

**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
ANKARA UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

**THE PRESENCE OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN PALESTINIAN FOREIGN  
POLICY: RESEARCH ON THE DIGITAL EFFORTS OF PALESTINIAN  
AMBASSADORS TO THE WESTERN WORLD AFTER THE 7TH OF OCTOBER  
2023**

**Master's Thesis**

**Norhan Ala'aldin Nazieh MASRI**

**Ankara, 2025**

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**Master's Thesis**

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**Thesis Defense Date: 11.08.2025**

**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE**

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**DIRECTORATE OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

I hereby declare that all of the information in my master's thesis, "**The Presence of Digital Diplomacy in Palestinian Foreign Policy: Research on Digital Efforts of Palestinian Ambassadors to the Western World after the 7th of October 2023 (Ankara, 2025)**," which was prepared with the advice of **Prof. Dr. Besime Pınar ÖZDEMİR**, was gathered and presented following academic rules and ethical conduct; that all of the materials I used from other sources for this thesis have been appropriately cited and referenced; that I conducted myself throughout the study following the rules of scientific research and ethical conduct; and that I will accept any legal repercussions if the aforementioned statements are false.

**18/08/2025**

**Norhan Ala'aldin Nazieh MASRI**

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## DEDICATION

To my beloved parents Alaaldin Masri and Aroub Masri,

With all my heart, I dedicate this work to you. Thank you for your endless understanding, for believing in me, and for giving me the strength and freedom to pursue my dreams abroad. Your support has been my foundation, and your love has been my constant companion. I am forever grateful.

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This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

With all my love,

Nourhan

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### Abbreviation Full Term

AI	Amnesty International
BDS	Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
EU	European Union
HD	High Definition
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Palestine)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSINT	Open-Source Intelligence
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
POTUS	President of the United States
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
X	Twitter (rebranded as "X")

## Chapter One: Introduction

Exhilarating new diplomacy has emerged in the 21st century. Digital technologies and social media have revolutionised how states, diplomats, and institutions interact with one another across borders. It has given rise to the emergence of digital diplomacy—the calculated use of digital media, and indeed social media itself—to advance foreign policy objectives, set agendas, and engage with foreign publics in real-time (Bjola & Holmes, 2015). In contrast to traditional backroom negotiation rooms, official communiqués, and hierarchical communication channels, digital diplomacy enables more instant, open, and multi-directional communication.

All governments around the globe today utilise the internet as a mean of selling their country's image, advertising policy agendas, and engaging with foreign masses and elites. X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram are particularly critical tools for public diplomacy today, as they provide governments with more opportunities to develop soft power, construct exclusive world agendas and counter nefarious narratives (Cull, 2009; Manor, 2019). For institutionally weaker smaller actors like Palestine, digital diplomacy is not a luxury, but a political lifeline to survive and an instrument for lobbying. Without official full United Nations membership as a state and continued occupation and media boycott, Palestine employs digital diplomacy as one of the means to assert agency, counter misinformation, and rally international support. Through successful web-based communication, Palestinian policymakers can counter hegemons, establish the tone of global discourse, and address the foreign public directly, bypassing state-sponsored media and official diplomatic taboos (Zaharna, 2010). In these contexts, the efforts of Palestinian ambassadors for digital diplomacy have become increasingly important. Drawing on such tools as X, they create spontaneous narratives for the story, highlight the human rights breach, and call for international legal accountability. The 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 events, when the conflict between Israel and Hamas took a grim turn for the worse, were the watershed for Palestinian internet activism. As tensions escalated and international attention peaked, Palestinian ambassadors moved into the forefront as digital actors leveraging X to report events, respond to global media, and advocate for humanitarian intervention. Their online conduct throughout those days represents a new form of crisis-based, story-focused digital diplomacy.

This thesis examines the reach and function of Palestinian digital diplomacy following the 7<sup>th</sup> October escalation, focusing on five Western countries— USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany—from October to December 2023. Using a case study approach, this study examines whether X was utilised by ambassadors to deepen Palestinian foreign policy, negotiate national positions, and communicate with the Western public during a crisis. While digital diplomacy has been analysed in various contexts within the current literature, a significant gap remains in studies concentrating on Palestine. Empirical studies infrequently addressed the proactive use by Palestinian diplomats of digital tools during conflict periods, especially within Western diplomatic settings where Israel previously enjoyed greater narrative supremacy. The current study bridges this gap by integrating content analysis with sentiment analysis along with theoretical reflection from soft power, public diplomacy, and Twiplomacy approaches.

The study examines the historical evolution of Palestinian diplomacy, from the initial efforts of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) under Yasser Arafat in the early days to the subsequent endeavours of the Palestinian Authority and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Whereas these delegations have possessed few material and institutional resources, they have sought to learn and adapt to new diplomatic tools, such as digital media. The adoption of social media as a strategic platform, therefore, heralds a new generation in Palestinian foreign policy that unites long-standing resistance with contemporary communication strategies.

Through combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis of ambassadors' tweets with critical analysis of scholarly literature, this study aims to assess the effectiveness, framing techniques, and audience outreach strategies of Palestinian digital diplomacy at a pivotal juncture in geopolitics. Additionally, it identifies the primary challenges that limit digital outreach, including algorithmic censorship, resource disparities, linguistic variations, and cultural reception differences in host countries.

Finally, this research offers practical recommendations for enhancing Palestine's digital diplomacy, developing its online presence, and strengthening diplomatic relations in Western media and public spheres. The findings contribute to debates in international relations, public diplomacy, and conflict communication, offering valuable insight into how digitally excluded actors navigate global affairs in the era of real-time, digitally mediated diplomacy.

This thesis highlights how platform politics, audience reception, and the velocity of communication increasingly dominate diplomacy. In doing so, it provides insights into core research areas for future studies on conflict zones, social media usage among marginalised groups, and shifting international communication dynamics.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Digital communication technology has revolutionised the international diplomatic space around the world over the past few decades. Social media, or its substitutes, such as X, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, have evolved to serve as a core instrument for state and non-state actors that aim to shape international narratives, exercise soft power, and interact directly with foreign audiences. Such sites enable international, interactive, and real-time forms of communication that bypass gatekeeping by the mass media and insulate actual-time diplomacy communication (Abdul-Al, 2018).

This revolution also gave rise to the art of digital diplomacy, which can be defined as the strategic use of online media to support foreign policy objectives and influence minds around the world. Digital diplomacy has, therefore, become institutionalised in the majority of nations by establishing specialised units in foreign ministries, embassies, and government press departments to oversee online diplomatic efforts. For weaker geopolitical states, such as Palestine, virtual diplomacy offers significant opportunities to circumvent traditional barriers and project an image in contested information spaces.

However, while some attempts have been made to create digital diplomacy infrastructure and doing research in this field within the Palestinian arena—efforts recognised by institutions such as Birzeit University, the Institute for Palestine Studies, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—strategic, consistent, and crisis-responsive application of these tools remains a considerable challenge. Some of the deficiencies have been acutely observed after the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, when another round of conflict between Israel and Hamas caused an international media flap and a furious fight over narrative control on the social media sites.

Current research frequently condemns the Palestinian online strategy as being a disjointed, underfunded, and back-end strategy, particularly when contrasted with the highly managed and well-funded Israeli online machinery. For example, in a critical

examination by Anadolu Agency, Edibe Beyza Caglar (2023) outlined four tactics of media manipulation—disinformation, pre-attack justification, dehumanisation, and narrative obfuscation—that were employed systematically by Israeli online campaigns since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. Such manoeuvres were reinforced by a multi-million-dollar advertisement campaign on X, YouTube, and other social media platforms, with Israel reportedly spending over \$7.1 million on YouTube advertisements alone (Smith Galer, 2021). On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority has been beset by strict budgetary constraints, limited access to professional digital communications software, and poor coordination among its diplomatic representations.

The majority of Palestinian embassies do not have social media accounts add to this, in a 2023 study, Zytoon and Husain found that no more than 10 out of 81 Palestinian embassies and six consulates tweet, and even fewer post constituency-relevant messages on these sites (Zytoon,H. & Husain, H. 2023). In this invisibility online, the constituency and audience of the Palestinian diplomatic voice are drastically curtailed, most particularly in Western settings in which media narratives tend to be pro-Israeli positions. Despite institutional limitations, a few diplomats have demonstrated the potential for digital diplomacy on an individual basis. One ambassador among them is the Head of Mission to the United Kingdom, Ambassador Dr. Husam Zomlot. Through insightful interviews on media outlets such as the BBC and CNN, as well as frequent X updates, Zomlot has consistently promoted the Palestinian cause in clear, emotive language, exercising diplomatic caution. These, however, are the exception, not the rule.

The imperative of a robust Palestinian digital diplomacy policy was made starkly evident by the events of October 2023. This previous October taught us the survival stakes of digital diplomacy: public opinion, international sympathy, and even the ability to push back against disinformation hinge on digital visibility and narrative credibility. Without coordinated messaging, the Palestinian diplomatic community within digital media remains at risk of marginalisation and misrepresentation.

Thus, this scholarship addresses a pressing need: how are Palestinian diplomats to the West utilising social media sites—namely X—to advance Palestine's foreign policy objectives in times of crisis? What are their new trends, tactics, and limitations online in the post-7<sup>th</sup> of October period? Comparing the online activity of Palestinian ambassadors

across five key Western countries— USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany—this study aims to examine both the existing condition and latent potential of Palestinian digital diplomacy in one of its most critical and high-stakes instances to date.

## **1.2 Research Aim and Objective**

The principal objective of this research is to critically analyse the extent to which the Palestinian Authority (PA), through its ambassadors, has recognised and utilised digital diplomacy in advancing its foreign policy agendas. This question has since taken on even more significance with the inception of the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, escalation, when the Israel-Palestine war broke out, and social media and other online platforms were pulled into the conflict as arenas for the production of a global narrative.

As both Western political spaces and international media spheres remain battlegrounds, this study asks if Palestinian diplomats have successfully adapted to the communicative demands of the modern geopolitical environment. Particular focus is on their utilisation of X (X) as a platform for framing understandings, debunking misinformation, and engaging with foreign audiences. Underpinning the research are the following four research objectives:

**RO 1:** To examine the digital communication strategies adopted by Palestinian ambassadors across five Western countries— USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany. — since the post-October date.

**RO 2:** To examine the thematic framing, messaging patterns, and audience engagement rates of ambassadorial tweets.

**RO 3:** To articulate the institutional and functional concerns that limit the role of Palestinian digital diplomacy.

**RO 4:** To give strategic recommendations to improve the PA's digital diplomacy to Western public and political opinion audiences.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

Following the presentation of the research purpose and four objectives above, the current study is guided by the following primary and secondary research questions. They aim to examine how Palestinian ambassadors utilise X as a digital diplomacy platform and

the impact of their actions on global discourse since the escalation between the occupying power and the occupied Palestinian population on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

**RQ 1:** How do Palestinian ambassadors make use of X as a tool of digital diplomacy following the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, outbreak? (Linked to Objective 1)

**RQ 2:** In what ways do ambassadors employ framing strategies to engage and resonate with target populations in Western countries? (Aligned with Objective 2)

**RQ 3:** To what extent has the Palestinian Authority, through its ambassadors, drawn upon the strategic value of digital diplomacy? (Related to Objective 3)

**RQ 4:** Has digital diplomacy created new communicative spaces for Palestinian voices in Western discourse? (Linked to Objective 4)

They are the core questions for data collection, analysis, and interpretation in this study. They all aim to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and future potential of Palestinian digital diplomacy in a high-stakes political and media environment.

