K,A,R – are considered to represent a person's behavior and experience during experiencing change. First there must be awareness about a change being necessary through which a person then creates a desire to initiate or help carrying change (Hiatt, 2006). Desire is considered to initiate the building of knowledge about a subject matter which then lead to the ability to implement change or to know what to do (Hiatt, 2006). Finally, recognition stands for the ability to reflect and appreciate change that has been made and therefore make it sustainable (Hiatt, 2006). For the purpose of this thesis, the ADKAR model is employed to assess the readiness and the capacity of human actors in diplomacy to change in terms of implementing Social Media into their information- and communication behavior. A high readiness and capacity for change in terms of Social Media is expected to have the effect that individuals generally show a higher acceptance of new information- and communication technologies such as Social media than individuals who display a low readiness and capacity for change. Such correlations are expected to reflect in the model introduced in the section below.

Hypothesis 3: *The attitude towards change shapes an individual's degree of technology acceptance*

3.3 Technology acceptance model

As seen through the literature review, individual human actors in diplomacy were historically often required to adopt new ICT accompanied by fundamental changes in existing business processes. It began with the adoption of the electric telegraph which has initially experienced much resistance but eventually broad adoption. Such significant changes were in the literature often documented with a focus on overall organizational acceptance- and adoption processes rather than changes in individual behavior and attitude towards a specific technology. This thesis aims to address this research gap by considering a concept that is known as the *technology acceptance model*. The model was developed by Fred. D. Davis because in his opinion researchers and practitioners needed a better understanding why and how individuals accept or reject implementing new technologies into their work and business processes (Davis, 1989). By now it has become a widely used theory aiming to explain the adaption process by which individuals start to form opinions, either positive or negative, that lead eventually towards the actual use of such systems (Dwivedi, Wade &

Schneeberger, 2011). For the use of this thesis, the technology acceptance model (TAM) is adapted partly through its fundamental elements which are *perceived usefulness* and *ease of use* (Davis, 1989). They are the starting variables towards an individual's acceptance towards a specific technology (Davis, 1989).

3.3.1 Perceived usefulness

Defines as “*the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance*” (Davis, 1989, p.320). For example, a high perceived usefulness equals the existence of a positive use-performance relationship whereas a low perceived usefulness correlates with a believe that a system has no advantageous use case (Davis, 1989).

3.3.2 Perceived ease of use

Refers to the “*degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort*” (Davis, 1989, p.320). Effort is understood as the resource(s) a person allocates to an activity. For example, a high ease of use would mean a person has to allocate only little, in case of a low ease of use, a lot of effort (Davis, 1989).

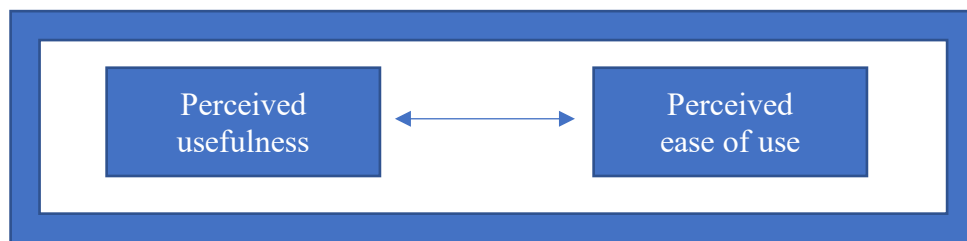


Figure 5: Fundamental elements to technology acceptance adapted from Davis, 1989

Both, *perceived usefulness* as well as *perceived ease of use* are considered to influence one's attitude towards using a system and indirectly the behavioral intention (Davis, 1989). But even if an application is perceived as useful, it will only be used if it has a positive relation, which varies individually, to its perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). *perceived ease of use* one-directionally influences *perceived usefulness* while both variables contribute to the attitude towards a system (Davis, 1989).

The variable of *perceived ease of use* is seen to respond to intrinsic characteristics such as the ease of learning, flexibility and clarity of a technological interface (Gefen & Straub, 2000). *perceived usefulness* on the other hand, bases on a users' assessment related to his or her job and task responsibilities and therefore base on how an ICT system helps one to achieve task-oriented objectives in terms of variables like efficiency and effectiveness (Gefen & Straub, 2000). A technological user demonstrating high levels of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use is not only to high intentions of making use of a system and hold positive attitude towards a system but is also to expected to show a more sophisticated use of a technological system (Gefen & Straub, 2000). This suggests this person actual use of a system is more sophisticated also in terms of taking

advantage of technological affordances in comparison to someone who scores low in the factors of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This behavior is expected to show through the theory of affordances as a fourth and final building block towards the specific theoretical framework of this thesis.

Hypothesis 4: *The degree of technology acceptance shapes an individual's ability to recognize affordances*

3.4 Affordance theory

As shown in the literature review, Social Media and their impact on diplomacy is a common subject of contemporary ICT texts. Especially through the diversity of their communicative functionalities, Social Media have become similarly subject of enthusiasm and scepticism (Majchrzak et al., 2013.) Ian Hutchby developed the concept of affordances into an analysis of technology and society long before today's social media platforms came into existence (2001). Through his definition of affordances as "*functional and relational aspects which frame, while not determining the possibilities for agentic action in relation to an object*" he created an often cited base for more recent research on digital platforms (Hutchby, 2001, p.444). The concept of affordances was originally coined by James J. Gibson who's initial description of affordances sourced from physical natural objects (1977). Gibson differentiates affordances from physical properties, such as a surface being flat, rigid or soft (1977). He suggests affordances are, even though they can as well be objective, real and physical properties relative a subject (Gibson 1977). The physical properties of a tree could therefore be an affordance to an animal to hide on top of it, as well as it may offer to another the affordance to scratch its back (Gibson 1977). The concept of affordances has survived decades of academic literature and has found new use cases and interpretations in the literature of ICT and is considered to offer a certain reconciliation between the discussions of technical determinism and social constructivism (Hutchby, 2001). Grint and Woolgar suggest that technologies should be treated as *texts* that were *written* in a certain way and with a certain purpose (affordances) in mind by their makers (2013). Such affordances may seek to encourage or limit certain use of the technology, but the final *interpretation* of a technology would be up to the end user. In the view of Majchrzak, affordances can be used to examine relationships of an action, taken or not taken, in regards to the capability of a technology or tool (2013). The exploration of affordances in regard to technology can also result in social consequences (Majchrzak et al., 2013; Jensen & Dyrby, 2013; Hutchby, 2001). Both Norman and Hutchby helped to actualize Gibsen's (1977) original affordance theory so that it found application in current research environments. Majchrzak et al. describe four concrete affordances that representing different ways of how employees can engage in online conversations (2013).

3.4.1 Metavoicing

The affordance of metavoicing is especially suitable to consider in the context of Social Media as it refers to the engagement in online conversations through making others aware of particularly exciting ideas, useful

knowledge or important conversations about certain topics (Majchrzak et.al, 2013). There are is a proactive and a reactive element to metavoicing:

- a) *Proactive*: Asking for comments, inputs, ideas, opinions, votes on issues and ideas but also current events, occasions or incidents (Majchrzak et.al, 2013).
- b) *Reactive*: Reacting online to others' presence, profiles, content and activities by adding knowledge to the content that is already online through retweeting, voting, liking, sharing, tagging, etc. (Majchrzak et.al, 2013).

3.4.2 Triggered attending

The second proposed affordance, called triggered attending, refers to the engagement in an online conversation only after a given trigger or alert that initiates a specific conversation, content or occurrence. Again, especially in regard to Social Media, this affordance seems especially relevant as most Social Media platforms afford such engagement through push notifications, alerts and email notifications. This allows a user to remain unengaged in a conversation or with a person and only initiate a conversation with someone or about a certain subject after a notification entered. (Majchrzak et.al, 2013).

3.4.3 Network-informed associating

The affordance of network-informed associating refers to the connection a user builds online and how such a network can be leveraged to enable new and further connections. Social Media provides the possibilities to see how someone is connected to others through friend lists, connection lists or followings. This makes it possible for users to identify specific networks and conversations about topics they would like to join or associate with also through observations of what kind of audience follows similar profiles or conversation topics online. (Majchrzak et.al, 2013).

3.4.4 Generative role-taking

The affordance of generative role-taking allows a user to engage in a conversation through a community-sustaining role that keeps it ongoing and dynamic and productive, therefore emphasizing the conversations importance. Sustaining activates can mean the user takes repeated and patterned action to feed the conversation. (Majchrzak et.al, 2013).

All four above mentioned affordances describe social and perceptive affordances but as mentioned earlier, Gibson's original affordance definition encompasses the non-debatable physical properties and the interpretative subjective definition of an object (Gibson, 1977). If we transfer this thinking into current affordance theory concerned with ICT we can assume that complementary to the mentioned social affordance there are also technological affordances such as the ability to transfer written text, images, videos etc. through

Social Media. These technological affordances can appear and disappear and current social media quite often enable and disable technological features. Technical affordances can therefore appear and disappear depending for example on the physical technology they are used at, based on region or based on the version the user is active on. For example, it was only recently that Instagram introduces a feature that allows users to communicate through short 10 second videos, called “stories”. And also Twitter recently changed its most important interaction feature, from a star to a heart or Facebook enabled everyone to start live videos. One needs therefore to be aware that even though these technological and social possibilities exist for some users, they may not for others because they do not recognize them as affordances. Also, an affordance is only considered to exist in relationship with a user/actor and therefore the same tool affords people to do different things (Meredith, 2017).

3.5 The framework

The above sections introduced four theoretical perspectives that address the main findings from the literature review and are seen as supportive towards the answering of the research question. The theoretical concepts, covering the areas of *power*, *change*, *technology* and *affordances* are believed to offer orientation in the attempt to evaluate how digital transformation shapes the behavior and attitude of an individual human actor in regard to a specific ICT system. This thesis proposes a combination of the separate theoretical models and suggest specific interrelations across the different areas. as visualized in figure 6 below

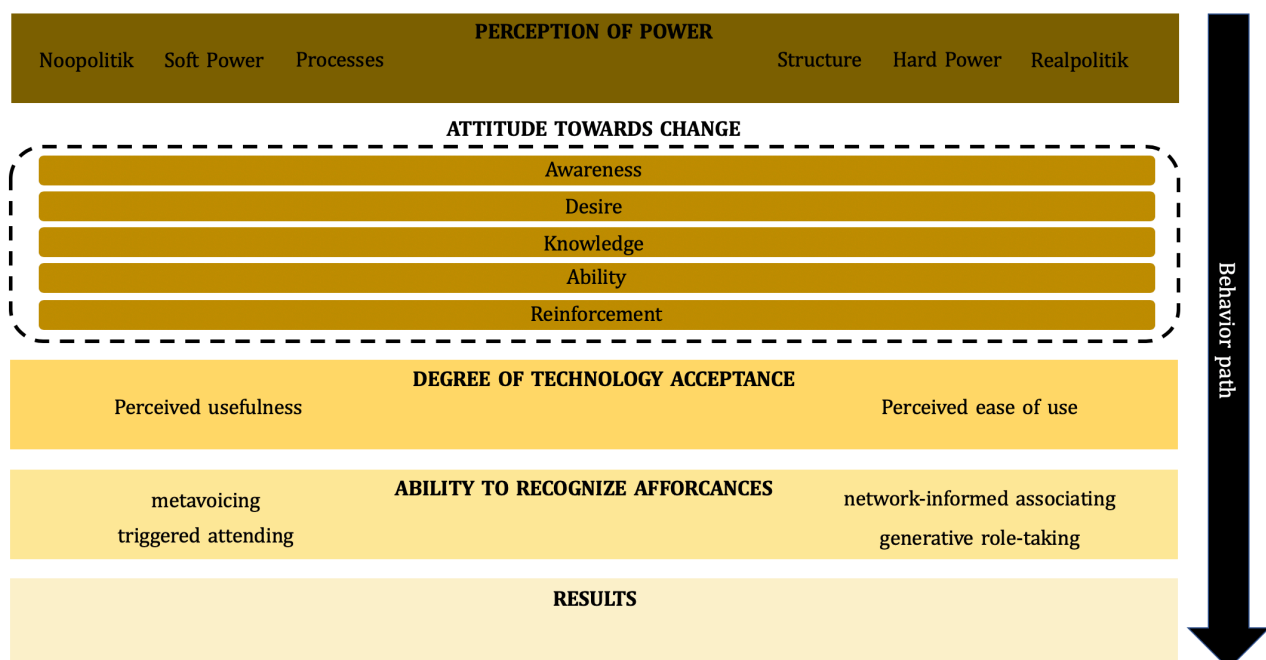


Figure 6: The theoretical framework

Figure 6 depicts a framework which is constituted by the four separate theoretical concepts introduced beforehand. Each area marks a self-contained and alone standing analysis but can be considered in combination

with other areas to offer to gain an understanding of the behavior and attitudes an individual forms towards using a specific ICT system or application.

The behavior path is considered to have its starting point in an individuals perception of power which, depending on its result, is expected to shape one's attitude towards change. The attitude towards change is considered through the earlier introduces ADKAR framework. Due to the sequential organization of the ADKAR model, the results of one's perception of power is expected to reflect especially in the first building block of the ADKAR model, which is the awareness about needed change. The consequence of an individuals perception of power and his/her attitude towards change is further expected to results in a certain degree of technology acceptance and finally also to shape one's ability to recognize affordances of a system. of one. The path, completed by the subsequent considerations of all four areas of analysis are expected to lead towards the eventual behavior of an individual in a diplomatic setting towards specific information- and communication processes or system, in the case of this thesis, towards social media. In order to test the validity and the expected interrelatedness of the separate areas, this theoretical framework established 4 hypotheses which will be tested through further empirical enquiry.

3.6 Intended contribution

This thesis has earlier established that the interrelated literature of ICT and diplomacy applies various perspectives and theories and is not conducted along the lines a of holistic theoretical foundation. There is a significant lack of holistic theory in the intersection of ICT and diplomacy especially concerning individual human actors interacting with specific ICT. This thesis hopes to shed light into that research gap by considering the behavior of individual diplomatic human actors in regard to social media. To limited extends, this thesis aims to contribute to theory building by proposing and testing a combination of relevant theories into a research specific theoretical framework. The relevancy of chosen theories was considered on the basis of the insights the literature review offered into the subject matter. The resulting framework is expected to provide support in bridging the dimension of theory and empirical enquiry for this specific thesis and possibly future similar inquiries from researchers and practitioners. The framework is also considered to hold potential for reflective self-evaluation by individual human actors in diplomacy, such as ambassadors and other diplomatic employees.

4 Research Model

The previous chapter described relevant theoretical concepts and derived a theoretical framework through which the central inquiry of this thesis can be further investigated and illuminated. This chapter explains the methodology and methods applied to answer the research question. The hypotheses will be translated into researchable entities, each of which highlights a part of the defined theoretical framework and the relationships that derive from it. This will guide the research design that drives the process of gathering the empirical data. The aim is to contribute to the empirical field, but also in a smaller degree to theoretical knowledge. However, the motivation of this study also stems from personal experience as a basis for research interest. Semi-structured interviews will provide the necessary qualitative data for reflecting and interpreting the validity of the framework. Thereby this study follows a deductive empirical process. Concerning the structure of this chapter, the first section will be dedicated with explaining the philosophy of science. The next section will outline the methodological basis of the study in more detail before a third section describes the sample of interviewees. In a final section, the reliability and validity of the study will be considered together with the research limitations.

4.1 Philosophy of Science

Considerations about the ontological and epistemological stance of this thesis are important in order to create warranted belief and an appropriate research strategy. Questions of ontology are concerned with the nature of reality and whether social entities should be perceived as objective or subjective (Bryman, 2016). This consideration constitutes a certain system of believe, which in the case of this thesis is found in constructivism. Constructivism implies that social phenomena and meaning are not pre-given but continually produced through actors and their social interactions (Bryman, 2016). While ontology defines how we consider reality to be constructed, epistemological considerations help to gain clarity on what there is to know about reality and what one considers to be acceptable criteria to classify and consider knowledge in the area of research (Bryman, 2016). In that matter, this thesis follows an approach of interpretivism which emphasizes the value in the emphatic understanding of human behavior and action in order to arrive at explanations (Bryman, 2016). The fundamental propositions of this approach base in the belief that human beings construct social realities and it is therefore important to grasp the subjective meaning such realities have for those who have constructed it (Bryman, 2016). Consequentially, in order to gain access to human thinking and be able to interpret their actions and their constructed point of view, research should strive towards applying appropriate strategies and methodologies. This thesis defines itself as interpretive social science and its chosen strategies and methodologies are discussed in the following section.

4.2 Research strategy and methodology

This thesis adopts the strategy of conducting qualitative empirical research emphasizing words and opinions rather than quantifications in the collection process of data. The thesis furthermore adopts a cross-sectional design but with respect to certain case-study elements as the research is conducted in the organizational environment of the Swiss Foreign Ministry. First and foremost, the research interest bases on the sample of Embassies as units of analysis and their adoption of ICT in their roles of diplomatic actors and not on the circumstance that their behavior represents Switzerland. The Swiss Foreign Ministry therefore rather acts as a sample case but provides no specific research interest as such. Nevertheless, findings are expected to offer certain case study evidence on the grounds that the qualitative research was undertaken in an organizational setting of a single subject. Through its neutral stance towards international conflicts and high political independence on economic and social issues, the Swiss Foreign Ministry is considered to offer the circumstances and conditions of a diplomatic environment with optimal exemplifying potential for other cases. Individual human actors in the Swiss Foreign Ministry are expected to interact with ICT in neutral everyday situations of diplomatic conduct rather than fierce circumstances and conditions of international conflict. Other than its representative potential, through personal connections I have within the foreign ministry of Switzerland, I see certain revelatory advantages and the opportunity to observe and analyze the research area through a perspective that would normally be inaccessible or hard to access for other researchers.

4.3 Method

The explained strategy and methodology are acted upon through using a method of individual semi-structured interviews with practicing diplomatic actors in order to collect qualitative data through primary research. Semi-structured interviewing has the advantage that its relatively unstructured nature allows for the capacity to gain insights into how research participants view the world and opinions (Bryman, 2016). The questions remain open ended and allow an interviewee to derive from the initial question and potentially provide information that was not directly asked. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow to follow up on newly appeared information that was not accounted for through the interview guide. This thesis uses an interview guide with 9 question/themes. The themes were not necessarily expected to appear in a given order during the interviews, but attention was put on the fact that all points were covered at the end of the conversation. The research question offered guidance towards which kind of participants are need in the study, in order to be able to contribute best to the research goal. Thus, three criteria were established from the outset on a priori basis by the virtue of a person's position, thus making sure that interviewees were decision makers in the matter at their Embassy unit (e.g ambassador, head of mission, consul or senior staffer with responsibility concerning technology or social media). The sampling was done purposefully and in a strategic matter in order to maximize the relevance of the interviews in regard the research goal. However, special attention was put on making sure that the selection of interviewees would allow for enough variety and different context. This was

achieved through a geographical dispersion of the representatives who are located in Swiss Embassies in 6 different countries. Overall, there was an aim to account for diversity in terms of age, organization and occupation, and approximately equal numbers of men and women. The assumption was that this would maximize the opportunity of accessing variation and highlight common behavior and attitudes. While the selection of the individual interview participants based on purposive sampling, the variety of actual units of analysis (Embassies) was achieved through sampling of accessibility. This had the consequence that out of 9 approached potential participants, 6 agreed to an interview. The final group of interviewees consisted of 2 women and 4 men. The age range of the interviewees was 28-59 years of age.

4.4 Data Collection and Analytical Process

The data was collected between 28.04.2019 – 15.09.2019. All interviews were conducted by phone to avoid a potential distortion of results due to different interview settings. A non-thesis related introduction and meeting with all interviewees preceded the interviews during the Switzerland's Europewide Embassy conference on in Riga, Latvia. However, at this point in time none of the interviewees was aware of the existence of underlying thesis. Information and context was only provided by a follow-up Email and interview request after 08.04.2019. The duration of the interviews varied from 35-40 minutes, resulting in approximately 4 hours of recorded data, and 35 pages of transcriptions. Lastly, all interviews were held in English, so as to avoid potential terminological confusion and distortion in the answers. All interviews were transcribed in their entirety but only after all interviews had been conducted. During the transcription process, data was broken down in components and labelled, a process that is often described as coding (Saldaña, 2009). The coding process had been prepared for through a first cycle coding cycle of provisional and hypothesis coding, even before the data was been collected. This resulted in a list of codes anticipated to appear in terms of types of responses. This list was put together on the basis of the study's theoretical framework and derived hypotheses. The provisional codes were expected to undergo modification, extension and/or revision at any given point during the further coding subsequent coding cycles. The starting set of codes consisted of the following elements:

- PERCEPTION OF POWER
- ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHANGE
- DEGREE OF TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE
- ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AFFORDANCES
- PERCEPTION OF CONSTITUENT AUDIENCES
- INTENDED PURPOSE OF MESSAGING
- APPLIED COMMUNICATION PHYLOSOPHY

Once the interviews were conducted, all six interviews were put into the *NVivo data management program*, in order to undertake the process of data coding and effectively identify the data through a first coding cycle. In a second cycle of coding, basic labels were assigned to the data so to create a segmentation of recurring answer patterns and themes through structural coding. The roughly categorized data did then undergo a third coding cycle focused on evaluation-coding and InVivo-coding to refine the data sets. Evaluation-coding was applied due to its emphasis on the collection of information about outcomes, effectiveness of policies, organizations and personnel (Saldaña, 2009). It also allows segmentation of data in terms of participants critique, observations of patterns, and improvement propositions (Saldaña, 2009). InVivo-coding supported the process of specific qualitative evaluative commenting of participants and captures and represents the essence of the interviewee's voice, perspective and worldviews (Saldaña, 2009). Summarizing it can be said that the coding process, following Saldaña's (2009) coding approach, applied three rounds of coding in order to retrieve the most meaningful material from the raw data and condense and categorize valuable information that allow for an effective descriptive analysis.