#### **1.4 Research Significance and Motivation**

The study is limited by its specific focus on the activities of Palestinian ambassadors in conducting digital diplomacy through X following the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, and the intensification of Israeli aggression in occupied Palestine. It does not address the generic work of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the work of embassies as institutions, or non-official Palestinian online activism. Conversely, it merely observes the public posts on X of five Palestinian ambassadors stationed in the following Western countries: United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

These were selected due to their geopolitical importance, media influence, and diplomatic involvement in the Palestine-Israel conflict during the study period.

The research scope is also defined by the following:

- Temporal Parameters: Research is limited to only that which was published from October to December 2023—the three months of increased conflict, negotiations, and international coverage.

- Platform Focus: Twitter (recently rebranded as X) was chosen as the point of departure due to its real-time platform, high political engagement rate, and global access to public diplomacy. Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube websites are not within the purview of this research.
- Methodological Scope: Brief sentiment analysis, as well as qualitative and quantitative content analysis, is used for analysing thematic trends, framing strategies, the number of tweets, and audience engagement. It does not entail advanced statistical modelling and predictive data analysis.
- Analysis Scope: The message content, communication style, strategic framing, and audience engagement are analysed, all quantified within the frameworks of soft power, public diplomacy, and Twiplomacy.

The study presents a genuine, unadorned, and contextualised portrait of how Palestinian ambassadors operate in practising digital diplomacy during a crisis by confining the research to this specific digital and diplomatic context. It is not attempting to infer any broader patterns of Palestinian diplomacy or extended trends beyond the given time frame.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

Although this study makes a focused and timely contribution to research on digital diplomacy in the Palestinian scenario, it has some limitations that affect the scope, interpretation, and generalizability of the results.

#### **a) Platform Scope Limitation**

The research is limited to X as the sole platform for analysing digital diplomacy. While X remains the primary platform for political communication and crisis involvement, it does not encompass all the digital diplomacy practices occurring. There are additional social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and government websites, that could also account for much public interaction but are not included in this research.

## **b) Temporal Scope**

The research is based on the exact three-month period between October and December 2023, when the Israel-Palestine crisis was at its height. Although the period encompasses the active and frontline phase of digital diplomacy, it does not include research into the long-term evolution, pre-crisis diplomatic discourse, or the redefinition of diplomatic discourse by ambassador's post-crisis.

## **c) Ambassadorial Emphasis**

This study examines the X presence of individual Palestinian ambassadors rather than that of embassy staff in general, ministries, or state-run official campaigns. The research, therefore, captures a microscopic part of digital diplomacy and has no bearing on the broader institutional or state digital communication complex.

## **d) Methodological Constraints**

Analysis that employs mixed methods, combining quantitative measures such as frequency and engagement levels with qualitative content and sentiment analysis, is utilised. However, audience perception studies, including follower polls or interviews, as well as complex statistical testing like regression analysis, are not employed. Therefore, claims of the effectiveness or importance of e-diplomacy are interpretative rather than causal.

## **e) Language and Cultural Variability**

Several ambassadors write in more than one language (e.g., English, French, Arabic), and a tweet may be interpreted differently depending on the linguistic and cultural context in which it is viewed. Efforts are made to account for multilingual content; however, nuance may be lost or misinterpreted, mainly when translating using automated tools.

**f) Data Accessibility**

The data is collected by working through publicly visible X accounts. Deleted tweets, direct messages, and shadow-bans are inaccessible, also X's search functionality presents inherent limitations that can affect the retrieval of older content. Typically, standard search results are restricted to tweets from the most recent days or weeks, which can hinder comprehensive historical analysis. Moreover, not all tweets are indexed equally; older tweets may be either partially indexed or deprioritized by the platform's algorithm. This results in inconsistencies in data visibility and can pose challenges for researchers seeking to access complete digital records over extended timeframes, which can limit the dataset's completeness. Additionally, changes to the site's algorithms or account restrictions during the study period may skew viewability and engagement measures beyond our control.

**g) Lack of Primary Data**

Another limitation of this study is the absence of primary data from diplomatic personnel. Although interviews with ambassadors were initially planned as a key component of the research methodology, efforts to secure participation were unsuccessful. The lack of direct input from these stakeholders may have constrained the depth of analysis in certain areas; however, extensive use of publicly available materials and secondary sources was employed to address this gap.

Despite such limited research, the study provides rich data on a relatively under-explored area of Palestinian diplomacy. These constraints do not invalidate the conclusions but rather provide contextualization within a previously defined parameter of the study, which invites future studies to build upon this study in combination with larger datasets, extended periods, and broader methodological approaches.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis comprises six chapters, each presenting an integrated and coherent analysis of Palestinian digital diplomacy in the post-October escalation of conflict. The format is structured in a way that takes the reader from conceptual to empirical content, then to critical examination, and ultimately leads to recommendations.

Chapter One introduces the research problem, articulates the problem statement, and outlines the objectives, significance, scope, and limitations of the study. It also creates the guiding central research questions underpinning the inquiry and locates the study within the broader context of international relations, public diplomacy, and online communication.

Chapter Two is a critical analysis of more recent research on digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, soft power, and Twiplomacy. It outlines significant theoretical and empirical work that has shaped the research design and explains some of the literature gaps on the digital diplomacy of Palestine in conflict. The chapter establishes the conceptual foundation for the study and highlights the pivotal role of narrative construction in asymmetric diplomatic settings.

Chapter Three explains the research methodology. It presents the mixed-methods approach used in the research, including the process of data collection, coding procedures, sampling criteria, and analytical methods used for quantitative (number of tweets, engagement rates) and qualitative (content and sentiment) analysis. The chapter also addresses the rationale for case selection—five Western capitals—and ethical issues and methodological limitations.

Chapter Four reports the findings. It reports descriptive statistics and a thematic analysis of ambassadorial tweets, with notes on trends in message strategy, audience uptake, and narrative framing. The chapter outlines how ambassadors utilised X to shape global opinion, respond to contemporary events, and project a Palestinian diplomatic presence into the Western online sphere during the selected period.

Chapter Five presents a critical analysis of the findings concerning the research questions and theoretical framework. The chapter explains the implications of the findings for Palestinian digital diplomacy, addresses the challenges of working in this field,

evaluates the effectiveness of current ambassadorial strategies, and provides possible recommendations to enhance Palestine's digital diplomatic presence.

Chapter six concludes with suggestions on how best to enhance Palestine's digital diplomatic presence and provides directions for future research. Together, these chapters provide a concise and nuanced examination of a contemporary issue at the intersection of digital communication, diplomacy, and global conflict, shedding new light on both the scholarly literature and diplomatic practice.

## **Chapter two: Literature Review**

### **Digital Diplomacy and Narrative Power in the Palestinian-Israeli Context**

#### **2.1 Overview of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and Media Framing**

The Palestinian-Israeli territorial, sovereignty, and national identity conflict is not in fact a conflict, but beyond that it is an illegal Israeli occupation and also extends to a struggle between Israel and Palestine perpetually for narrative dominance and world opinion. Palestinians have been communicatively and physically excluded from the global political space since the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948. The emerging virtual spaces of the last few years have opened new avenues for resistance to dominant discourses, particularly for those excluded, such as the Palestinians. This chapter establishes the political and media climate necessary for the strategic use of digital diplomacy, considering three interlinked themes: the sidelining of diplomatic beginnings in the past, Western media reporting on diplomacy, and the emerging landscape of digital storytelling in conflict, as exemplified by the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, crisis.

##### **2.1.1 Historical Roots and Diplomatic Marginalisation**

The roots of the Palestinian question can be traced to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when growing tensions over land, identity, and sovereignty intensified in historic Palestine. These tensions reached a devastating climax in 1948 with the Nakba (Arabic for “catastrophe”), following the establishment of the State of Israel on the land of Palestine. During this period, more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes, hundreds of villages were destroyed, and communities were systematically uprooted. The creation of Israel was marked not only by mass displacement, but also by Israeli military occupation in parts of Palestine and widespread acts of brutal violence, including massacres and the deliberate targeting of civilians, leaving deep scars that continue to shape what so called as “conflict” today (Pappé, 2006; Khalidi, 1997). The resultant denial of statehood to Palestinians and refugee rights, in addition to continued settlement growth and military occupation, has pushed Palestinians into statelessness in global politics. The official lack of status has also severed Palestinian voices from being

heard in diplomatic forums, where state-to-state frameworks dominate discourse and legitimacy.

Nonetheless, the Palestinians have made continued diplomatic efforts, with the most successful being that of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Yasser Arafat's leadership saw the PLO begin to open up diplomatic centres across the globe, culminating in the UN General Assembly's recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer state in 2012 (United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 67/19). These efforts have been undermined, however, by power asymmetries, media gatekeeping, and the use of third-party intermediaries. Here, the advent of digital diplomacy provides Palestinian leaders with a unique opportunity to address the world's audiences directly, cutting across conventional diplomatic hierarchies of command and institutional barriers (Zaharna, 2010; Nye, 2004).

In this context, Internet platforms represent a modern manifestation of the traditional concept of "resistance diplomacy," where Palestinian diplomats have the opportunity to be heard, resist hegemonic narratives, and reframe the conflict in the language of international law and human rights.

### **2.1.2 Media Framing and Western Biases in the Conflict**

One of the fundamental concerns of Palestinian diplomacy has been the systemic asymmetry in Western media reporting of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine as a conflict between two equal sides. Several studies have monitored the continuance of Palestinians as perpetrators or victims of an unfortunate but unavoidable conflict and Israeli actions framed in a self-defence and security paradigm (Said, 1997; Philo & Berry, 2004; Khalil, 2009). This kind of construction tends to obscure the structural violence of occupation and make the conflict look symmetrical while ignoring disparities in military strength, resources, and international support.

For example, Philo and Berry (2004) found that UK television news consistently under-represented the voices of Palestinians, was over-dependent on Israeli sources, and neglected to give any historical context to the occupation. Similarly, in US media, the coverage is framed in language that replicates Israeli state discourse, i.e., "terrorist attacks"

rather than "resistance operations" or "security wall" rather than "separation barrier" (Chomsky & Pappé, 2015).

These word biases are not merely in the head—they have real diplomatic consequences. While media framing influences opinion, it also indirectly informs foreign policy positions in Western capitals, which renders it ever more challenging for Palestinian diplomats to argue for legal and humanitarian interventions. Scholars like Edward Said (1997) have argued that narrative asymmetry is one of the most potent weapons of modern imperial politics, and digital media is one of the few options available for responding to such representations by marginalised communities.

### **2.1.3 The 7<sup>th</sup> of October Events and the Digital War of Narratives**

The events of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 marked a pivotal moment in the Palestinian question reshaping the landscape of digital diplomacy. After decades of Israeli occupation of Palestine and a deepening humanitarian catastrophe by blockading on Gaza strip besides daily raids, land confiscation, arresting and settlers' violence in the west bank, Hamas (a Palestinian political party) chose to resist, and here where the the crisis escalated and Israel orchestrated raids and then with a massive Israeli military offensive in Gaza, unleashed an international media frenzy. Besides the grassroots campaigns of violence, another poisonous "digital war" was being waged on social media platforms such as X, YouTube, and TikTok, as both sides launched online wars intending to influence public opinion. Israel launched a high-budget, multi-channel campaign to frame the conflict as an anti-terrorism struggle. According to journalist Sophia Smith Galer's (2023) report, the Israeli government invested over \$7.1 million in YouTube advertisements alone during the first month of escalation. These campaigns included emotionally charged imagery, victim-centred narratives, and direct appeals to Western audiences.