4.5 Examined relationships

The interview questions were designed to span over the four main areas of the theoretical framework which would allow to address the overall research, the specified research gap and the hypotheses. One of the four areas addressed the relationship and connection interviewees drew between their information- and communication processes and their ability to exert power through their communication. Through a second area it is evaluated which necessity interviewees see to change their information- and communication processes to favor a stronger integration of social media in their behavior and practices. For this purpose, the ADKAR model was applied to evaluate the interview partners readiness towards conducting such change. The interview partners were therefore asked whether they see a necessity to adjust their current processes to social media to play a bigger role in their activities. It was also tested if and to what extent they may have already formed a desire to initiate such change and to what degree their current social media activities impact their daily work environment. Furthermore, it was tested if the interview partners received sufficient support towards building a knowledge base about social media. The last two building blocks of the ADKAR model (Ability & Reinforcement) are described as consequential outcomes of earlier building blocks and address factors such as psychological abilities, intrinsic values and intellectual capability (Hiatt, 2016). I decide that they could not be sufficiently addressed through the research design and excluded them from the empirical analysis. A third area addressed the degrees to which interview partners found social media as useful and contributing to their professional goals and targets. Similarly, it was tested as how complex the interview partners perceived the application of social media functionalities. A fourth area examined the relationship interview partners have towards concrete technological affordances which would also determine the degree of complexity their activities hold on the platforms.

4.6 Ethical considerations

This thesis, its corresponding research and management of its collected data, was conducted with a particular emphasis on professional secrecy. I have been in an employment relation with the ministry of foreign affairs during the data collection process of this thesis and was therefore obliged to follow the principle of confidentiality. In the fulfilment of my professional role, I had access to data and documentation, that demanded to be treated with confidentiality and not to be disclosed to the public in any form. While insights into certain internal processes, decision making behavior and overall strategy have certainly guided the direction and motivation of this research, the thesis contains no information which would be unattainable for other researchers. This thesis puts a high emphasis on principles of privacy, confidentiality, secrecy through the following main objectives:

First objective:	Avoid harm to study participants
Second objective:	Ensure informed consent
Third objective:	Independence of research

Adapted from Dill et. al., 1980)

The first objective was to avoid disturbance to interviewees and the relationship with their working environment. Depending on their roles, the interview partners were asked to issue their honest and frank opinions about internal processes of their organization unit or the ministry of foreign affairs in general. I regarded it as crucial to allow the interviewees to make such statements under the guarantee of confidentiality of records. The participants names & location of their organization unit was therefore anonymized to ensure that the individuals are not identifiable. A second objective was to ensure informed consent. Due to my employment, there was technically speaking a professional connection to the interviewees through the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. However, this thesis treats the predications and remarks obtained through the interviews conducted from 28.04.2019 – 15.09.2019, as its sole source of data. Before every interview, prospective participants were provided with information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research enabling them to make informed decision whether or not they wish to participate in the study. The third objective was to guarantee the independence of this thesis. I recognize the potential danger of conflict of interest or partiality but ensure that this thesis has at neither been embedded in any organizational unit of the Federal department of Foreign Affairs, nor has it ever discussed the matters goals, intents or results of this thesis with any organizational representatives other than the interview participants directly.

5 Results

In this section of the thesis, the results for the empirical analysis and found links between information- and communication processes by in diplomatic conduct are presented. The conversations were held with individual representatives of diplomatic institution of Switzerland. The questions and therefore the structure of this section bases on findings and theoretical definitions introduced in previous sections. The empirical results consider the theoretical framework and the preliminary codes as main structural elements but offers increased depth of information by including additionally coded information that appeared during the process. Due to the emphasis on this thesis to capture and depict the interviewees opinions, the answers are often reproduced verbatim as they were given by the interviewee partners. At times answers are reproduced as texts blocks and summarized fashion to allow for combined emphasis. Also, some answers are analyzed in combination to show indirect relationships and estimate these factors' relative importance.

5.1 Perception of power

I received mixed answers from interviewees when I asked about perceptions about the source of power of their information- and communication processes. Nevertheless, a couple of reoccurring themes were identifiable. Some interviewees clearly associated the international status of Switzerland and the reputation they derive from it, as an influential factor of why their information-and communication processes carry a certain power:

“First of all, we are a trusted institution, we represent a nation state and Switzerland is a nation that has international power and is respected” [. . .] In regard to our Embassy we have the power because Switzerland has this power and help out with things for which it makes sense to be on site and of course we have appointed tasks by the Foreign Ministry to represent Switzerland and the interests of Switzerland here”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“We represent one of the most successful countries in the world in terms of economy, humanitarian tradition, social constructs. I think this is something to be proud of and gives our voice a certain weight when talking to peers”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

Other status derived attributes, trustworthiness and reliability were also often mentioned as shaping factors of power:

“I think this is what people get from us and what they can expect from us, trust”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“[. . .] there is a chance for us to step in here and say, hey we're not just someone, we're a trustworthy organization [. . .].”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

It was furthermore noticed that trustworthiness is not only considered a base element of power in external communication but similarly relevant in internal information- and communication processes.

“Also the Foreign Ministry puts its trust in us to represent Switzerland in an appropriate manner and conduct base its information gathering in due-diligence to make sure that the information we communicate is truthful”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

Another reoccurring theme was Switzerland’s neutrality that is considered to be deeply rooted into the country’s DNA and enabling the Foreign Ministry to play a role as a connector and negotiator in an international context.

“[. . .] people trust that the things we say are independent and from a neutral standpoint”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“Neutrality is deeply rooted in Switzerland and also has a legal part next to the political part”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Neutrality was not only mentioned in relation to a giving Switzerland a certain international status but was also seen as guiding of concrete communication behavior. One interview partner saw the principle of neutrality as fundamental reason why Switzerland generally avoids including political and controversial topics in its information- and communication processes (interview 3). For example, it was mentioned that even in times when Switzerland held the OECD presidency during the Russia/Ukraine crisis, it barely condemned Russia’s actions while most other European countries clearly condemned the act. Interviewees saw neutrality combined with trustworthiness as crucial condition for enabling Switzerland to occupy important communicative and meditative roles in international conflicts (interview 3).

Only one interview partner explicitly mentioned Social Media by stressing it should fulfil the same standards in terms of reliability and quality as other forms of communication and that hasty information- and communication decisions on Social Media could endanger such quality.

“I believe that we’re a respected institution and people can expect a certain reliability and quality of our communication that is not necessarily a given anymore in a world of Fake news and unreliable content that is circulating. This is a quality that we should not just dismiss and certainly not risk through some unthought posts on social media”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

Interview partner 5 showed the strongest deviation from considering power of diplomatic messaging appointed by structure. He sees the source of power mainly in the process of communication:

“[. . .] we’re also only powerful when we communicate, because as explained earlier with the examples of the successful diplomats on social media channels, this is power too [. . .] We have the reputation and the status but we’re increasingly missing the content and the audience.”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

similarly, interviewee 6 drew a clear connection between power and concrete information- and communication processes.

“[. . .] the world evolves around talking to each other this is really important in order to find solutions about issues but also all parties can profit in terms of collaborations in economic manners. It is important to foster mutual understanding and also for a country like Switzerland that is not part of the European Union it is very important to keep explaining our positions and how we do things, otherwise we get isolated. But every country has different priorities of course. I think for our means and our goals as a country collaboration is everything”.

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.2 General perception about information- and communication processes

Without exception, all six interview partners did stress that their Embassy is employing a multitude of different information-and communication activities. Similarly, in all instances the phone and the computer were mentioned as applied ICT. Also, the importance of information- and communication processes in a diplomatic context was often pointed out as the following quotes show:

“Exchanging information with a whole variety of actors is deeply embedded in the DNA of diplomacy and therefore a main part of our daily work”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“Communication is obviously an essential part of our daily work, if not the most important”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“Information and communication is the very soul of our work, nothing goes without it”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

The foreign ministry of Switzerland was with one exception always explicitly mentioned as an important communication partner. Other concrete examples included swiss citizens, foreign diplomats and economical decision makers. The description of concrete communication activities was very diversified and included both external and internal processes. Another noticeable dimension of the answers includes the reason of communication. Such encompass helping Swiss citizens out with administrative matters such as visa applications and travel enquiries, inform diasporas about importance happenings and topics in the host country but also to ensure internal clarity on responsibility sharing and tasks.

5.3 Attitude towards change (ADKAR model)

In order to test the interviewees attitude towards change towards increased implementation of social media in information- and communication processes, they were asked 5 questions (see appendix 8.1). The question had been developed in view of testing elements of the ADKAR framework. Question 2 aimed to test the interviewees awareness towards change. Questions 3 and 4 aimed to test whether the interviewees internal and external environment was enabling a desire for change. Finally Question 5 & 6 aimed to test the interviewees ability to create knowledge towards creating change. Through these question, the building blocks A,D & K of the model were tested. The building blocks A & R were perceived not to be accessible to test due to their consequential character.

5.3.1 Awareness

Interviewees showed divided awareness about a necessity to embed social media more strongly in their information- and communication processes. While some dismissed the necessity for change, others agreed that some changes were indeed necessary based on different factors. However, the large majority of interviewees were found to be critical or at least undecided if and to what extend change would be necessary. For example, interviewee 6 stated that their Embassy's efforts in terms of social were not significant enough to make a change in processes necessary. Also, interviewee 1 admits that:

"Its sometimes difficult to see what change is absolutely necessary and what we can let go past and it won't hurt us"

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

An interview partner considered it to be *"unwise"* to question existing and proven means of communication for something that in his view has yet to prove real value (interview 3). It became clearly noticeable that interviewee partners are doubtful about the lasting impact of Social Media:

"Possibly in a couple of years we've grown all so tired of Social Media that it no longer a topic."

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

"Only look at the amount of social media that came up within the last 5-10 years, nobody know how long they will be around [. . .] I don't see such drastic measures being necessary, things come and go, some stay"

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

However, there were also voices that have accepted that social media will play a role in future information- and communication processes at their Embassy but there appeared to be uncertainty in what manner and to what extend. For example, an interview partner stated that the effort put into social media should not be

exaggerated without giving a reason (interview 2). Another interviewee seems to have a more founded opinion of why he struggles to commit to social media:

“The reason why I dismissed the case at least in the beginning, was because I didn’t see the return on investment as not satisfactory. What I did was looking into social media channels of colleagues of mine and other actors and the typical ambassador or the typical embassy had something like 300-500 followers or friends, depending on the channel”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Interviewee 5 displayed awareness about the necessity to include social media in order to stay connected with constituent audiences while another stressed that in terms of audiences the need for communication measure can vary significantly depending on external conditions in a specific location or existing communication culture:

“the younger generations probably who don’t read a lot of newspapers or go to our website. We need to account for this and it’s necessary to stay in touch also with this audience but they are not anymore accessible for us through another way than social media. It is important to us to allow interested parties to learn about our activities as easily as possible”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

“it depends a lot of the place of where you are operating as my locations changes every 4 years or so. It is definitely different whether you work somewhere in Europe, and there it even depends whether you’re located in northern or southern countries. There are other places worldwide, and communication is always handled in a different way”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

The most prominent factor that seemed to shape the interviewees awareness about the need to adopt social media for their information- and communication processes was found to be perceived pressure. This pressure appears to source from Switzerland’s foreign ministry but also from peers and diplomatic actors from other countries. One of the interviewees stated explicitly that it their direction of an Embassy in terms of social Media depends clearly on where the foreign ministry decides to head in that matter (interview 4). Another interview partner concurs that there would be no way around making Social Media a part of their communication as the foreign ministry moves heavily in this direction (interview 5). A third interviewee confirms that they started to notice subtle pressure towards investing time and dedication to Social Media channels from the ministry (interview 2). Interviewee 6 confirms the direction of the foreign ministry but does not perceive it as a form of pressure:

“The Foreign Ministry is now actually encouraging us to experiment”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

The perceived pressure from the ministry however still seems to be at a relatively low level as one interviewee concludes that:

“At the moment nobody in the ministry cares about how much you post, what you post and how many likes you get but as soon as we start to measure and evaluate those things it’s a whole different story and we need to talk about a clear resource and task strategy”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

But not only the foreign ministry contributes to the impression of the diplomats that change of their information- and communication processes towards social media becomes a bigger topic. The interviews showed that peers and also foreign ministries, embassies and diplomats are influencing the interviewees perceptive:

“When I look at other Embassies also from other countries, I see that their followers are growing and they produce quite good content. That puts some pressure to us to raise our level and produce good content so that people follow us and not other channels”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

“If I look at some of my colleagues from other European states, I think some of them are doing quite a good job. If we could follow similar footsteps I think it would be a good threshold”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“[. . .] look at other countries what they are doing. Britain, France, Sweden. To see a little bit what we should be trying to improve”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

Another interviewee confirms that *“we can observe some organizations, including Embassies, doing a very professional job at communicating through these channels”*(interview 2) As they hear success stories of other Ambassadors and politicians who reach impressive amounts of people and therefore expand their power and an interviewee confirms that *“Of course it is also a goal for us that people know about the activities of our Embassy”* (interview 5). Others notice that not long ago *“Social Media was a playful side project that nobody paid attention to”* (interview 4) but now moved towards a much bigger relevance.

5.3.2 Desire for change

The desire for change towards social media is considered to arise from a high awareness about a needed change but also through experienced changes in organizational processes and responsibilities

5.3.2.1 Organisation processes

Interviewees were found to experience the impacts of Social Media on their organizational processes only to a very limited degree:

“it has not much influenced our traditional Embassy work but is more an additional thing we have to do and take care of”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“[. . .] it is a manageable additional effort”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

“[. . .] it has not significantly intercepted with other communication processes at our Embassy”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

Almost all interview partners consider Social Media rather as an *“additional dimension”* (interview 2) or *“just another project”* (interview 1). Also whenever interviewees describe a certain specific impact, they do so by giving examples where social media has not initiated new processes but rather serves as a medium for already established processes.

“I think it is pretty close to classical way of communicating, some information we put on the website in the past, nowadays on Facebook”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

“Before we were sometimes asked to update the website more often with current events and pictures, but this was replaced by social media and we no longer asked to do this by the FDFA”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

It is noticeable that the interview participants seem to have quite a pragmatic approach to Social Media. They seem to be an accepted, or in the least case tolerated, social media as an addition to current practices or as one interviewee puts it *“they have their place in our work”* (interview 1).

“We don’t spend excessive amounts of work on that (Social Media). It will be embedded in a set of tasks of our embassy but not a top priority”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

There is a noticeable lack of enthusiasm about Social Media which seems to lead to a form of application which shows a low complexity. An interviewee admits that they stick to the *“basics”* (interview 5). The low effort usage of social media also seems to reflect in the type of contents the embassies publish. Two interviewees explain that they only engage in *“good weather posts”* (interview 2) and *“feel-good content”* (interview 3).

However, there are also signs of a changing attitude. One interviewee states that they are *“working on a strategy”* (interview 1) others admit that It forces them to think in new ways and makes them reconsider how they want to talk about certain topics (interview 5).

“It adds a new dimension and things we would have never thought about communicating in the past we are certainly asking ourselves, wait could this be worth a Tweet?!”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

5.3.2.2 Role and responsibilities

The current impact Social Media has on the roles and responsibilities of the interviewees were overall described as moderate. Multiple interview partners state that they currently do not see their roles and responsibilities being impacted much by the handling of social media. Often it was described that the responsibilities were distributed over multiple employees at the Embassy. One interview partner said he hoped to break down responsibility silos and make the management of social media a team effort (interview 3). Even though responsibilities appear to be shared and distributed, in all cases the Ambassador or head of mission were named to be the person holding the final responsibility of the Social Media channels. Ambassadors and head of mission were furthermore described to be posting without consulting anyone else, whereas other employees had to seek the final permission from the Ambassador or head of mission. Social Media were found to be integrated in existing business processes at the embassy such as daily meetings. However, in every instance current responsibility and sharing of tasks still seemed up for discussion and susceptible of future change.

“These are questions that are occupying my mind as an Ambassador and it is currently up for debate how much of the effects will center around the tasks of me as an Ambassador and what kind of tasks we will distribute among the employees or even just one employee.”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

In regards of sharing and coordinating responsibilities with the ministry of foreign affairs the interviewees showed a clear preference of maintaining as much responsibility within their own entity. They voiced their opinion clearly that each Embassy should have the final say in defining the approach and strategy in terms of Social Media. On multiple occasions it was pointed out that everything else would be considered an unjustified interfere with the competences of an Ambassador. One interviewee stressed the necessity that an Ambassadors personal opinion should be clearly distinguishable from a general statement of the Embassy (interview 4). However, in general there was a clear tendency towards keeping as much responsibilities, freedom and decision making power in the Embassy. Even though the current distribution of power between the Embassies and the ministry of foreign affairs was considered to be appropriate, any deeper involvement would make certain interviewees “uncomfortable”. One interview partner self-initiatively mentioned the matter of IT security which he sees to lie clearly at the level of the ministry of foreign affairs:

“What I don’t mind is to take responsibility about content that is posted from our side but in terms of account security, whether we are getting hacked or receive a lot of spam, I see the responsibility

clearly at the Foreign Ministry also because the IT capacities are all centralized anyway at headquarters.”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

The perception of the work and involvement of the ministry of foreign affairs resulted to be positive. Also their handling and capacity to be responding to change was considered to be good.

“The Foreign Ministry is doing a fine job, it’s a complex apparatus and change is not always coming in similar shapes and formats. Current foreign policy bases on political decisions, past experiences and is constantly reshaped by new developments. So yes generally I think Switzerland and the Foreign Ministry are doing a fine job which is also shown by our standing as a country in the world”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“I think we have a good communication in place with the Foreign Ministry. They have understood that change cannot be done by telling us how we should do things but they value the experience and position of diplomatic employees and Embassies. Every change is always a matter of discussion and we have good contact points, such as the yearly Ambassadors conference, regional embassy conferences etc. where we discuss among each other the issues.”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

5.3.3 Uncertainty

When interviewees were talking about concrete consequences and implementation actions of Social Media in order to evaluate their desire to help carrying change, an answer pattern emerged that points towards the fact that Social Media was often associated with being a source and creator of uncertainty for human diplomatic actors and regarded as difficult to mediate with current practices and even causing potentially negative effects. For example, multiple interviewees admitted that they were still trying to figure out and understand what Social Media means for their them, their Embassy and their activities. One interviewee partner expressed frustration over the fact that *“nobody is talking about the costs of this”* (interview 6) and expressed uncertainty about how to approach social media in general:

“It almost feels like we’re in constant catch up mode, every time when we login there is something new we should be doing, or maybe we shouldn’t? We always ask ourselves should we be doing this too, is it too loose or is it too serious, it’s a fine line. But then we see a high politician or another Embassy or the Foreign Ministry do it so I guess it is accepted standard. It can become confusing so we want to stick to what works and don’t get over our heads when it comes to trying out new things on these platforms.”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

Also others admit that *“there are still important questions coming our way on what channels we want to be active on, how much time we want to spend using them and what the benefits are of using it”* (Interview 2) or

go as far as admitting *“for us is more the question, why are we online. It shouldn’t be just for the sake of it but we need to find a good reason”* (interview 1) or that *“sometimes we just miss a good reason why to post and then also don’t know what to post (interview 6)* Also, oftentimes there seems to be a missing point of reference:

“I don’t know whether we speak of 200 hundred or two thousand (followers) or another number at this point”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“if we end up tweeting and liking only each others content in our silo, I think it starts getting ridiculous.”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

Uncertainty also appears to stem from confusion what form and style of communication is appropriate for social media channels:

“For me it is not that clear whether this kind of contested content should be something we post about in social media. It is not really in the DNA of swiss diplomacy I believe”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“This is also in the sense of the Ambassador he wants to keep the content as informative as possible. In my opinion it is a little bit too serious and standardized sometimes. But of course, I agree that it is important that people get something out of our posts and they don’t just show nice pictures without any informational value. However, interestingly we see the best results in terms of likes if we post something relaxed, for example a celebration picture when the Swiss Ice hockey team performs well”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

“What do you want to your embassy and yourself as ambassador how want to be seen what image do you want to portray and how do you manage that image for many years and months.”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“sometimes I see colleagues of mine putting posts where I would put a question mark if that is how Switzerland would like to be seen.”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Another cause of uncertainty seems to be how to go about producing content for Social Media

“A main challenge for us is certainly to produce the creative elements, including the right texts, the right hashtags, the right pictures. Also a major challenge is going to be finding an answer what should be handled institutional or personal, for example whether an Ambassador should post in his name, the name of the embassy or within it’s role as the Ambassador of the host country and then pass the profile on to his/her successor.”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“We can simply not produce several pieces of information every week to share about our activities.”
(Interview 1, Ambassador)

But not only the nature and type of content seems contributing to the uncertainty but interview partners also expressed experiencing difficulty in implementing Social Media as a part of their processes especially in terms of available resources. Some state that they had to be careful not to invest too much resources (interview 2). Others agree that exactly such questions as well as *“internal setup and also the target groups need to be clarified”* (interview 3). Other just simply admit that *“we’re not yet ready to commit to it (Social Media) to the extent that is actually has an impact”*. Some question whether the commitment of resources towards social media is actually worth it:

“The question is always surrounding resources and as mentioned around decisions how much time of your day you want to spend on those things, time you could also use differently”
(Interview 4, Ambassador)

Again another interviewee seems to state the obvious by stressing that:

«You don’t just receive thousands of followers like that, it needs time and a plan to build up that level and there is no magic formula but it takes a lot of work and time and resources. It’s a commitment to invest those things to reach that level and at some point you need to make a decision about, do we want that and what it is worth to us and probably you need to do less of other things that you’re doing”
(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

5.3.4 Knowledge

The empirical interviews also aimed to find out about the levels and type of support interviewees receive in order to build up knowledge towards the use of social media in their information- and communication processes. It was found that the support which the foreign ministry deploys towards the Embassies was generally evaluated as positive even though the interview partners sometimes questioned the existing regulations in place.

5.3.4.1 Type of support

Interviewee’s described a process that had to fill out a form that makes the interviewees aware of things to think about before opening up a social media account, such as the target audience, deployed resources and type of content. However the value of this process is contested among the interview participants.

“There is an application form we need to fill out when opening up a channel. But honestly, this is just more of a formality and not adding any value”
(Interview 1, Ambassador)

On the other hand the interviewees issued clear expectations about what kind of support they expect from the ministry of foreign affairs. One of the expectations included support for content:

“[. . .] I hope for some support from the Ministry in terms of content that we could post[. . .]”
(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“The Foreign Ministry has a supporting function and could propose content, that Embassies can then use or not”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

One interviewee mentioned that he wishes the ministry of foreign affairs would engage more in explaining functionalities of Social Media and seemed to miss a certain pro-active approach:

“We once had somebody from the FDFA in the Embassy to show us how to add people to our Facebook account but ever since we were never again proactively approached from the FDFA.”
(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

Another interview partner hopes for some further explanations, strategic support and overall a more personalized assistance:

“[. . .] to have some strategic thinking and explanations of the benefits would be nice to see aha, yes I understand know why we do this (...) we would need somebody to come here, learn about us as people, our knowledge, how we work and then maybe we can start talking about how to integrate a process into our daily work”
(Interview 6, Ambassador)

Interviewees also mentioned that the foreign ministry offers social media seminars and evaluated those positively with some suggestions for improvement:

“It was very informative. But I think I’ll be only able to properly assess its effectiveness at a later stage, after we have gathered our own practical experiences.”
(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“The seminars they are offering are good. They are interactive I think that is a good way to do. But I think we could be structured a bit differently; it is maybe too much top down and not enough practical.”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Interview partner 1 stated that they were in no need of support from the foreign ministry but that he feels that they could receive it if they were ever in need for it (interview 1)

5.3.4.2 Evaluation of support

Overall the interviewees evaluation the effort to support the embassies in their social media activities as sufficient but with room for improvement.