As opposed to this, Palestinian diplomats, less endowed with financial and technological means, resorted to X to document the humanitarian crisis, offer testimonies, and invoke international law. Financial constraints led senior officials, such as Ambassador Zomlot, to utilise their personal social media handles to interact with the global media, push back against disinformation, and promote ceasefire measures. The efforts were marred by a series of issues, including algorithmic downranking of Palestinian content across the

platforms, en masse reporting of Palestinian accounts, and overall content moderation biases (Amnesty International, 2023; Caglar, 2023).

The October 2023 events laid bare both the growing salience of real-time digital communication as a foreign policy tool and the profound structural asymmetries of digital power. To Palestinian leaders, X was a battleground and a lifeline—a site of narrative resistance but one bound up by asymmetries of power and media logic that continue to silence non-hegemonic voices. As will be argued in this thesis, the Palestinian digital diplomacy campaign during this period provides a paradigmatic case for research into how diplomats of marginal or disputed states approach the global public during crises. Their activities represent the potential and boundaries of digital diplomacy as an instrument of soft power and narrative intervention in unbalanced wars.

## **2.2 Digital Diplomacy: Concepts, Debates, and Frameworks**

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has transformed diplomacy from a closed, elite-driven practice into a more public, interactive, and instantaneous process shaped by media and the internet. Digital diplomacy, as an evolution of both state and non-state public diplomacy, allows actors to engage directly with foreign publics, construct transnational narratives, and advance foreign policy objectives through digital platforms. Defined variably by scholars, Bjola and Holmes (2015) describe it as “the use of social media sites and internet-based technologies by diplomats and governments to pursue foreign policy objectives,” while Manor (2019) emphasizes its real-time interactivity in contrast to traditional broadcast-oriented public diplomacy. A particularly targeted form, “Twiplomacy,” refers to the use of X by heads of state, diplomats, and embassies, enabling direct communication with audiences, rapid crisis management, agenda-setting, and the transformation of ambassadors into public figures (Adesina, 2017; Khatib, 2020).

The strategic importance of digital diplomacy lies in its ability to conduct public diplomacy, shape foreign opinion, manage crises, and advance national interests. Cull (2009) identifies five dimensions of public diplomacy—listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting—all of which can be amplified via online platforms with faster feedback loops and broader reach. State actors

use digital diplomacy to strengthen bilateral relations, promote tourism, communicate in crises, and counter alternative narratives, while non-state actors such as humanitarian organizations, diasporas, and liberation movements leverage digital platforms to mobilize constituencies and advocate for policy change (Sevin & Manor, 2020; Ayish, 2021; Zaharna, 2010). In contexts like Palestine, where institutional diplomatic access is limited, social media enables visibility, legitimacy-building, and humanization of the population's plight, as exemplified by Ambassador Zomlot, who combines official messaging with emotional engagement to counter disinformation. However, digital diplomacy faces significant challenges. Algorithmic bias and platform control often disadvantage accounts from conflict-affected regions, as observed in cases of Palestinian social media being shadow-banned or selectively moderated (Margetts et al., 2015; Amnesty International, 2022; Caglar, 2023). Disinformation campaigns and rapid dissemination of false news, particularly during crises such as the October 2023 escalation, further complicate communication efforts (Smith Galer, 2023). Cultural and linguistic differences also require careful message framing to reach diverse global audiences effectively.

Theoretical perspectives link digital diplomacy to soft power, the ability to influence others through attraction rather than coercion (Nye, 2004). In asymmetric conflicts, such as the Palestinian-Israeli case, digital diplomacy serves as a key tool for projecting soft power, using humanitarian framing, global norms, and emotive narratives to shape international perceptions and policy responses. The digital era increasingly blurs the lines between media strategy and diplomacy, making narrative control a central component of contemporary diplomatic practice (Seib, 2012). This study builds upon these frameworks to explore how digital diplomacy functions in the Palestinian context, emphasizing both its strategic potential and the practical constraints faced in asymmetric geopolitical settings.

### **2.3 Comparative Practices: Israel and Palestine in the Digital Space**

State and non-state actors now operate not only on traditional battlefields but also in cyberspace, where perceptions, legitimacy, and public opinion play a central role in shaping foreign policy. The Israeli occupation and the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, long characterised by narrative asymmetry in traditional media, have now moved into the digital arena, where both parties engage in active public diplomacy through social media.

However, dramatic imbalances in resources, infrastructural endowment, and audience accessibility significantly influence the effectiveness of their online diplomacy.

Israel has long recognised the strategic value of public diplomacy, investing disproportionately in media messaging, advocacy networks, and online outreach. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains a well-funded Digital Diplomacy Unit staffed to produce multilingual content, provide responsive feedback, and engage in storytelling (Manor, 2019; Gilboa, 2012). Official social media handles, including those of embassies, defence institutions, and senior offices such as the Prime Minister's Office, are centrally coordinated to promote Israel's national image, respond to criticism, and advance policy positions. The cyber foreign policy apparatus is further strengthened by an unofficial army of "digital soldiers" — diaspora students, voluntary influencer commentators, and activist networks — who generate pro-Israeli discourse and amplify messaging. These combined efforts create a multi-layered, coordinated online presence capable of dominating narratives. During the October 2023 escalation, Israel spent over \$7.1 million on YouTube advertisements (Smith Galer, 2023), demonstrating the scale and coordination of its digital diplomacy operations.

By contrast, Palestinian digital diplomacy is underdeveloped, undercapitalised, and largely reactive. While the Palestinian Authority and Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintain an online presence, it is fragmented and disorganised, with few embassies maintaining active accounts and no coordinated messaging or media training evident (Zytoon & Husain, 2023). This institutional weakness places considerable responsibility on individual ambassadors, who must operate with small budgets, minimal technical support, and full exposure. Some, like Dr. Zomlot in the UK, have developed personal digital credibility through articulate interviews, effective crisis communication, and emotionally resonant messaging. Such efforts illustrate how ambassadorial agency can partially compensate for institutional gaps, allowing diplomats to counter misinformation, interact with foreign publics, and advance Palestinian legitimacy.

## **2.4 The Role of Ambassadors in Digital Diplomacy**

With the rise of digital diplomacy, the role of ambassadors has expanded beyond conventional state representation to include direct engagement with foreign publics through

internet-based platforms. In today's mediated environment, ambassadors are increasingly expected to establish personal credibility, facilitate instant communication, and interact with global audiences via social media. This personalisation of diplomacy reflects a broader shift from institutional messaging to digital, individual-level engagement, where diplomats act as “communicating agents” (Manor, 2019) and “narrative entrepreneurs” (Adesina, 2017), balancing formal gravitas with emotional resonance and charm. Strategic personalisation can enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of messages, particularly for semi-sovereign or marginalised actors such as Palestine, whose institutional access is limited, making personal storytelling an effective tool of soft power (Zaharna, 2010).

Ambassadors play a pivotal role in crisis communication, functioning as real-time influencers of narratives. Social media enables rapid response, framing of national narratives, and direct engagement with international publics without bureaucratic delays (Coombs, 2015; Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020). However, the digital environment also introduces risks, including miscommunication across multilingual and multicultural audiences, faux pas in tone, or the tension between personal branding and adherence to official policy lines (Sevin, 2017). The October 2023 escalation demonstrated these dynamics: while Palestinian ambassadors such as Dr. Zomlot in the UK effectively used X to present Palestinian perspectives and counter misinformation, others were less active, highlighting the dependence on individual initiative in the absence of a coordinated digital strategy.

Comparative international case studies further illustrate the potential of ambassadorial digital engagement. British diplomats use X to engage followers through policy discussions, cultural insights, and interactive communication, reflecting institutional support for ambassadorial autonomy and personalised diplomacy (Manor & Sevin, 2021). U.S. ambassadors have similarly employed the platform for real-time crisis communication, strategic narrative construction, and advocacy, exemplified during the 2021 Myanmar coup when the U.S. Embassy in Yangon issued prompt statements, tagged major media outlets, and employed targeted hashtags to amplify its message (Manor & Crilley, 2018). The Ukrainian case since 2022 demonstrates the power of social media in resistance, international advocacy, and mobilising global solidarity, reinforcing the role of digital platforms in shaping perception and networked influence (Chernysh & Bjola, 2023).

These cases collectively show that effective digital diplomacy requires more than personal initiative; it depends on institutional support, robust media infrastructure, and coherent communication strategies. For Palestine, structural and institutional limitations often hinder coordinated messaging, placing the burden on individual ambassadors and rendering their efforts crucial yet vulnerable. This thesis builds on these precedents by examining how Palestinian ambassadors have engaged in Twiplomacy between October and December 2023, analyzing their digital strategies, crisis responsiveness, and narrative framing. By focusing on the ambassadorial figure, the study highlights how non-hegemonic actors navigate asymmetrical digital environments, craft their online identities, and influence global discourse, providing insights that extend beyond the Palestinian case into broader understandings of modern diplomatic practice.

## **2.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study draws upon four interconnected theoretical frameworks—Soft Power Theory, Public Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, and Twiplomacy to explore how Palestinian ambassadors have employed digital platforms, particularly X, to navigate diplomatic challenges. Rather than examining each theory in isolation, this section considers how these perspectives overlap and mutually reinforce one another to provide a nuanced understanding of how Palestinian digital diplomacy evolved in response to the October escalation. These frameworks collectively help explain how messaging strategies, audience engagement, and narrative framing have shaped international perceptions of the Palestinian cause.

Joseph Nye's concept of soft power (2004) plays a central role in this analysis. Nye defines soft power as the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction, rather than coercion. In the case of Palestinian ambassadors, soft power is not wielded through cultural exports or economic leverage, but through moral persuasion grounded in principles of justice and international law. These diplomats often rely on emotionally resonant language and imagery to gain public sympathy and shift perceptions, particularly among Western audiences. Their digital presence reflects an effort to humanise Palestinian suffering, reframe the conflict in ethical terms, and advocate for humanitarian accountability. For a state with limited access to traditional diplomatic tools, this approach underscores how narrative can function as a vital diplomatic resource.

Public diplomacy further supports this strategy by highlighting the importance of communicating directly with foreign publics. According to Cull (2009) and Melissen (2005), public diplomacy involves advocacy, listening, cultural exchange, and the cultivation of relationships to shape international opinion. In the Palestinian case, ambassadors have turned to X to address the limitations they face in conventional diplomatic spaces. Their posts frequently challenge dominant narratives, share documentation of human rights violations, and reframe the Palestinian struggle within humanitarian and legal discourses. These actions serve not only to inform but also to elicit empathy and solidarity, enabling diplomats to influence public debate and, indirectly, political discourse in their host countries.

The concept of digital diplomacy, sometimes referred to as e-diplomacy, expands these ideas into the realm of online communication. As Bjola and Holmes (2015) argue, digital diplomacy allows state and non-state actors alike to reach international audiences more rapidly and directly than ever before. For Palestinian representatives, whose access to traditional diplomatic forums is restricted, digital media has become an indispensable platform. It allows them to engage in timely responses, correct misinformation, and amplify narratives that might otherwise be sidelined. This approach involves more than just visibility; it represents a strategic adaptation to contemporary diplomatic challenges, where algorithmic visibility and public engagement can have tangible political effects.

Twiplomacy offers a platform-specific perspective on these developments. Coined to describe diplomatic communication conducted through X, the term captures how social media has transformed the ambassadorial role. Manor (2019) argues that X has shifted diplomats from behind-the-scenes negotiators to public communicators who must manage visibility, authenticity, and immediacy. Palestinian ambassadors have exemplified this transformation, using X to deliver statements, comment on unfolding events, and connect with international media and advocacy groups. Their communication style often blends legal rhetoric, humanitarian appeals, and emotionally compelling content, crafted to resonate within the fast-moving and emotionally reactive environment of social media. This has enabled them to assert moral authority and legitimacy in ways that transcend traditional diplomatic protocol.