“Presence Switzerland (foreign ministry) is doing a fine job but it’s in the beginning”
(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“I think it is quite okay”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“Sufficiently”
(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“For the things we do on Twitter I think it is sufficient”
(Interview 1, Ambassador)

One interviewee was disappointed about having written and sent a strategy his Embassy’s handling of social media to the foreign ministry but never received feedback or even a response (interview 5).

“I wrote like a two page document about our goals, also because the FDFA asked for it [. . .] I also sent it to the FDFA but no feedback but at least we received the okay to open up the account.”
(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

It was pointed out by an interviewees that it was only recently that the foreign ministry had changed it’s opinion in terms of social media

“for a long time the Foreign ministry was completely absent if I may say so, even reluctant in a way, until not long ago with social media.”
(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

In terms of possible improvements interview partners mentioned that the foreign ministry would start following a less generic form of support but adjust its activities with a focus of the Embassies as separate organizational units with unique needs for support:

“I think it would not be bad if they offer something like a social media coaching function. Like if somebody opens a channel that they would follow this channel critically and give feedbacks.”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“To receive a feedback from time to time would be valuable. Some hints to create and curate more engaging content is always appreciated by us. But in the end we produce a lot of content and don’t

receive substantial feedback, which is a bit of a pity. I think it would help us a lot to improve and become aware of new functionalities.”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.4 Degree of Technology acceptance

5.4.1 Perceived usefulness

Interview partners perceived usefulness of social media as information- and communication generally as existent and positive but had reservations about the need of its extensiveness. Favorably perceived were factors like speed, flexibility and the amount of control the tools enable over communication:

“Social Media is adding value because it is instant (...) it is controllable by us other than when we send out a press statement we never know if and when it is going to be picked up. Social Media helps us to control and plan out our communication better before.”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“It offers us more flexibility than other communication and it is a lot faster.”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

However, interviewee 4, despite seeing positive aspects in social media in terms of speed questions whether speed in the communication of their Embassy should even matter. This also stands representative of the fact that even though interview partners generally identified positive attributes of social media, they questioned if they even matter for their work or at least doubted whether they would to a large extend. For example, interviewees 1 and 3 show doubts if social media helps them to communicate in better ways:

Do they allow us to do a better job in informing and communicating in general, probably not really.

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

I'm not sure honestly. I don't think it is making anything better but also not worse (...) We use pictures, emojis, it's more playful but that doesn't mean it makes our communication better in general.

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

On the other hand, interviewee 2 and 5 do indeed see potential in Social Media to make their information- and communication processes better

“My job as a representative of Switzerland is to represent Switzerland as good as possible and I would agree that Social Media helps with that”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“It's adds another flavor to our communication and maybe it drives us to be better communicators in general.”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

Interviewee 6 sees the upsides of social media without having given a clear judgement about its impact on general information- and communication processes.

“I think it might really enable us to talk to more people. There is a lot of potential to make people aware of what we are doing and we can inform them about our actions and activities”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.4.2 Perceived ease of use

When it comes to the perceived ease of use interview partners evaluated Social Media tools to be mostly easy to use and self-explanatory. However, the interview partners pointed out that even though they were familiar with the basic functionalities, they struggle to use the tools when it comes to more advanced application forms.

“I think they are made in a way that it is very easy right? Otherwise nobody uses them. I have the Twitter app on my phone and I think it’s easy and fast to make a tweet.”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

“I am familiar with Facebook and Instagram to the extent that I know the basic functionalities”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“it depends what the standard is we talk about. I know how to make posts on Facebook and Twitter but the use of these channels naturally don’t stop there”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“I’m sure I know not every functionality, but it is a learning by doing that will take time. Also I think there are easy ways of doing it and more demanding ways.”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

“It’s not complex in a technical sense”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

Sources of knowledge were often described to stem from private instances and usage rather than experience with the tools from a professional use.

“I see my children using it. Me myself I have not been active on such platforms as a private person

(Interview 3, Ambassador)”

“Personally, I have used Facebook privately so for me it is quite normal and known to me and I understand sort of the logic behind it. But of course there are some difference if you use it private or for a company.”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

One interviewee gave also described a professional instance where the complexity of usage hindered them in a professional environment whereas others admitted that whenever an increased complexity occurs there appears uncertainty how to deal with it:

“A couple of weeks ago we had the issue that the Ambassador deleted something on our Facebook and asked me to reconstruct it but we didn’t find out how to do it, that also happens and we move on”
(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.5 Ability to recognize affordances

5.5.1 Metavoicing

Interviewees were asked about their specific handling and usage of Social Media platforms and it was found that they mostly refrain from trying to receive user feedback, opinions or comments on their activities. In only one instance and interview partner stated that they were trying to do so. And even in this instance, the type of questions included within the posts were *“rhetorical”*. (interview 1). Another interviewee states that even though they *“hope”* for people to comment on their posts, they *“don’t actively ask for feedback or comments”* (interview2). In a further instance an interview partner admits that *“I don’t think that the things we post on our social media channels are offering too much depth to start a conversation”* (interview 4). Interviewee 3 emphasizes their priority of providing information and questions the appropriateness to ask for user feedback.

“we see it primarily as our task to inform people but of course it is always nice to see people engaging with our posts. Sometimes they tag other people, that’s always good to see. I’m not sure what we would get from asking our followers questions I’m not sure if that fits the character of our activities as an Embassy.”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Interviewee 5 mentions that because it is *“difficult to give enough context to people about something”* they would avoid asking people questions because the user’s attention span would not be long enough to ask meaningful questions (interview 5). Finally, interviewee 6 states that they are oftentimes using and reposting material from the foreign ministry which are already sparking some commenting from users but that the Embassy is not actively seeking that form of interaction. (interview6).

The interview partners show a slightly altered stance towards reacting to other users presence on Social Media in the form of passive metavoicing. On multiple occasions interviewee partners mentioned that they *“retweet”* some content when it seems relevant to them (interview 1). Interview partner 6 also confirms that they are leaving reactions on others posts but only in the form of likes (interview 6). Others are actively trying to avoid retweeting too much content as they see it as a priority to produce their own content (interview 2). Another

interview partner states he does not see the value in reacting to others Social Media activities also due to resource issues:

“We don’t do that. It’s already time intensive as it is I think that would just go beyond our possibilities. Of course, I see that maybe other Embassies would be happy if we like their content, so they get more likes but just as a gesture I think it is not worth the effort”
(Interview 3, Ambassador)

An interview partners considers it to make sense under the condition that the issue concern either European or other multilateral issues that are relevant for Switzerland. (interview 4). Interviewee 6 showed doubt about the usefulness to react on others activities on social media other than liking their post:

“We always keep an eye on what the foreign ministry is doing of course and if we see it we also like it. But adding something to it, I honestly wouldn’t know what”
(Interview 6, Ambassador)

Finally, interviewee 5 showed the largest willingness to engage in reactive metavoicing but also only in to limited extends (interview 5)

“I’m not even sure if other people would like if we add too much to their post or comment a lot because then they also need to start thinking about how to respond.”
(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

5.5.2 Triggered attending

In terms of content monitoring and triggered attending, all interview partners deny to have their channels have the necessary automation settings in place to do so. All interview partners state that they are manually monitoring their social media channels for updates and content at least once a day or more often:

“we rely on receiving the most important information by checking our accounts in average about twice a day”
(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“we check it multiple times a day to make sure we stay on the pulse”
(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

“[. . .] checking it multiple times a day I will receive the most important information”
(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

Some interviewees state that they receive notification however they do not act upon it:

“having notifications set up would also suggest that we immediately take action and react to the content that we had the notification set up for, I think that would be disrupting our other work at the Embassy to much.”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

“We receive notifications every time when someone liked or commented our posts but we don’t check it immediately, especially not with likes”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.5.3 Network-informed associating

In regard to the affordance of network-informed associating, interviewees were asked about their methods and plans to expand their network on Social Media. It was found that the interviewees displayed no, or insufficient awareness, about how their existing audience has developed and how it might expand further. The interview partners instead referred to their posted content, which they make available to their existing audiences:

“we hope people find it interesting what we have to say”

(Interview 2, Deputy Head of Mission)

“On the one hand swiss people and Swedish people in Sweden who are interested in Swiss matters. Also we have a responsibility to inform the swiss diaspora in Sweden. We inform them about cultural happenings or invite them to events”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

“When something Switzerland related happens within the host country, we usually try to announce it, whether it is a sport event or a state visit or sometimes also cultural happenings”

(Interview 4, Ambassador)

“we really look at the expectation that people go on a platform and then decide what content we’re posting and what could be most interesting for them considering the reasons why they spend time on the platform”

(Interview 5, Trade & Digital Business Attaché)

Compared to the rest of the interview partners, interviewee 1 displays some awareness about how to connect with new audiences:

“Usually we include hashtags in all our tweets and where possible we mention people and hope that this carries our message out there. Also, it might also happen that I had a meeting with somebody and then the same or the next day I see them starting to follow us on Twitter, that is always nice to see.”

(Interview 1, Ambassador)

Also, interviewee 6 makes an assumption of how people might be finding their Embassy’s social media channel but also admits that he doesn’t know whether his assumption is correct.

“I don’t know how people find our Facebook profile probably through many different ways. We have it on our website and we now also start to have it in our Email signature, possibly that helps making people aware.”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

5.5.4 generative role-taking

Interviewees mostly don’t consciously take on a generative role through their social media activities. The activities described by interviewee 1 come closest to the idea of creating and sustaining a conversation about a certain topic as he describes that their posts are mostly seen by local politicians and that they follow the goal to continuously display Switzerland as an attractive partner to do business with (interview 1). Also interviewee 4 describes instances where their Embassy tries to regularly talk about topics that shows Switzerland as an attractive tourist destination (interview 4). Other interviewees show less awareness about the impact of their posts and don’t appear to follow concrete content strategies.

“It is not that we think about this a lot. Our main goals remains to inform our followers about our doing our actions and activities in general. It is true that many posts we make is about Switzerland in relation to either cultural or sport events but we don’t pay attention how often we post about a topic.”