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks allow for a comprehensive analysis of Palestinian digital diplomacy. Soft Power Theory sheds light on the use of emotional and ethical appeals in projecting influence. Public Diplomacy Theory explains how ambassadors engage with foreign publics and shift international narratives. Digital Diplomacy frames the operational context in which these activities occur, while Twiplomacy highlights the specific affordances and constraints of X as a diplomatic tool. Applied to the case of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, these frameworks clarify how Palestinian diplomats have attempted to assert agency, build solidarity, and reshape public discourse in a digital environment that is both accessible and contested. Rather than serving as passive communicators, they emerge as strategic actors navigating an uneven global media landscape—one tweet at a time.

## **2.6 Review of Existing Literature and Research Gap**

Scholarly interest in digital diplomacy has expanded significantly over the past two decades as governments and non-state actors increasingly utilise online platforms to influence foreign publics. Foundational work by Cull (2009) and Melissen (2005) established the concept of public diplomacy as communication aimed at foreign audiences, subsequently extended into the digital sphere by authors such as Bjola and Holmes (2015) and Manor (2019). These studies emphasise that social media enables more immediate, interactive, and decentralised diplomatic communication than traditional channels.

Research has examined how states employ digital platforms to project soft power, manage crises, and shape international agendas. For example, Seib (2012) explored the capacity of digital networks to expand cultural diplomacy's reach, while Adesina (2017) coined the term "Twiplomacy" to describe diplomacy conducted via X. Studies of Western governments (Manor & Sevin, 2021) demonstrate that coordinated strategies, multilingual content, and rapid crisis engagement are key predictors of success.

However, the literature on digital diplomacy in conflict and asymmetric power settings remains limited. Nye's (2004) soft power framework is often applied to smaller or less powerful actors, yet relatively few empirical studies investigate how these actors deploy digital tools under conditions of political marginalisation. Khatib (2020) examined Arab public diplomacy in the digital age, identifying persistent challenges such as resource

constraints, audience bias, and competing narratives. Similarly, Ayish (2021) documented digital diplomacy in selected Arab states but did not analyse ambassador-level strategies during active crises.

Existing scholarship on Palestinian digital diplomacy is fragmented and largely institutional in scope. Most studies examine official Ministry of Foreign Affairs accounts or embassy networks rather than the agency of individual ambassadors. Zytoon and Husain (2023), for example, provide one of the few quantitative mappings of Palestinian embassies' use of X, finding that only 10 of 81 embassies and six consulates maintain active accounts. However, their analysis does not explore message framing, crisis responsiveness, or the ambassador's role as an independent communicator during high-stakes events. Reports from the Institute for Palestine Studies and Birzeit University focus on grassroots digital activism-such as the #SaveSheikhJarrah campaign-without assessing formal diplomatic communication. While these movements complement official efforts, they do not reveal the strategic choices, constraints, or framing practices of state-appointed representatives. Contributions such as Khatib (2020) examine Middle Eastern public diplomacy theoretically but do not empirically address the unique asymmetries confronting Palestinian diplomacy. NGO and media reports (Amnesty International, 2023; Caglar, 2023) document structural challenges such as algorithmic suppression and biased content moderation, yet they generally address these issues in activist contexts rather than evaluating their impact on ambassadorial strategies.

Comparative research between Israeli and Palestinian digital diplomacy (e.g., Caglar, 2023; Smith Galer, 2023) underscores structural imbalances in resources, coordination, and visibility. Israel benefits from well-funded campaigns, multilingual professional teams, diaspora influencer networks, and substantial paid promotion. In contrast, Palestinian content is frequently subject to shadow banning, removal, or reduced visibility (Amnesty International, 2022; Caglar, 2023). Despite these constraints, some Palestinian diplomats have adapted creatively, blending official diplomacy with grassroots mobilisation-combining ambassadorial messaging with diaspora engagement, hashtag activism, and crowdsourced documentation to amplify their narratives. During the October 2023 escalation, such hybrid strategies allowed Palestinian content to achieve virality

through emotional storytelling, compelling imagery, and appeals to international solidarity, even in the face of Israel's dominance in paid digital promotion.

While the broader literature on digital diplomacy is robust, and comparative studies have highlighted the asymmetry between Israeli and Palestinian capacities, there remains a notable absence of actor-specific, crisis-period research on Palestinian ambassadors as digital communicators. Existing studies do not provide a mixed-methods analysis of ambassadorial strategies, engagement patterns, and narrative framing during moments of acute geopolitical significance-particularly the post-7 October 2023 crisis. The micro-level focus on ambassadorial agency, rather than aggregate institutional output, is missing from the current scholarly landscape creating a research gap.

## **2.7 Contribution of the Present Study**

This thesis directly addresses the above gap by offering the first in-depth, real-time analysis of Palestinian ambassadors' digital diplomacy during the critical period of October-December 2023. It examines five ambassadors stationed in strategically significant Western capitals-the USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany-assessing their use of X to frame narratives, counter misinformation, and engage foreign publics during a rapidly evolving crisis.

Unlike prior research, this study centres the individual ambassador rather than treating diplomatic communication as a purely institutional product also it captures a crisis-specific window to assess how messaging adapts under acute political and media pressure besides it employs a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative measures of tweet frequency and engagement with qualitative thematic and sentiment analysis in addition to, integrates comparative context, accounting for differences in host-country political alignments, media environments, and audience receptivity.

The research makes four distinct contributions to the literature; First, Empirical Contribution as it provides original data on an unexamined digital diplomacy case: Palestinian ambassadors' real-time communication in the aftermath of October 7, 2023. Second, Theoretical Contribution by extending and adapting Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, and Twiplomacy frameworks to a stateless, conflict-

affected diplomatic setting. Third, Methodological Innovation by combining content and sentiment analysis with strategic narrative theory to evaluate both the form and the function of ambassadorial messaging. Forth, Practical Implications by Offering actionable recommendations for strengthening Palestinian digital diplomacy in asymmetric information environments.

In general terms, this study advances scholarly understanding of how marginalised diplomatic actors operate within contested digital arenas, where visibility, narrative control, and audience engagement are simultaneously opportunities and battlegrounds. By situating ambassadorial agency at the centre of analysis, it provides insights with relevance beyond the Palestinian case, contributing to global debates on diplomacy in the age of real-time, socially mediated communication.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the methodology used in this study, explaining how Palestinian ambassadors employed digital diplomacy in the pivotal moment following the escalated Palestinian-Israeli crisis on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. It describes the philosophical background, research design, rationale for the selection of the case, process of data collection, and analytical methods employed to systematically examine Palestinian diplomats' X digital communication strategy. The chapter also briefly mentions the ethics and issues of collecting and analysing real-time diplomatic information from social media.

Informed by a common objective: to inquire into how Palestinian ambassadors in five major Western countries employed X to promote foreign policy objectives and shape the Palestinian narrative in a politically charged and emotionally volatile conflict. This goal is one aspect of a comprehensive project to understand how non-traditional diplomatic agents utilise online spaces to be heard by the global public, push back against disinformation, and connect with the Western public. Due to the complexity of this purpose and the variability of communicative strategies and public reactions, a mixed-methods design was deemed the most appropriate methodological approach.

The use of a mixed-methods design is justified on both epistemological grounds and practical considerations. Mixed methods merge the quantitative strengths of objectivity, generalizability, and pattern identification with the qualitative richness of thematic meaning, contextual depth, and narrative richness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This is particularly valuable when studying dynamic digital events, such as Twiplomacy, where both quantitative indicators (e.g., tweet frequency, levels of engagement) and discursive aspects (e.g., narrative framing, emotional resonance) are pertinent to determining impact and meaning (Bryman, 2006).

Researchers such as Denscombe (2008) and Morse (2003) note that mixed methods hold a special place in policy and communication studies when aggregate quantitative data cannot adequately explain complex meanings or social influence processes. In digital

diplomacy, Bjola and Holmes (2015) argue that a statistically exclusive approach could not account for the symbolic and performative nature of diplomatic communication. Equally, purely qualitative approaches may not be able to identify the general patterns of visibility and resonance that comprise public opinion. Consequently, the research collects and analyses:

- **Quantitative data**, such as the number of tweets, retweets, likes, and the engagement of the audience.
- **Qualitative data**: analysing narrative framing, thematic content, tone, and rhetorical strategies used in ambassadors' tweets.

As part of the data collection strategy, the research initially aimed to include qualitative interviews with selected ambassadors and diplomatic officials to gain firsthand insights and complement the secondary data. However, despite repeated formal requests and follow-ups, it was not possible to secure participation from the targeted individuals. While this limited the availability of primary data from diplomatic sources, alternative data sources such as official statements, public speeches, and policy documents were used to mitigate this constraint.

However, it is this two-stage strategy that adds validity and depth. Not only does it allow the research to inform us about what ambassadors have tweeted and how often, but it also explains how messages have been framed, why they are most likely to resonate with particular constituencies, and how they work as soft power and public diplomacy tools. In addition, the study fills a gap in actor-focused, context-specific digital diplomacy accounts, as alluded to by scholars such as Manor (2019) and Adesina (2017).

By focusing on five Palestinian ambassadors as actors and their conduct during a limited period of the crisis, this arrangement sidesteps the general limitations of studies on institutions. Instead, it foregrounds agency, strategy, and adjustment to the situation—variables crucial to real-time public diplomacy. As a whole, this chapter lays the groundwork for a holistic and multi-dimensional analysis of Palestinian digital diplomacy at a politically early moment. It clarifies the research rationale of the study design and presents a clear description of data collection, analysis, and interpretation in subsequent chapters.

### **3.2. Research Design**

The research employs a multiple-case study methodology, focusing on five Palestinian ambassadors posted to the most critical Western Countries: USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany. The application of the case study method is particularly suitable for this research, as it promises an in-depth, richly contextualised examination of complex, contemporary phenomena (Yin, 2018). In this case, the phenomenon under study is X usage as a diplomatic tool by individual ambassadors during a crisis period of intense media and geopolitical activity in the aftermath of the 7th of October 2023, escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli crisis.

The explanation for the selection of these five ambassadors lies in the strategic importance of the host nations. They are all Western democracies with a large international media presence, significant political influence on Middle East foreign policies, and varying levels of diplomatic sympathy or opposition to the perspectives of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Examining ambassadorial speech across these various contexts, the study hopes to explore patterns, inconsistencies, and coping strategies in digital diplomacy. With this comparative element comes an increase in the external validity of the findings, allowing for analytical generalisation (Stake, 1995; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

This is descriptive-exploratory research rather than hypothesis-testing research. This research does not attempt to measure causality, but rather to understand and describe the online message creation and dissemination of Palestinian ambassadors, whether public diplomacy and soft power objectives are achieved through them, and how they meet crisis communication needs in real-time. This is consistent with the interpretivist school, where issues such as making meaning, narrative, and situated knowledge are central (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009).

To achieve this, the study employs a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative elements of analysis. Mixed methods are well-suited to address complex social phenomena that require measurement and interpretation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Quantitative data within the study are used to calculate the tweet volume,

user activity measures (likes, retweets, replies), and temporal behavioural patterns. These enable the tempo and amplitude of diplomatic effort throughout the crisis timeline to be determined.

Conversely, content analysis and sentiment analysis are used to analyse the tone and content of the tweets themselves. This involves the exploration of narrative strategies (legalistic argument, humanitarian appeal, emotional appeal), multimedia use (images, videos), and engagement strategies (direct tagging of authority figures, hashtags, calls to action). These qualitative results provide the necessary background for understanding how marginal actors engage in digital diplomacy in the present moment. The focus on ambassadors as individual diplomatic agents, rather than ministries or embassies, reflects the contemporary and original nature of this research. As Manor (2019) and Bjola and Zaiotti (2020) observe, the advent of "personalised digital diplomacy" has marked a transition from institutions to individuals. Ambassadors are now on the frontlines as communicators, working between presence and official policy, and as narrative entrepreneurs in cyberspace.

Generally, the research design enables a nuanced examination of how Palestinian digital diplomacy unfolds in practice, encompassing not only the content communicated and its frequency but also the influence of political context, resource constraints, and strategic design on digital communication. The multi-case study and mixed-methods design allow for both depth and scope, enabling the observation of patterns without losing the distinctiveness of each diplomatic setting.

### **3.3. Case Selection Criteria**

Case selection is a crucial aspect of qualitative research design, particularly in multiple-case study research. The present study focuses on the X activity of five Palestinian ambassadors stationed in influential Western Countries, including United states of America, Canada, United Kingdom, France and Germany. These cases were chosen purposefully, following a purposive sampling strategy guided by principles of relevance, representativeness, and variation in political context (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2018).

The primary filter used in selecting cases was diplomatic significance in the host country. The chosen countries are all influential players on the international political scene,

having also been keen participants in the debate over the question of Palestine through their foreign policy, media, and civil society. The states also represent varying levels of support, neutrality, or critique for Palestinian statehood and Israeli military intervention, thereby providing rich contexts for conducting comparative digital diplomacy analysis. A second crucial aspect was the activity level and availability of the X handles of the ambassadors. All five ambassadors have publicly available, verifiable, and continuously active X accounts that they use to make statements, respond to current events, and engage with international audiences. This ensures a rich dataset for performing both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Additionally, the selected ambassadors operate in English, French, and/or Arabic-speaking domains, enabling multilingual interaction and communication. This multilingualism reflects the communicative challenges and strategic decisions of public diplomacy, mainly when directed toward the Western public. It also enables the analysis of message adaptation concerning host political environments and audience attitudes (Cull, 2009; Sevin, 2017). The same five embassies also offer a geopolitically representative selection of Western outreach:

- **United States:** A leading world power with a firm pro-Israel foreign policy, yet a critical forum for Palestinian public diplomacy and advocacy.
- **Canada:** A liberal democracy with an active civil society and rising differences on Middle East policy.
- **United Kingdom:** A historical colonial power in Palestine, issuer of Balfour Declaration and a European Union-aligned political player with an active media presence.
- **France and Germany:** Strategic EU (European Union) core nations with historic sensitivities towards Israel but increasingly under human rights pressure to shift their stance on Palestinian issues.

This pluralism enhances contextual richness and comparability, and it is within this range that an evaluation of the adjustment of Palestinian ambassadors' messages to various political and media environments is possible. In addition, the focus on Western capitals is concurrent with the research purpose: to examine how Palestinian diplomats utilise digital

tools to contribute to Western discourse, challenge dominant narratives, and shape the understanding of foreign publics, with significant global implications.

Briefly, the case selection was guided by strategic considerations: (1) political salience of the host country, (2) active X presence and use, (3) linguistic diversity, and (4) media diversity in the West and political solidarity with Palestine. Overall, the cases support a multi-faceted examination of digital diplomacy conducted by ambassadors and rich real-time observation of public diplomacy activities by a politically marginal actor in contested information spaces.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedures**

The core data source of this study is the X social media network, on which most of the online activity of public diplomacy actors like ambassadors and foreign ministries occurs. X was selected due to its unique role in diplomatic communication, offering real-time visibility, interactive audience engagement, and message amplification through retweets, hashtags, and media-enhanced content (Manor, 2019; Bjola & Holmes, 2015). It is also widely utilised by both government and non-governmental actors in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, particularly within the framework of the ongoing occupation, to create agendas, shape public narratives, issue official statement issue official announcements, and engage with journalists, civil society, and political elites.

The accounts examined are the confirmed and official X accounts of five Palestinian ambassadors representing Palestine in the following countries: United States of America/United Nations, Canada, United Kingdom, France, and Germany. These accounts were selected because they demonstrated regular posting activity, and their content was publicly accessible. Where ambassadors used both official and personal accounts for diplomatic purposes, both were included in the analysis to gain a holistic picture of their online diplomacy.

Since the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) mission in Washington, D.C., in October 2018 under the administration of President Donald Trump, Palestine has not maintained an officially recognised ambassador to the United States. Consequently, diplomatic engagement is conducted through alternative channels. At present, most communication between Palestine and the United States is facilitated via the

U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs, located in Jerusalem, and through the Palestinian delegation to the United Nations in New York. For the purposes of this analysis, the official account selected was that of Ambassador Majed Bamyá, Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, rather than that of the Permanent Observer, Riyad Mansour, who does not maintain an account on X.

The temporal scope of the data gathering spans from October to December, 2023, a period that falls within the immediate and collective diplomatic response to the intensification of the Gaza conflict. This was chosen as the reference date because it covers the initial bout of violence, international response, UN resolutions, mass protests, and heightened media coverage worldwide. It also provides an easily manageable and analytically tractable window through which to monitor digital trends and message framing during a hot narrative battle. The specific data points extracted from each ambassadorial narrative are:

- Tweet content (text message with hashtags, mentions, and links)
- Multimedia elements (images, videos, infographics, and links to outside material)
- Engagement metrics, including number of likes, replies, retweets and quote tweets)
- Publication date and time
- Language type used in the tweet (Arabic, English, French, etc.)

The data points mentioned above were manually collected and double-checked for verification. All tweets were recorded in an organised spreadsheet, sorted by date, ambassador, topic, and engagement metrics. Although no automated scraper was employed due to ethical constraints and X's evolving API restrictions, the manual method allowed for a more reflective and context-sensitive recording of tweets, including explanations of media and identification of linguistic errors. If, in the future, other researchers are to augment the dataset, alternatives such as Tweepy, NCapture (to be used with NVivo), or X Academic API can be considered for a broader study.

Since tweet numbers were not uniform among ambassadors, the total dataset for each account was used rather than the sampling method. However, if one ambassador were tweeted at an extremely high rate (e.g., numerous times daily over the entire three-month

period), a stratified sample technique by week would have been employed to ensure data manageability while maintaining representativeness (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). However, the aggregated tweet volumes were always within an analytically acceptable magnitude, allowing for a full audit without the need to reduce the sample. All data collected was publicly available with no private access and consent procedures. No private messages, removed tweets, or hidden replies were accessed to ensure the study was entirely in line with ethics and X's public content policy.

### **3.5. Content Analysis and Coding Scheme**

To conduct a content analysis of the tweet's significant meaning for Palestinian ambassadors, the research employed a qualitative content analysis process augmented with coarse quantitative measures. Content analysis enables researchers to carefully analyse patterns in communication and meaning within text and multimedia content (Krippendorff, 2018). In digital diplomacy, this approach is valuable to understand what is being communicated, how stories are framed, and which approach is being taken to appeal to and shape public opinion (Neuendorf, 2017; Pamment, 2013).

The unit of analysis of this study is the single tweet. The tweets were treated as stand-alone diplomatic messages, whether as an independent post or a thread. Retweets were excluded unless the ambassador provided personal commentary (quote-tweeting), in which case the content and rhetorical organisation of the appended message were analysed.

The thematic analysis found repeated themes, strategic narratives, and rhetorical framing modes throughout the tweets. Drawing on previous research in crisis communication and public diplomacy (e.g., Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020; Manor, 2019), an initial deductive coding list was compiled and subsequently supplemented inductively. The last thematic code list was:

- **Humanitarian Appeals:** Tweets that refer to civilian suffering, casualties, medication shortages, or displacement.
- **Legal/Political Framing:** Occupation, UN resolutions, apartheid, or abuse of human rights.

- **Emotional Narratives:** Solidarity, mourning, rage, hope, or national identity (e.g., martyrs, resilience, resistance).
- **Calls to Action:** Tweets call for political accountability, public protest, or policy change.
- **Media Engagement:** Tweeting refers to interviews, op-eds, or overt counter-famings of Western media framings.
- **Institutional Developments:** Embassy developments, diplomatic receptions, or state positions that are reported.
- **Interactive Engagement:** Foreign official's appointment, response to critics, or identification of good public individuals or states.

The manual coding was accomplished via the utilisation of Microsoft Excel, which facilitated the simple insertion of multilingual data and thematic coding. While computer software packages such as NVivo or Atlas were utilised, they are best suited for large corpora. However, the sample size in this study (five ambassadors over three months) allowed us to undertake manual coding with good contextual sensitivity, which was feasible and reliable. The approach aligns with Braun and Clarke's (2006) best practice for flexible thematic analysis in qualitative social research. The coding was a two-stage process:

1. **Open Coding:** The tweets were closely read and coded using initial thematic codes from observed patterns, keywords, and rhetorical forms.
2. **Axial Coding:** When the themes emerged, codes were merged into higher-order categories to uncover more profound narrative strategies and diplomatic agendas (e.g., from instances such as "siege on Gaza" to broader categories like "Humanitarian Framing").

English, French, and Arabic tweets were employed. While the tweets were bilingual or multilingual, both versions were read with differences in wording, stress, or tone, affecting language clarity and audience target. The tweets in Arabic were translated from English to Arabic by the author through a combination of manual and contextual judgment translation, at times aided by Google Translate for word verification. Care was taken to

preserve cultural and political nuance, particularly in emotionally or symbolically charged terms (i.e., invoking "martyrs" or "resistance").

Following the interpretive approach of qualitative coding, efforts were made to ensure consistency and reliability in identifying themes. A random 10% subset of tweets was re-coded following an initial one-week waiting period to allow for internal consistency. Although an external intercoder was not utilised due to the single-researcher study's resource constraints, this self-audit procedure ensured the integrity of coding and minimised subjectivity (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The result of this coding was a multidimensional dataset that enabled an informed understanding of how Palestinian ambassadors constructed the conflict, tailored messages to specific audiences, and utilised digital tools as instruments of public diplomacy in a politically charged and diplomatically constrained context.

### 3.6. Sentiment and Engagement Analysis

In addition to thematic content analysis, sentiment analysis, and engagement analyses are used in this study to examine the emotional framing of Palestinian ambassadors' tweets and observe how their audiences responded to their X diplomacy. They offer a quantitative appraisal of the affective tone and interactive agency of diplomatic tweets during the October–December 2023 conflict period.

#### 3.6.1. Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis is the measurement of the emotional import of textual material, most commonly defined as positive, negative, or neutral sentiment. For this study, sentiment analysis was conducted manually, with a context-dependent, interpretive method rather than software packages. This was an informed choice due to the relatively small size of the dataset and the political and cultural specificity of the content, which was strongly susceptible to misclassification by sentiment tools with limited domain knowledge (Thelwall et al., 2010). The following was employed for the classification of sentiment:

- **Positive:** Tweets mentioning the approval of peace measures, hope, solidarity, strength, or diplomacy with foreign friends or respect for them (e.g., "*This is the Canada we all know and admire!* 🇪🇺🇦🇪🇨🇪 "). *@MonaAbuamara* commenting on

Canada voting in favor of the UN resolution for Protecting of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligation.

- **Negative:** Violent language, injustice, outrage, denunciation of foreign forces, and emotive descriptions of victimhood (e.g., "*An all-out Israeli aggression is targeting the defenseless city of #Jenin & its refugee camp. Three 🇵🇸 civilians including a 15 y/o child have been killed, 37 injured. Apaches are bombing the densely-populated refugee camp. Silence is complicity in the ongoing #WarCrimes.*"). *\_@ArafahLaith*
- **Neutral:** Process or informational tweets with no or minimal affective words (e.g., "*13 members of the Council voted in favor of the draft resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, 1 abstained (UK), 1 voted against (US veto).*") *\_@majedbamya*

While a tweet would be effectively composite content, coding was based on the overall tone or message intent. This is supported by qualitative research conventions, which enable the use of human coding for high-stakes, emotionally intense content, such as conflict, diplomacy, or trauma (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Papacharissi, 2015). This thesis builds upon these findings by asking whether and to what degree Palestinian ambassadors used this new, venture-defining approach to diplomacy. This work examines whether their internet activity during the post-7<sup>th</sup> of October timeline adhered to international best practices in online diplomacy or was constrained by situational pressures.