(Interview 6, Ambassador)

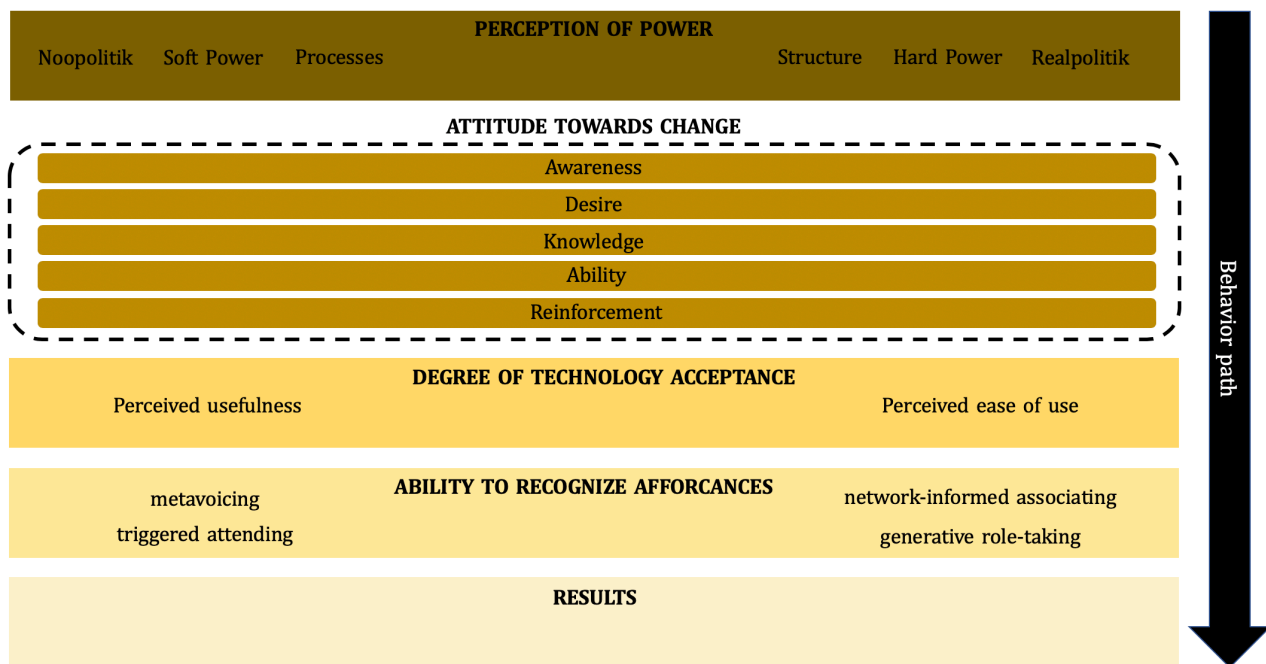
“I think the type of content we post has always the potential to initiate a conversation. But our clear focus remains to inform people. If they talk about this information or as mentioned tag each other in a post, that’s even better.”

(Interview 3, Ambassador)

Also, interviewee 2 expresses hope that their posts create conversations among their followers but doesn’t notice that this would be the case and also doesn’t display strategic awareness to lead people towards it. Finally, interviewee 5 display awareness about different type of audiences depending on the social media platforms but shows no intent to shape their awareness about a certain topic.

6 Analysis

This section discusses the outcomes from the empirical results in regard to the proposed theoretical framework and its hypothesis. Each interview represents the perception of an individual human actor who is directly responsible or delegated to coordinate the activities of his/her Embassy and their individual behavior is considered to guide and affect an embassy's behavior towards Social Media. Figure X below shows again the proposed theoretical framework and the areas that are seen to be contributing to an individual's perception of social media as an information- and communication tool:



6.1 Perception of power

The empirical results have shown none of the interviewees consistently perceives their power to source only from processes or structures. However, there were identifiable elements in the answers of the interview partners that suggested tendencies in either one or the other direction. Interviewee 1 and 2 both emphasized their close association to Switzerland as an internationally respected country and appear to derive an understanding about their power based on the status of Switzerland in an international environment. Interviewee 1 furthermore derived his tasks clearly through the appointment of the foreign ministry which demonstrates a closeness to a structural understanding and associated status of the Embassy to the nation state rather than from the act of communication and the content of the message itself. As the literature revealed, such a perspective is usually associated with ideas of political realism which describes diplomatic actors as fundamental source of power and considers power to derive from status rather than the act of communication itself (Morgenthau, 1966; Humphreys, 2014). Interviewees 3 and 4 still seem also to be guided by status related elements such as

neutrality, trustworthiness but showed indications that they consider the value of such elements only to unfold in relation to information- and communication processes. Interviewee 3 mentions that he sees Switzerland as a “bridge builder” “negotiators” and “inbetweeners” in international issues and conflicts while however still seeing status attributes such as neutrality rather than the concrete practice of information- and communication as enabling factor. Also, interviewee 4 emphasized the importance of ensuring that communicated information is truthful and correct but puts the principle of associated trustworthiness of the organization above the practice of communication. Only interviewees 5 and 6 can be found to argue in direction where the actual process of communication supersedes the structure appointed elements in importance and is considered the main source of power. Interviewee 5 stresses the importance of retaining access to audiences through social media and interviewee 6 stresses the fact of continuous exchange with partners. Figure 7 below shows the a summary and graphic representation the found attitudes towards power

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
structure	structure	mixed	mixed	process	process

Figure 7: Perception of power

According to the proposed theoretical framework, the interviewees leaning towards a perception of power through processes should consequently be in a stronger position to show awareness about benefits and of social media for communicative purposes and the change potential they hold due to their collaborative possibilities. Interview partners leaning towards a structural understanding of power on the other hand, are expected to be display less awareness about benefits social media could bring to their information- and communication processes.

6.2 Attitude towards change

As explained in the research design, the ADKAR model was used to do an assessment about the necessity interviewees saw to change their information- and communication processes to favor a stronger integration of social media in their behavior and practices. The empirical results showed that overall interview partners do not seem ready to commit and carry such change based on first three elements of the ADKAR framework.

6.2.1 Awareness

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
medium	medium	low	medium	high	medium

Figure 8: Level of awareness about a needed change

The interview results depicted that interviewee 5 shows a rather high awareness about the usefulness and importance of social media, which is consistent with the proposed theoretical framework in regard to the interviewees perception of power. He recognizes that certain constituent audiences may not remain available to reach out to for the Embassy other than through Social Media. The same interview partner also deployed

awareness towards the consequence that Embassies from other countries are growing their followings and considers it a necessity to produce content so that people follow the Embassy and no other content creators. Also, interviewee 6, who was similarly found to lean towards a perception of power through processes, was expected to show increased awareness about needed changes. However, this correlation could not be confirmed. Even though interviewee 6 did not contest or question the usefulness of Social Media, he saw no necessity to make changes in the current processes. Interviewee 4 seems to base his awareness about a needed adjustment in the fact that the foreign ministry moves towards intensified use of social media but otherwise considers the possibility that social media might even lose its relevance in the future. Interviewee 1 was not generally dismissing the necessity for change but makes it dependent on the location and external surrounding in which an Embassy is operating. Interviewee 3 saw very little need of change. In his opinion social media lacks return on invested resources and he also doubts the longevity of the platforms. Finally, also interviewee 2 shows no need of fundamental changes but acknowledges that the social media channels of other institutions could be inspirational to future activities of his Embassy.

6.2.2 Desire

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
low	low	low	low	low	low

Figure 9: Level of desire to initiate and carry change

The ADKAR model holds that desire for change cannot exist without awareness (Hiatt, 2016). It similarly also doesn't automatically derive from the awareness but is also influenced by organizational context such as the amount of impact a change puts on an organization's structure and job responsibilities (Hiatt, 2016). The empirical analysis investigated such circumstances and found that the interviewees experience only very little impact on current structures and use social media as an output medium through similar processes than they had used other mediums (e.g. website, blogs etc.). In terms of responsibilities, the interviewees mostly report that social media responsibilities are shared among many employees rather than a specific responsible person so that the impact on an individual is as little as possible. It was interesting to see that even the found high awareness about a necessity for change by interviewee 5 was apparently not sufficient in regard to other factors to create an actual desire for change. Interviewees seem rather comfortable with the current state of things and appear not to display any urgency or willingness to make adjustments to their environments.

Knowledge

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
medium	medium	medium	medium	low	medium

Figure 10: Perceived possibility to acquire new knowledge and receive support

In the context of this thesis Knowledge was considered as the third and last investigated ADKAR element through the empirical analysis and is evaluated through how interviewees perceived types and levels of support

from the ministry regarding social media. The results showed that the interviewees were generally happy with the support they received from the foreign ministry. However, interviewee 2 concurred but criticized that the Foreign Ministry was apparently reluctant to offer such possibilities until recently. Interviewee 5 expressed frustration about not having received appropriate support and feedback. Interviewee 1 saw a sufficient level of support. Multiple interview partners also expressed suggestions about further initiatives and offerings from the foreign ministry especially in the direction of more personal support. Interviewee 3 deemed the support as quite good similarly to interviewee 4 who also expressed doubts that higher levels of support would make sense. Overall there was no particularly positive or negative evaluation of the level of support from the ministry, except from interviewee 5.

6.3 Degree of Technology acceptance

6.3.1 Perceived usefulness of social media

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
low	positive	low	medium	high	medium

Figure 11: Degree of perceived usefulness of Social Media applications

The results concerning the perceived usefulness of Social Media for information- and communication processes in the Embassies confirmed showed divided attitudes about the use-performance relationship. Interviewee 1 and 3 specifically issued doubts about Social Media having a positive impact on their information- and communication processes. Interviewee 6 confirmed displayed a mixed perception about the usefulness of social media whereas interviewee 5 and 2 showed a high perceived usefulness.

6.3.2 Perceived ease of use of social media

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
high	high	high	high	high	high

Figure 12: Degree of perceived ease of use of Social Media applications

In terms of the perceived ease of use interviewees were found to find the application of the tools as easy. However, the participants expressed awareness that they only use the basic functionalities of social media and expressed that their level of comfort decreases accordingly if they had to do more complex things on the platforms.

6.4 Ability to recognize affordances

Interviewees generally showed a low awareness about the proposed affordance of social media in the theoretical framework.

6.4.1 Metavoicing

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
medium	low	low	low	low	low

Figure 13: Degree of engagement in metavoicing

Interestingly, despite the fact that interviewees expressed their wish and hopes to receive comments, feedbacks and opinions on their social media posts, they similarly admit that they largely refrain from practices that would trigger such activity. Interviewee 1 stated that they try to engage the audience but admitted that questions in their posts are often rhetorical and part of the stylistic writing rather than actual questions. The other interviewees stated that they do not actively ask their audience for feedback or interaction and therefore showed evidence not to engage in active metavoicing. In terms of passive metavoicing, interviewees generally show higher activity and state that they engage sometimes with content from other users by liking or retweeting. However, the activities remain at a generally low activity levels overall

6.4.2 Triggered attending

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
low	low	low	low	low	low

Figure 14: Degree of engagement in triggered attending

All interviewees denied engaging in forms of passive content monitoring or engagement after a given trigger, alert about a specific conversation, content or occurrence. Even though some interviewees confirmed to receive standardized platform notifications they explained that they would not act upon it. Alternatively, to triggered attending all interviewees were found to do manual monitoring of their channels.

6.4.3 Network-informed associating

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
medium	low	low	low	low	low

Figure 15: Degree of engagement in network-informed associating

The interview partners proved very little awareness about how their audiences on social media have grown and what measures they could take to expand them. Interviewee 1 showed an understanding that their used hashtags helps them to connect to new audiences. Interviewee 6 also displayed some, even though little awareness about the possibility that new users could find their social media channels. However, the interviewees described ways did not match with the affordance of network-informed associating, so it was still evaluated as low. All other interview partners showed no awareness about the possibility of growing their audience through the affordance of network-informed associating or in any way at all.

6.4.4 Generative role-taking

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
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medium	low	low	medium	low	low
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Figure 16: Degree of engagement in generative role-taking

Interviewees were found not to take on generative roles to engage themselves in online conversations or communities about a certain topic. Among all interview partners, interviewee 1 showed the closest attribution to generative role-taking by explaining that their messages were targeting specific audiences. Also, interviewee 4 showed at least some attribution towards generative role taking in trying to continuously display Switzerland as an attractive tourist destination. Other interviewees showed no evidence of behavior suggesting generative role-taking.

6.5 Summary

Through the theoretical framework of this thesis I proposed an individual's behavior to be guided by four areas, which are *perception of power*, *attitude towards change*, *degree of technology acceptance* and *ability to recognize affordances*. I also made tentative statements about the relationship between the four areas and formulated hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested through the empirical study which was strongly guided by the proposed theoretical framework. The results only partly support the hypotheses.

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
Perception of power	structure	structure	mixed	mixed	process	process
	Hypothesis 1: A perception of power arising through <u>structures</u> weakens an individual's awareness about change					
	Hypothesis 2: A perception of power arising through <u>processes</u> strengthens an individual's attitude about change					
Attitude towards change	Awareness					
	medium	medium	low	medium	high	medium
	Desire					
	low	low	low	low	low	low
	Knowledge					
	medium	medium	medium	medium	low	medium
Degree of technology acceptance	Hypothesis 3: The attitude towards change shapes an individual's degree of technology acceptance					
	Perceived usefulness of social media					
	low	high	low	medium	high	medium
	Perceived ease of use					
	high	high	high	high	high	high
Ability to recognize affordances	Hypothesis 4: The degree of technology acceptance shapes an individual's ability to recognize affordances					
	metavoicing					
	medium	low	low	low	low	low
	triggered attending					
	low	low	low	low	low	low
	network-informed associating					
	medium	low	low	low	low	low
	generative role-taking					
	medium	low	low	medium	low	low

Figure 17: Analysis of the framework

6.5.1 Hypothesis 1 & 2

It was suggested that if an individual tends to perceive the power of an embassy's information- and communication activities to arise through the structure and the status of the institution rather than the communicative process itself, it would impact the person's attitude towards change especially in terms of awareness. The results suggest only weak support for these hypotheses as figure 7 above suggests. Only the attitude of interviewee 5 was in line with the expected behavior, the other interviewees could not be found to show a strong connection between their attitude towards change and their perception of power. It was furthermore considered that especially interviewee 5 who showed high awareness of change was then similarly found to carry an especially low desire to carry change and similarly evaluation his perception about knowledge support from the foreign ministry as low.

6.5.2 Hypothesis 3

It was expected that an individual's attitude towards change would influence his/her degree of accepting technology in a working process, which was measured by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The analysis brought the result that interviewee 2 showed an unexpected high degree of technology acceptance, especially in regard to the person's perception of power and attitude towards change. The results in regard to interviewee 5 were to a certain extent unexpected, not in regard to the person's perception of power but due to his attitude towards change. Hypothesis 3 therefore also showed to be insufficiently supported by the results.

6.5.3 Hypothesis 4:

This hypothesis suggested a correlation between a person's ability to recognize affordances of social media and the degree of technology acceptance. In regard to this suggested connection interviewee 1 showed unexpected behavior in terms of showing an above-average ability to recognize affordances compared to other interview partners even though showing a low score in perceived usefulness of social media tools. On the other hand, interviewee 2 and 5, according to the hypothesis expected to be able to recognize affordances, showed low awareness about all tested behavior in terms of leveraging affordances. Consequently, also hypothesis 4 has to be refused.

7 Discussion & Conclusion

The initial interest of this thesis was the question of how the increasing pace of technological development, impacts diplomatic institutions and their usage of ICT. The review of literature has then identified a research gap and missing focus concerning individual human actors in diplomatic institutions and their perceptions and actions in regard to specific ICT tools and applications. The research question was therefore specified to investigate usage and behavior of individual human diplomatic actors in regard to social media. Due to the lack of existing holistic theory, this thesis proposed a combination of relevant models which was compiled to a theoretical framework. This framework supported the formulation of relevant hypotheses and formed the foundation of the empirical analysis.

This final section summarizes and discusses the results from the empirical research and the analysis in terms of the theoretical framework and the hypotheses. Furthermore, several implications for future research concerning information- and communication processes in a diplomatic context are outlined. Also, possible implications for diplomats & state institutions are addressed. Finally, this section concludes by evaluation the limitations of this thesis and summarized the conclusions that can be drawn.

7.1 Interpretation of results

The results from the empirical analysis showed that all interviewees engage in a multitude of information- and communication activities and to consider such as important. The question about the general information- and communication activities of the interviewees was intentionally formulated broad and open. It was noticeable that none of the interviewees, except one, would self-initiatively mention their activities on social media. The fact that social media does not find mentioning could already be an indication of the circumstance that interviewees generally don't consider social media to take on a significant role in their communication activities. Noteworthy are also the significant differences in the emphasis of audiences, goals, and used tools among the responses of the interview partners. Another area where interviewees were found to have disparate perceptions was in terms of power arising through their information- and communication activities. Some showed an understanding that power arising sources through their role as messengers in terms of structures and institutional characters as of Embassy, derived from Switzerland as a country and the foreign ministry. Others identified the message itself (content and form) as the source of their power. Often interviewees pointed out cultural and societal achievements of Switzerland as a thing to be proud of. Also, neutrality and trustworthiness were mentioned as factors which are considered to be associated with Switzerland. It was interesting to see how closely the interview partners derive the image and activities of their Embassies from a general image of Switzerland. Also, surprising to see was that interviewees are skeptical, if not even dismissive of the idea to integrate social media more deeply into the information- and communication

processes. This was unexpected as the interview partners all carry the responsibility of the social media channels and activities in their Embassies. Even more unexpected in this regard was that four out of six interviewee participants saw only a low or medium usefulness in social media to improve their information- and communication processes.

This circumstance forces the question why then Embassies decide to manage a social media presence if even their person in charge doubts their usefulness by the person in charge of it. The empirical results suggest that there may be two reasons for this. The first reason could lie in the interviewees mentioning of perceived pressure from their external environment such as the foreign ministry of Switzerland, other embassies and also representations from other countries. Even through such pressure appears mostly indirect through the increased social media activities of the mentioned actors, the interviewees still seemed to be influenced by it. In the case of the foreign ministry, some interviewees also reported to have received the suggestions and encouragements to increase their social media activities, which can be perceived as a more direct form of pressure. Another reason for the usage of social media by the interviewees, despite limited perceived usefulness of the tools, might lie in the fact that the interviewees only make use of basic functionalities. Multiple interview partners made statements and showed indication towards using social media as new format but with the same established processes. Concrete examples included that the interviewees would publish the same information they had published on their websites on the past now on social media. Also, the low ability to recognize affordances by interview partners clearly suggests that the sophistication of usage by the interviewees is generally low. Another factor that is congruence with this assessment is the overall high perceived ease of use of social media points towards a low sophistication in the usage of social media despite very low ability to recognize tested and more advanced affordances. Reasons for the low sophistication in usage could in fact stem from the high uncertainty interviewees experience concerning how to best appropriately integrate social in the daily work in terms of processes, resources and content. It therefore seems only natural that they would only make use of social media up to a certain level of sophistication that allows them enough certainty that they are doing nothing wrong. Such uncertainty has to be addressed and taken seriously by the foreign ministry of Switzerland despite the fact that the interviewees evaluate the support from the ministry as sufficient. A more detailed look on the statements of the interviewees shows that it rather supports the current usage levels of the Embassies than helping them explore new functionalities and dimensions of the platforms. There were numerous suggested improvements by the interview partner about how the foreign ministry could offer better aid in terms of strategy, processes and more personalized issues.

Another interesting discussion point can be found in the interviewees attitude towards change, especially in very low I desire to carry and support change among all interview partners. I believe that this result also correlates with the ability of the interview partners to recognize affordances. The additional value they see

social media bringing to their business processes is simply too low as they use the tools through the same communication processes than they have used tools in the past. Also, it is understandable how it would be difficult for someone to develop a desire for an increased use of a tool for which they hold so much uncertainty. The uncertainty of appropriate usage seems indeed to supersede the amount of pressure which individuals experience from their external environment.

7.2 Conclusion

This thesis had the goal to research the impact of digital transformation on diplomatic actors. A particular research gap was identified in regard to individual human actors and their behavior and attitudes in regard to specific ICT tools and processes. The research question was successfully explored through an empirical semi-structured interview process which was based on a specific theoretical framework and four major hypotheses. The empirical research not only allowed to capture and attain interesting information and insights into the practice of diplomatic actors but also concretely tested the validity of a new framework. The framework was hoped to contribute to the current and extensive discussions in literature about the impact of digital transformation on diplomacy that was found to lack a holistic theoretical unification. Even though the proposed hypotheses were refused by the findings and therefore the proposed theoretical framework contested, I believe that its building blocks keep their validity and contributed greatly and appropriately towards the exploration of the subject and the answering of the research question. In terms of results it can be concluded that individual human actors in the observed diplomatic entities hold much uncertainty about how to appropriately use social media in their daily work. Despite skepticism in terms of usefulness and longevity of social media they still adopt them but only up to a level that affords them to conduct familiar kind of information- and communication processes than with other tools (such as website). Individuals in the observed diplomatic entities do not interact with social media in ways that would allow them to perceive more sophisticated affordance. The main reason why the interviewees decide to use social media nevertheless are suggested to stem from perceived environmental pressure, from the foreign ministry, peers and foreign diplomatic entities. The interviewees also showed a clear and close association to the activities and values of Switzerland as a country and the foreign ministry as superseding entity. Due to this structural dependency, it therefore seems to lie in the responsibility of the Swiss foreign ministry to address the individual uncertainties and strongly promote the education among the individual human diplomatic actors. Such education should target more sophisticated use cases of social media rather than the monitoring and explaining of low sophistication application forms. The ADKAR framework could in fact prove as helpful to initiate, monitor and control for the progression of such education. Even though the hypothesis of this thesis were refused and the format of the structural format of the theoretical frameworks therefore too, I believe that the individual

7.3 Limitations

The limitation of this thesis arose predominantly through the methodological choices and the proposed theoretical framework. The research questions clearly guided the sampling process of suitable interviewees and thereby was also limiting the range of possible findings. Similarly, the choices about preliminary codes contributed to the ability to explore the research question but were similarly limiting to receive even more exploratory findings. I was aware and cautious about not to allow for too many preconceptions of I expect in the field. I tried as good as possible to keep an open mind and expected to be adding many more codes which also turned out to be the case. Even I had a certain native way to think about the phenomenon due to my affiliation with the foreign ministry I had the willingness to tolerate ambiguity and remain honest to myself in terms of findings that were not in line with my expectations or notions about the subject matter.