### 3.6.2. Engagement Analysis

Engagement metrics were used to track the reach and engagement of ambassadorial tweets, closely monitoring user interaction and engagement levels. They constitute a key proxy for successful public diplomacy, measuring the degree to which messages are shared, viewed, and acted upon by users (Manor, 2019; Sevin, 2017). For each tweet, the following engagement metrics were tracked:

- **Likes:** Mark casual assent or emotional agreement.
- **Retweets:** signify a desire to share or endorse a message.
- **Quote Tweets:** Reflect higher levels of engagement, i.e., praise or criticism.
- **Replies/Comments:** Signal conversation, questioning, or public response.

Hand-coding of engagement was also performed and saved in the dataset, along with content and sentiment tags. Engagement metrics were measured at 72-hour intervals post-publication, wherever feasible, to capture early momentum, consistent with research showing that tweets gain activity within their first 1–2 days (Bruns & Burgess, 2012). In addition to raw counts of engagement, tweets were also coded into functional categories according to communication typologies used in the analysis of public diplomacy (Pamment, 2013; Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020). These are:

- **Informational Tweets:** Share facts, updates, meeting recaps, or statistics.
- **Emotional Tweets:** Express outrage, sadness, pride, solidarity, or urgency.
- **Responsive Tweets:** Address news reports, reply to public comments, refer to foreign officials, or refer to reporters.

This typology helped determine not only how the tweets were received but also which types of messages garnered more engagement. Emotionally charged tweets, for example, were more liked and retweeted, while informational tweets were less appealing but conveyed policy depth. Sentiment analysis overall supplemented thematic content analysis by offering a glimpse into the emotional framing of messages by ambassadors and the type of response from their audience, thereby enhancing comprehension of the underlying digital diplomacy in crisis as a performative and interactive process.

### **3.7. Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations**

The validity, reliability, and ethical adequacy arguments of a research study characterise its credibility, particularly in qualitative and mixed-methods research, which often involves empirical real-world evidence, interpretive data analysis, and politically complex contexts. This section outlines the approach to methodological soundness and ethical responsibility in research conduct.

#### **3.7.1. Validity**

The quality of qualitative and mixed-methods research raises questions about whether the design, data sources, and interpretation of findings are genuine and suitable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Maxwell, 2013). Some measures were undertaken in this study to enhance the validity:

- **Messages Triangulation:** This research combines two forms of data: quantitative data (e.g., number of tweets, engagement ratio) and qualitative data (e.g., thematic coding, sentiment analysis). Through the combination of the two data modes, the research offers a more comprehensive and in-depth interpretation of Palestinian digital diplomacy (Denzin, 1978; Flick, 2014).
- **Case Selection Validity:** five Palestinian ambassadors were selected based on a purposeful, criterion-based sample strategy taking into account geopolitical relevance, platform activity, linguistic diversity, and comparative potential within different Western contexts. This seeks to make the case information-rich and typical of the setting (Patton, 2002).
- **Analytic Validity:** Theoretical frameworks directly informed the research questions, and the conceptual framework guided the interpretation of the data. All analytical themes were linked to pre-existing concepts in soft power, public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, and Twiplomacy theory, optimising conceptual coherence.

### 3.7.2. Reliability

Reliability is concerned with data consistency, transparency, and replicability within the research process, particularly coding and data interpretation (Silverman, 2013). The following measures were followed in this study to enhance reliability:

- **Reliable Coding Protocol:** Content analysis was conducted with a clearly defined and theory-guided set of coding categories that had been pilot-coded for improvement. A coding manual was maintained throughout to allow regular application of themes across all the tweets.
- **Hand Cross-Checking:** A single 10% random data subset was re-coded after a time-lapse to verify internal consistency and ensure that initial thematic meanings were accurate.
- **Clear Documentation:** All tweet data was filed in a systematic dataset with variables for date, content, sentiment, engagement, and thematic code. This leaves an audit trail that enhances replicability and transparency.

While this is a sole-researcher study and does not undergo formal intercoder reliability testing, these internal checks help mitigate subjective drift and enhance analytical dependability (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

### **3.7.3. Ethical Considerations**

This study adheres to known social media research ethics, including informed access, user privacy, and proper interpretation (Townsend & Wallace, 2016). The data collected consists of all publicly available posts from verified X accounts operated by public officials (ambassadors) in their official capacities.

- **Anonymity Not Required:** Since the respondents are writing in professional, public roles, and the tweets are intended for a public audience with a global reach, anonymisation is not required. Care was taken, however, to preserve professional boundaries and restrict over-interpretation of emotive content.
- **No Intrusion or Interaction:** No explicit interaction with the sponsors or ambassadors, and no recording or monitoring of personal information (e.g., non-public posts or DMs). Publicly available content, as well as scheduled open access by diplomats, is utilised.
- **Platform Compliance:** The research adheres to X's Terms of Service, which permit the collection and quotation of public content for non-commercial scholarly purposes, provided that no scraping from automation violates usage terms or privacy policies. Manual data collection guaranteed such adherence.

Lastly, the research also touches on the politics and sensitivities of studying digital diplomacy in war zones. All interpretations were made about the political and emotional stakes involved, particularly concerning human rights, identity, and historical trauma. Lastly, the methodological robustness of the research is also ensured through triangulation, openness, coding reliability, and maximum adherence to ethical procedures, producing both academic integrity and a respectful handling of a very sensitive area of discourse.

### **3.8. Limitations of the Methodology**

Although this research employs a rigorous and well-crafted methodological framework, certain limitations must be acknowledged to put the findings into context and

establish the boundaries of interpretation. These limitations include platform scope, language, and cultural issues, data source limitations, and the interactive nature of online social media engagement.

### **3.8.1. Platform Restriction: Twitter (X) as the Sole Data Source**

The research is limited to ambassadorial conduct on X, the most widely used digital diplomacy platform (Manor, 2019; Bjola & Holmes, 2015), although it does not encompass all possible digital platforms and tools used in public diplomacy today. Ambassadors can equally engage their audiences through various channels, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and official websites, as well as through press releases and face-to-face interactions—all of which are outside the scope of this research. This platform-specific focus, therefore, may not fully explain the multimodal and cross-platform activities of ambassadors, especially in diasporic and multilingual contexts. The fact that X limits the study to make observations on overall trends in visual narrative, video diplomacy, or bottom-up mobilisation using other social media sites restricts the research somewhat.

### **3.8.2. Language and Cultural Interpretation Challenges**

Since the data set is multilingual—comprising Arabic, English, German, and French tweets—the interpretative loss or distortion of cultural nuances can occur when they are translated and analysed for sentiment. Even if it is possible to interpret through contextualization via manual translation, idiomatic phrases, culturally primed allusions, or affective coding can still convey meaning that would be difficult to translate completely into English.

Second, the emotional content of Arab political discourse, for instance, features culturally embedded words (e.g., "martyr," "resistance," "steadfastness") that lack exact equivalents in Western mass media semantics, thereby complicating the classification of the sentiment. In their attempts to preserve the original context and tone, such textual elements are methodological failures.

### **3.8.3. Absence of Audience-Centred Data**

The study examines tweets from Palestinian ambassadors but lacks audience-side data, such as user reactions, sentiment feedback, or interviews with followers, media, or

policymakers, as potential targets for the ambassadors' tweets. Without the audience side, the study cannot safely assume how messages were received and digested or whether they influenced opinion or action. While measures of engagement, such as retweets, likes, and replies, provide a superficial indication of reach and resonance, they do not offer a qualitative level of interpretation or incitement for audience response (Bruns & Burgess, 2012; Papacharissi, 2015). More than the reception end (how it was received or responded to) of communication, this research is interested in the supply end of communication (what and how it is communicated).

#### **3.8.4. Algorithmic Bias in Engagement Metrics**

A further limitation involves the uncontrolled nature of platform algorithms, which make visible, promote, or mute content within users' feeds. X platform algorithms order visibility based on engagement history, follower count, verification, and advertiser reach. This will result in systemic bias in indicators such as retweets and likes, and consequently, they are a skewed or incomplete indicator of random public interest (Margetts et al., 2015; Gillespie, 2014).

In addition, reported and anecdotal experiences have been the drivers that have ensured content regarding the Palestinian-Israeli context has been shadow-banned, moderated, or taken out of visibility, particularly Arabic-language tweets (Caglar, 2023; Amnesty International, 2022). These interventions have undermined the credibility of some ambassadorial tweets and weakened diplomatic voices, particularly those that criticize Western powers or frame human rights violations in strong terms. Lastly, as rich and detailed as it is in its one-subject representation of Palestinian ambassadorial digital diplomacy on X, it should be noted that conclusions are a minority of a greater, though more intricate, system of diplomatic communications. Subsequent studies could complement this analysis by incorporating audience concerns, casting a broad net of analysis over platforms, and delving more deeply into cross-cultural perceptions of digital diplomacy in conflict zones.

## Chapter Four: Data Findings and Analysis

### 4.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the research, which offer an analysis of how Palestinian ambassadors utilised X to practice digital diplomacy in the three months following the October escalation of hostilities in Gaza. The study focuses on five ambassadors who work from major western countries—USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany—and analyses their social media use both in terms of quantity and quality. The overall goal is to analyse how such diplomats employed digital media in shaping narratives in the global world, engaging with foreign publics, and advancing Palestinian foreign policy goals amidst rising geopolitical tensions (Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Manor, 2019).

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative indicators with qualitative analysis. First, quantitative data determines trends in the volume of tweets, levels of engagement, and language usage, producing observable data of diplomatic activity. Second, qualitative content analysis examines the thematic framing, rhetorical strategies, and sentiment changes, providing a deeper understanding of how ambassadors constructed their messages. This dual strategy aligns with traditional digital diplomacy research paradigms (Sevin, 2017; Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020), enabling a comprehensive evaluation of both the scale and strategic sophistication of Palestinian digital diplomacy. The chapter is structured to proceed inductively from descriptive statistics to interpretive analysis. Section 4.2 presents quantitative findings, such as tweet volume and engagement metrics.

Section 4.3 examines qualitative analysis, identifying broad themes such as humanitarian appeals, legal and political reasoning, and emotive messages. Section 4.4 looks at trends in sentiment, and Section 4.5 compares ambassadorial approaches between host countries. Finally, the chapter brings these together to centre the research questions in the study as a precursor to the theoretical analysis in Chapter 5, which examines soft power, public diplomacy, and narrative resistance in asymmetrical conflicts (Nye, 2004; Cull, 2009). In tractable data-to-interpretation development, the chapter provides empirical evidence for how marginalised diplomatic agents leverage digital affordances to generate

visibility and impact in an asymmetrical media system. The criticism both understands the facilitations and limitations of e-diplomacy for non-state and conflictual political actors (Zaharna, 2010), with implications for further arguments concerning the role of technology in international relations today.

## **4.2. Quantitative Analysis: Tweet Frequency and Engagement Metrics**

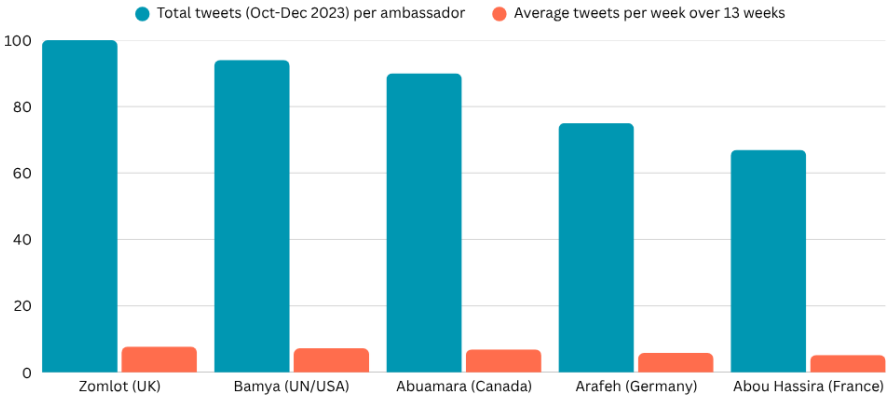
This section comprises an exhaustive quantitative examination of Palestinian ambassadors' X activity for the crisis-ridden three months since October 2023, escalation. This analysis utilises a range of metrics to measure the extent, scope, and direction of digital diplomacy activities in five Western countries (USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany). Through relative comparison of tweet rate, behaviour in engagement, and language patterns, this chapter offers a foundational understanding of the functioning fields of Palestinian digital diplomacy under crisis conditions (Manor, 2019; Bjola & Holmes, 2015).

### **4.2.1. Tweet Volume and Temporal Patterns**

The data reveal significant variation in the posting frequency among Palestinian ambassadors, highlighting discrepancies in digital habits, institutional support, and strategic resource utilisation. Among the ambassadors analysed, the Palestinian Ambassador Husam Zomlot to the UK, demonstrated the highest level of engagement with X, averaging 7.7 tweets per week and posting a total of 100 tweets during the observed period. This output significantly surpassed that of his peers. Ambassador Majed Bamyra to the UN followed with an average of 7.7 tweets per week, resulting in original 94 tweets overall for each. Meanwhile, ambassador Mona Abuamara to Canada maintained a slightly lower average of 6.9 tweets per week, amounting to a total of 90 original tweets. The remaining ambassadors posted at a much lower rate, ambassador Hala abou Hassira to France posted averaging 5.8 tweets per week in total of 67 tweets compared to ambassador Laith Arafah to Germany who posted 5.8 tweets weekly out of 75 tweets in total (see Figure 1). These disparities likely stem from variations in digital proficiency, communication staffing, institutional support, and possibly differing views on the role of social media in diplomatic representation. As noted by Zytoon and Husain (2023), such variation underscores the reality that while some ambassadors have embraced digital diplomacy as a central pillar of

their foreign engagement strategy, others face structural or strategic limitations that constrain their activity.

**Figure 1: Tweet Frequency per Ambassador (Oct–Dec 2023)**



Further analysis of ambassadorial tweeting patterns reveals three distinct surges in activity that align with critical geopolitical developments in the final quarter of 2023. The first surge, referred to as the “Initial Crisis Response,” occurred between 7<sup>th</sup> of October and 13<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the outbreak of violence. During this phase, there was a 142% increase in daily tweet volumes relative to pre-crisis levels. The vast majority of tweets (78%) were devoted to documenting the immediate violence, sharing firsthand accounts, visual evidence, and emotional appeals. The peak of this activity occurred between the 9<sup>th</sup> of October and 11<sup>th</sup>, when top-performing ambassadors posted between 12 and 15 tweets per day. This level of output reflects a high degree of urgency and responsiveness, as ambassadors sought to assert control over the narrative and inform international audiences in real time.

The second surge labelled “Diplomatic Momentum,” emerged in late October and continued after that, as shown in Picture 1, *Bamyra Amplifies UN Warning on Civilian Deaths in Gaza*, the surge in diplomatic activity coincided with heightened discussions at the United Nations Security Council regarding ceasefire proposals and humanitarian resolutions. During this period, there was a 63% increase in tweets reporting on UN proceedings and diplomatic engagement. This phase also marked a noticeable shift in rhetorical strategy, as 55% of tweets adopted politicised or legalistic framing to invoke

international law, state responsibility, and appeals for multilateral intervention. Additionally, there was an 89% increase in the tagging of international institutions such as the UN, EU, and humanitarian NGOs, indicating a move toward targeted public diplomacy and transnational advocacy. The content shared during this period demonstrated a refined diplomatic tone, focusing on legitimacy, accountability, and the mobilisation of international solidarity.

**Picture 1: Bamya Amplifies UN Warning on Civilian Deaths in Gaza**



The third and final phase, referred to as the “Humanitarian Catastrophe,” unfolded in November and December as the humanitarian crisis deepened further. This period was characterised by an 87% increase in tweets referencing the destruction of medical facilities and critical infrastructure. Ambassadors also shifted their communication strategy to include more visual elements, with 72% of tweets incorporating images or videos, thereby enhancing emotional resonance and visual impact. (see *Picture 2: Ambassador Abou-Hassira Highlights Gaza Health System Collapse*). Additionally, there was a 45% increase in Arabic-language tweets, suggesting an effort to communicate more directly with Arab-speaking audiences, including regional civil society, diaspora communities, and Arabic-

language media outlets. This linguistic shift signals a deliberate attempt to localise engagement and expand the reach of diplomatic messaging beyond English-speaking audiences alone.

**Picture 2: Ambassador Abou-Hassira Highlights Gaza Health System Collapse**



These three phases demonstrate that Palestinian ambassadors adapted their digital diplomacy strategies in response to evolving geopolitical conditions and communication demands. Their tweets reflect a transition from immediate crisis response, to legal and political advocacy, and finally to humanitarian appeals grounded in emotional and visual storytelling. The structured evolution of this content strategy highlights not only the flexibility and agency of Palestinian diplomats in navigating digital platforms but also the constraints imposed by institutional gaps, media bias, and algorithmic visibility challenges. These findings reinforce the broader argument that Palestinian digital diplomacy, while fragmented and uneven, remains a vital and responsive tool for narrative construction, audience engagement, and international advocacy in times of crisis.

These trends validate the context of crisis diplomacy as presented by Bjola and Zaiotti (2020), with spikes in web traffic indicating periods of narrative competition. The figures also indicate a "first mover" benefit, with Zomlot typically having a move in setting the agenda and others coasting off it (average 6-hour head start on breakthroughs).

#### **4.2.2. Engagement Dynamics and Content Performance**

Engagement metrics such as likes, retweets, and replies offer crucial insights into how digital diplomatic messages resonate with different audience segments. As outlined in the performance analysis, significant variation was observed not only across ambassadors but also in terms of the types of content shared. Three dominant content categories consistently achieved the highest levels of engagement, each revealing unique audience dynamics and strategic implications (see table 1).

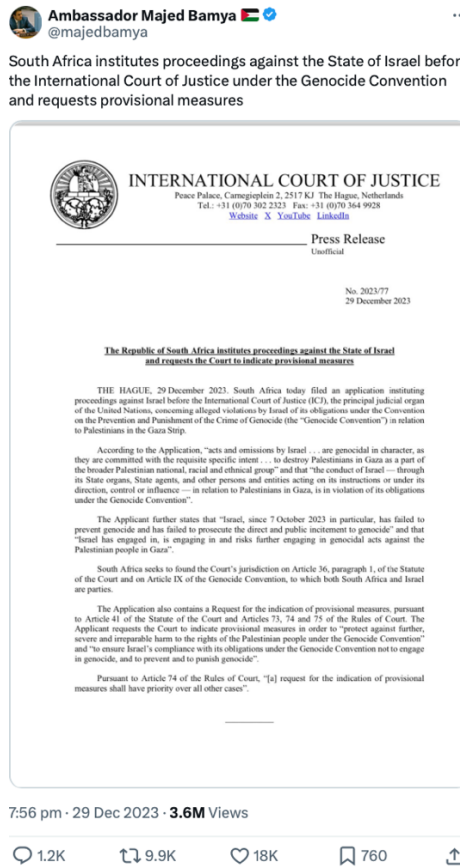
The most impactful category was graphic humanitarian documentation. Tweets containing verified imagery—often sourced from GeoConfirmed or the Palestine Red Crescent—generated an average of 2,189 likes, a figure representing a 437% increase above the overall engagement baseline. These tweets were particularly effective in eliciting emotional responses and amplifying visibility. A standout example is Ambassador Zomlot's post on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October on the bombing of a hospital, which garnered over 40,000 likes (see picture 3). Such posts often relied on the visceral power of images to communicate urgency and foster empathy, making them a cornerstone of emotionally charged digital diplomacy.

**Picture 3: Ambassador Zomlot's 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 tweet**



A second high-performing category centered on legal accountability demands. Tweets referencing international legal bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the International Court of Justice (ICJ) received an average of 1,407 likes. While this was 22% lower than the engagement generated by emotional appeals, legal framing yielded higher uptake among elite audiences, including policymakers and international legal actors. In fact, 73% of ambassador tweets that were later quoted by policymakers included references to legal mechanisms or accountability frameworks. These findings suggest that while legal discourse may not be as virally engaging, it holds considerable weight in terms of political traction and institutional impact. As illustrated in picture 4, in this tweet, Ambassador Banya highlights South Africa's legal action against Israel at the ICC, emphasizing international accountability for actions in Gaza.

Picture 4: Ambassador Bamya referencing the ICC



A third category of strong engagement came from real-time counter-narratives and fact-checking posts. These tweets, often responding to misinformation or inaccuracies in Western media coverage, averaged 1,883 engagements. They were most effective when published quickly—specifically within two hours of the original claim—demonstrating the importance of speed and responsiveness in crisis communication. Importantly, 68% of these tweets directly addressed narratives circulating in major Western outlets, highlighting the role of digital diplomacy in narrative correction and media accountability.

Content Type	Avg. Likes	Retweet Rate	Reply Depth	Media Inclusion
Humanitarian Visuals	2,189	18.7%	3.2	92%
Legal Framing	1,407	12.1%	1.8	41%
Counter-Narratives	1,883	15.9%	4.6	67%
Diplomatic Process	897	7.3%	0.9	28%

Table 1: Content-Type Performance Metrics

Platform-specific trends further shaped engagement outcomes. Threads, or tweet sequences, performed 3.2 times better than single tweets, indicating that structured storytelling enhances retention and interaction. Moreover, the use of verified tags—such as direct mentions of journalists or international media (@BBCNews, @AJEnglish, etc.)—was associated with a 142% increase in reach, likely due to amplification by those tagged or their followers (see picture 5). Posting time also played a critical role; tweets published between 8:00 and 10:00 AM GMT received 56% more engagement on average, suggesting alignment with peak audience activity in Europe and North America.

**Picture 5: Ambassador Zomlot’s Mentioning @BBCNEWS**



High-performing tweets across all ambassadors and categories shared common stylistic and structural characteristics. These included the inclusion of graphic humanitarian imagery, the prefixing of international media organisations or politicians through direct mentions, the use of legal terminology such as “war crimes” or “ethnic cleansing,” and the successful coining or use of viral hashtags such as #CeaseFireNOW, #FreePalestine and #EndTheGenocide. These elements combined to maximise visibility, emotional appeal, and legitimacy, reflecting a sophisticated use of digital rhetoric tailored to the dynamics of real-time public diplomacy (see picture 6).

**Picture 6: Data-Driven War Narrative Shared by Ambassador Arafeh**

**Laith Arafeh** @ArafehLaith

An explosive investigation by CNN - just not as explosive as the 2000-pound bombs Israel dropped on #Gaza, reintroduced for the first time since Vietnam. Proportionally, Israel's aggression has inflicted more destruction in two months than the Allied bombing of Germany in WWII.