The theoretical framework purposefully limited its perceptive on an internal sphere of behavior which exists for individuals within an organizational architecture of diplomacy that is impacted by a lot of external influences. Such influences were out of the scope of this study but certainly have a certain impact the individual perceptions. Furthermore, it was found that certain elements of the theoretical framework, such as the ADKAR framework, were not fully transferable into an empirical interviewing process. The ADKAR framework was employed in this thesis to conduct a readiness assessment of the interview participants, including personal and organizational factors. But only three out of the five building blocks of the ADKAR model were considered to be observable through an empirical interview process. Since the ADKAR considers its building blocks in a sequential order it was concluded that an analysis would be meaningful despite not considering the last two building blocks. The analysis of the results in regard to the ADKAR model revealed that most interviewees only show a very limited readiness towards a change of current business processes and behaviors in terms of social Media. The theoretical framework also showed a certain weakness in terms of assessing the perceived ease of use in terms of functionalities in social media as the interviewees interpreted the factor very differently.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

This development also brings new challenges on the map, issues and implications to which our society still needs to develop a better understanding and solutions for. Data leaks, Fake News, Filter Bubbles, Hacking and Digital Propaganda are just a handful of issues that are vividly debated in academia, politics as well as popular media. In summary it can be said that technology and information- and communication processes often stand in a dual relationship push digital transformation forward. Digital transformation is its effects, especially in regard to a diplomatic context, are an insufficiently understood phenomenon and the challenges as well as consequences of starting, performing and achieving digital transformation remain the subjects of an ongoing debate in public and academic discourses. The discussions encompass a multitude of academic and professional fields, in fact there is probably hardly any area that has remained fully excluded of considerations

in regard to effects of digital transformation New and rapidly developing information and communication technologies, from mobile phones to internet-based applications such as social media have become integral parts of diplomatic processes. They get more and more attention by foreign ministries in terms of strategic uses and build an increasing importance in reconfigured access to information. Consequently, also the number of participants within the field of diplomacy and foreign affairs has increased tremendously. Influential groups or individuals from governmental and non-governmental organizations, but also corporate actors or activist groups are leveraging the power of the internet and new information and communication technologies to spread their messages and exert influence on people. The diplomatic system of foreign ministries, embassies, consulates and individual diplomats are still the engine room of international relations but there are substantial need and challenges posed upon them in regard to define appropriate processes and policies to react to such developments. In order to do so there is a substantial need for combining theoretical research with empirical management practices to assist the development of appropriate business processes in diplomacy. Diplomacy is thereby in a unique position to leverage its network know-how and translate it in a digital context.

8 Appendix

8.1 Generic interview guide

PERCEPTION OF POWER

What factors do you see as influential to the power your information and communication activities carry? or
What do you consider as the source(s) of power when you inform or communicate about a certain topic?

ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHANGE

Do you think there is **need for change** in your embassy's information and communication processes in regard to social media? (awareness)

How is your **role and your responsibilities** impacted by the use of Social Media as an additional mean of information and communication? (desire)

Would you say the **foreign ministry is generally open and responding well to making changes**? (desire)

Would you say you that you receive enough **opportunities to educate and train** yourself about the functionalities of Social Media? (knowledge)

Are you receiving **support towards how to best embed Social Media in your current information and communication processes**? (knowledge)

DEGREE OF TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE

To what degree would you agree that the use of Social Media allows you to enhance existing information and communication processes at your work?

What knowledge do you have about Social Media and as how easy or complex do you perceive the current use of social media at your job?

ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AFFORDANCES

Are you proactively engage your audiences by asking for inputs, comments ideas etc?

Are you reacting online to others' presence, profiles, content and activities by adding knowledge to the content?

Do you have any push notifications enabled making you aware of somebody posting or a certain kind of content?

How do you go about building your audience online?

Are you initiating any conversations online?

8.2 Extract of raw interview material coded

Interviewer: Hello, thank you for your willingness to take part in this interview. I would like to begin this conversation by asking you, if you could describe the information and communication processes at your Embassy?

Interview partner: Thank you, no problem, it's interesting to talk about this, I'm looking forward to your questions. Well, we're working with a lot of different things, probably it has actually become such a big part of our work that I can't even tell you all of it, I mean I probably myself don't realize how much it is. For sure the computer I am using right now is a part of it. Then we have of course a lot of phone calls from Swiss citizens living here about administrative matters such as visa applications, lost ID's, passports and general travel enquiries. It is our task to provide these people with the necessary information. We communicate with a whole lot of stakeholders surrounding us this includes the Foreign Ministry back in Switzerland but also many constituencies in our host country such as politicians, decision makers in the economy and other powerful individuals.

Interviewer: Do you think there is need for change in your Embassy's information and communication processes towards an increasing use of social media?

There is always room for improvement, and this is certainly particularly true for how we deal with these new kind of media. We are currently working on a strategy about how we want to approach it. We know that Social Media has its own rules and norms you obviously don't write posts like you would write press statements and I'm not even starting to talk about the use of emojis. I think it regards to communication on social media it is important to have an inclusive process here at the embassy so that all employees receive an opportunity to bring in their ideas and build a certain sense of responsibility and sensibility towards these forms of media.

Interviewer: How do see your role and responsibilities at work being impacted by the use of Social Media?

Interview partner: It depends on the activity I would say. They have their place in our work clearly and we have understood that of course it is interesting means of communication to a larger public. As we are not a very large Embassy, we from here with social media cover all the subjects and all the activities. This means political, economic but also cultural issues. I think it depends a lot of the place of where you are operating as my locations changes every 4years or so. It is definitely different whether you work somewhere in Europe, and there it even depends whether you're located in northern or southern countries. There are other places worldwide, and communication is always handled in a different way. But all things considered, I think communication has become more democratized and more open, more transparent overall, this has definitely changed and it is also impacting our work at the Embassy no doubt. It adds a new dimension and things we would have never thought about communicating in the past we are certainly asking ourselves, wait could this be worth a Tweet?!

Interviewer: To what degree would you agree that the use of Social Media allow your to enhance existing information and communication processes at your work?

Interview partner: I think it really depends again on what aspect of my job it would relate to. They can help to make a bigger impact with relatively little means and effort I think. Do they allow us to do a better job in informing and communicating in general, probably not really. I don't see them impacting our current processes. Maybe they add a new task or two, maybe my tasks changed a



little bit and we start to pay more attention to certain things such as taking good pictures of an event so we can share it later on our social channels. Probably that is the case. But I see how somebody can also spend too much time on them and I'm sure if they are done too much it can start to become a waste of time and eventually make me even do a worse job because I start to neglect other responsibilities. I think every project has the potential to change certain working methods in an organization and disrupt it to a certain extend. It doesn't really matter what a project is about. Social Media is also just another project. So, it could prove very useful and a good tool for us but I doubt that it has more disruptive potential than other projects. That doesn't mean that it will completely disappear again anytime soon. Imagine, about 15years ago most people started stopping to send fax. However, you still see them around at many offices. That shows me that even technologies that have once been very big don't necessarily keep their relevance, but it takes a long time for them to disappear again. This could be the same for social media

Interviewer: What knowledge do you have about Social Media and as how easy or complex do you perceive the current use of SNS at your job?

Interview partner: I think they are made in a way that it is very easy right? Otherwise nobody uses them. I have the Twitter app on my phone and I think it's easy and fast to make a tweet. Personally I have been using Facebook in the past but not extensively. But as I said, I see how somebody could be tempted to spend too much time on there and we try to keep it easy enough for us.

Interviewer: Are you using other channels besides Twitter?

Interview partner: At our Embassy we only use Twitter and I believe this is right to concentrate resources on one channel but do this one right. Keeping multiple channels running and creating content for them would be very otherwise very time consuming

Interviewer: What made you decide on Twitter?

Interview partner: In fact a lot of politicians in our country rely on Twitter. Getting in touch and staying in touch with these politicians, we consider Twitter most appropriate. Apart from the idea that people have some kind of interest about international relations and activities of an Embassy their country, their state of president will also be on Twitter.

Interviewer: You mentioned the political circle of your country is on Twitter. What about the broad public, would you want to reach them as well?

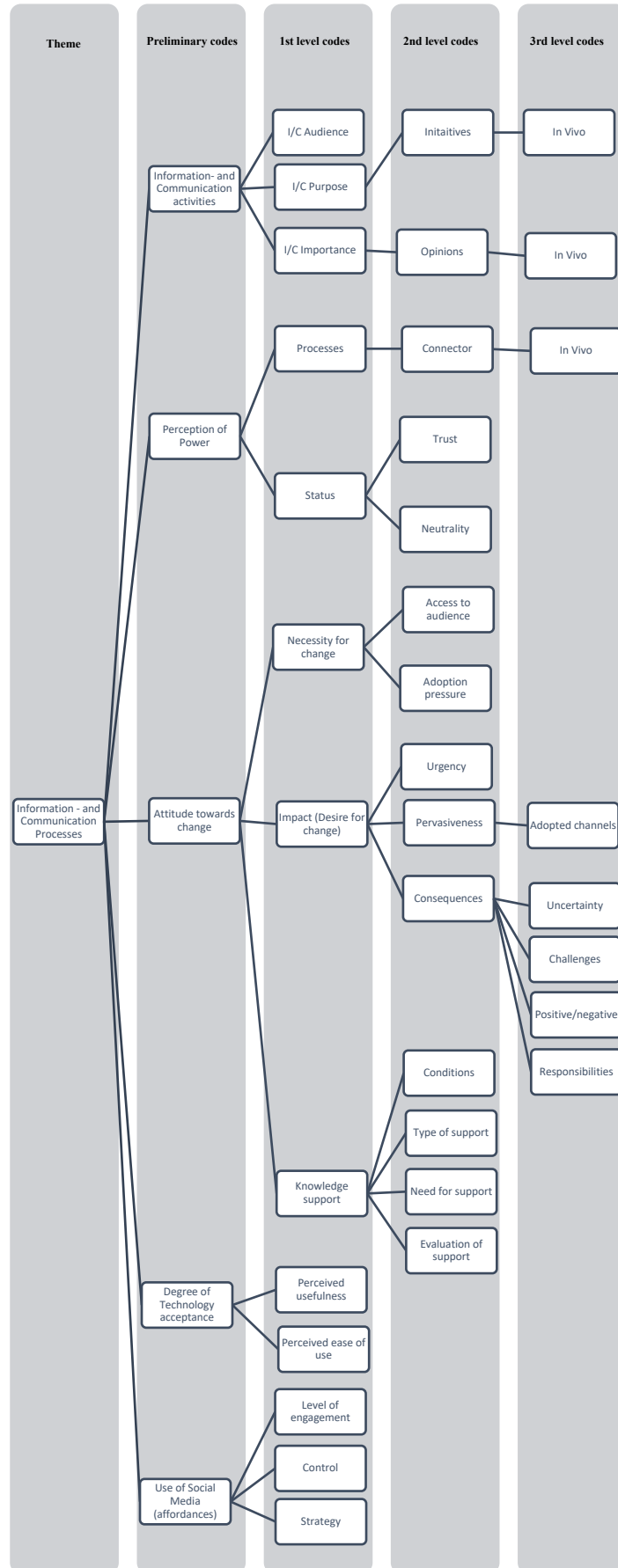
Interview partner: They are certainly a part of it. Apart from the idea that those people who are interested in our Embassy activities will most probably be as well interested in what politicians have to say in their countries and will therefore already be attracted by Twitter. But of course, each choice is a choice and is at the end of the day also an exclusion of other opportunities, but I think like this (Twitter) we get the maximum out of our available resources

Interviewer: Just a few more questions on how you use Twitter if you allow. Are you asking your Twitter following to provide feedback on certain topics, or maybe ideas or do you ask for comments etc. about what you tweet?

Interview partner: Yes, we try to. I remember we posted a poll recently about in which city the next Ice Hockey world cup takes place. But I have to admit that "questions" that we ask are often rhetorical, in the sense of "Did you know that" and then we write about a fact or event that is then



8.3 Coding tree



8.4 References

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