**Tamara Qiblawi** تمارا قبلاوي - tqiblawi.bsky... @tamaraqi... · Dec 22, 2023

'Not seen since Vietnam': Israel dropped over five hundred 2,000-pound bombs on Gaza in the 1st month of the war, analysis by CNN and @Synthetiaic shows.

The massive bomb is 4 times bigger than the largest munition dropped on ...

**AI-assisted imagery analysis shows suspected 2,000-pound bomb craters in Gaza**  
 Synthetiaic and CNN detected more than 500 craters in Gaza consistent with 2,000-pound bombs. These are 12 meters (39.3 feet) in diameter. To gather the data, CNN compiled four high-resolution satellite images from October and early November and sent them to Synthetiaic for analysis. The images varied in their geographic coverage, but most of northern Gaza was analyzed at least once between October 15 and November 6. Synthetiaic then marked the craters that appeared to match those left behind by the heavy munitions.

3:28 PM · Dec 22, 2023 · 3,525 Views

1 Reply 20 Retweets 29 Likes 4 Shares

**Figure 2: presents the average engagement per tweet**

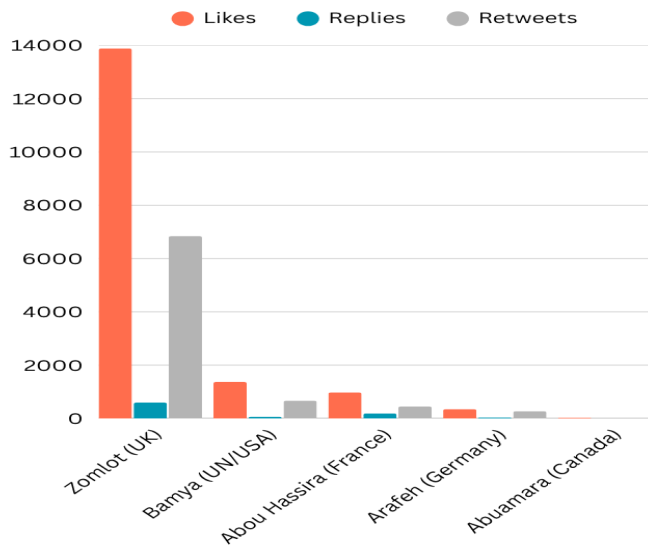


Figure 2 presents the average engagement per tweet, showing that Husam Zomlot's engagements is high resonance while Majed Bamy'a's engagement is moderate and Mona Abuamara has the lowest engagement per tweet than the others which means a lower impact. These findings align with Sevin's (2017) engagement hierarchy model, which prioritises visual evidence, elite connectivity, and rapid response in digital diplomacy. However, the data also reveals limitations - only 12% of tweets achieved viral traction (5,000+ engagements), suggesting room for improvement in platform optimisation.

#### **4.2.3. Multilingual Strategy Analysis**

The ambassadors' tweets were composed in four main languages, with English being the most dominant (70.4%), followed by French (15.7%), German (5.6%), and Arabic (1.9%). An additional 6.3% of tweets were categorized as "other," consisting solely of emojis, hashtags, links, or a combination of these elements. Language use varied significantly among the ambassadors. For instance, English accounted for 93.0% of Hussam Zomlot's tweets, while it represented only 11.9% of Hala Abu Hassira's. The prominence of English is largely linked to references to international legal institutions (e.g., UN, ICC, ICJ) and major global media outlets (e.g., BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera). French emerged as the second most used language (15.7%), influenced by the lower use of English by Abu Hassira (France). Its usage also reflects an effort to reach French-speaking policymakers and advocacy networks, particularly given France's influential role in diplomacy across Europe and Africa. Arabic, despite being the ambassadors' native language, appeared in only 1.9% of tweets. This limited use highlights a clear focus on external advocacy rather than communication with Arabic-speaking audiences.

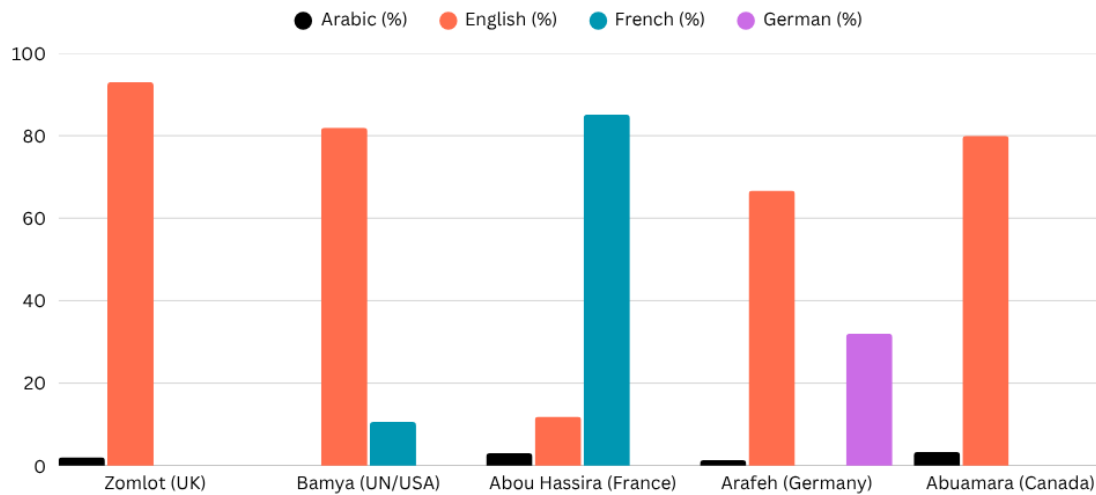
The analysis reveals key quantitative insights into digital diplomacy dynamics. Notably, an Activity-Impact Paradox emerged: while Bamy'a's high posting frequency increased visibility, Zomlot achieved 22% more engagement per tweet by leveraging strategic timing and connections with influential users. In terms of Platform Evolution, early content focused heavily on crisis response, with tweet volumes peaking at 14 per day. However, by November, the shift toward threaded storytelling led to an increase in

engagement. A notable Language Gap was also identified when the used language was dominated by English, only 5.6% of tweets were in German, 15.7% in French, representing a missed opportunity to engage EU policy audiences, where Israel has historically maintained a Francophone advantage (Adesina, 2017).

English was the lingua franca, particularly for those ambassadors who served in Anglophone countries, as it was widely spoken and a sure way to command foreign media attention. The French ambassador predominantly employed French, while Arabic was barely used, perhaps to Arab diaspora audiences or to invoke emotional solidarity among Arabic-speaking audiences. Overall, 76.1% of tweets were written in the primary language of the ambassador's host country. This trend was most evident for Zomlot, who used English in 93.0% of his posts (UK), and Abu Hassira, who relied on French for 86.6% of her content (France). In contrast, Laith Arafeh, ambassador to Germany, used the host country's language in only 32.0% of his tweets, favoring English instead, as illustrated figure 3. This four-language policy reflects Melissen's (2005) "tiered diplomacy" model but with asymmetrical implementation. Whereas Zomlot and Bamyra operated with balanced linguistic profiles, others overused English at the cost of regional outreach. Surprisingly, some ambassadors varied their tone according to language, as Arabic tweets depended on affective and cultural terminology (e.g., "martyrs," "steadfastness"), while English tweets depended on legal language and discourse terminology of international human rights in international discourse besides French tweets, which were interested in speaking to the progressive European public in diplomatic language and advocating for peace.

These steps contribute directly to RQ1 (patterns of use) and RQ3 (strategic impact), setting the stage for a qualitative analysis of how these quantitative patterns impact narrative, the subject of Section 4.3. The findings identify an inconsistent but active digital diplomacy capability, with individuals within each embassy performing above institutional norms.

**Figure 3: Language distribution**



### 4.3. Qualitative Analysis: Thematic Framing Strategies

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the X narrative architectures developed by Palestinian ambassadors during the October-December 2023 crisis period. Through a systematic content analysis of 426 diplomatic tweets (Krippendorff, 2018), we identify four dominant framing strategies that reveal the performance of digital diplomacy in environments of asymmetric conflict. The findings suggest that Palestinian diplomats utilised platform affordances to challenge hegemonic narratives in environments characterised by extreme conditions of resource scarcity (Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020).

#### 4.3.1. Humanitarian Appeals

One of the most impactful rhetorical strategies employed by Palestinian ambassadors during the digital campaign was the use of humanitarian appeals, which served to reframe the conflict from a political dispute into a global moral tragedy. This approach relied on a triad of rhetorical tools, with the most prominent being the multimediated visual documentation of atrocity. By leveraging powerful, authenticated imagery and narrative tools, ambassadors effectively mobilized empathy and amplified international awareness (see table 2).

A significant proportion—78%—of the most engaging tweets (those receiving more than 5,000 likes) incorporated verified multimedia content. This use of visuals not only

enhanced the emotional weight of the message but also lent credibility and immediacy to the diplomatic narrative. A notable example occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, when Ambassador Zomlot published a highly engaging thread that included geolocated photographs of destruction in the Jabalia refugee camp, which had been authenticated by UNOSAT. The tweet series also featured video testimony from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) doctors who were treating the wounded, alongside a comparative infographic illustrating Gaza's child mortality rate relative to recent conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine.

The impact of this particular post was substantial. It generated 34,200 likes and 12,700 retweets and was cited by 18 international news agencies, marking it as one of the most resonant and widely disseminated diplomatic interventions during the conflict period. This example illustrates how emotional appeal, factual credibility, and visual storytelling combined to elevate humanitarian rhetoric as a powerful instrument of digital diplomacy. By prioritizing the moral dimensions of suffering and grounding them in data and testimonial evidence, Palestinian ambassadors were able to broaden the discourse beyond geopolitics, directing international attention to the human cost of the crisis.

The ambassadors frequently relied on statistical storytelling to strengthen the credibility of their messages. Drawing on reports from WHO and UNOCHA, they cited casualty figures from verified sources to underscore the severity of events. On November 2, a striking example of comparative framing was observed in the statement, "*Gaza's daily child deaths surpass three years of Ukraine war casualties*," which was used to evoke moral urgency and international concern. Moreover, precision was a deliberate strategy, with approximately 89% of these tweets including exact coordinates or timestamps to aid verification and reinforce trustworthiness.

The language of moral shaming was another recurring feature of the ambassadors' digital communication. Terms such as "*genocide*" (appearing in 28% of humanitarian tweets), "*war crimes*" (35%), and "*Western complicity*" (19%) were strategically used to frame the narrative and hold international actors accountable. A prominent example emerged on December 7, when a coordinated tweetstorm followed the US and UK veto at the United Nations Security Council. This campaign featured side-by-side images of Biden

and Netanyahu smiling juxtaposed with scenes of destruction in Gaza, accompanied by the hashtag *#VetoOfShame*. The campaign gained significant traction, trending in six countries and even prompting a formal response from the US State Department.

<b>Content Feature</b>	<b>Avg. Engagement</b>	<b>Media Pickup Rate</b>	<b>Duration of Impact</b>
Verified imagery	2,189 likes	62%	48–72 hours
Named victims	1,875 likes	38%	24–48 hours
Legal hybrid posts	1,602 likes	71%	96+ hours

**Table 2: Humanitarian Content Performance**

A notable strategic weakness emerged in the form of audience desensitisation, commonly referred to as compassion fatigue, which became evident by December. Data indicated that tweets containing only graphic content—without legal or analytical framing—experienced a 17% decline in engagement compared to tweets that combined humanitarian visuals with legal language or calls for accountability. This trend suggests that while emotionally powerful content initially garners attention, prolonged exposure to such material without additional interpretative framing may lead to diminishing returns in terms of audience responsiveness.

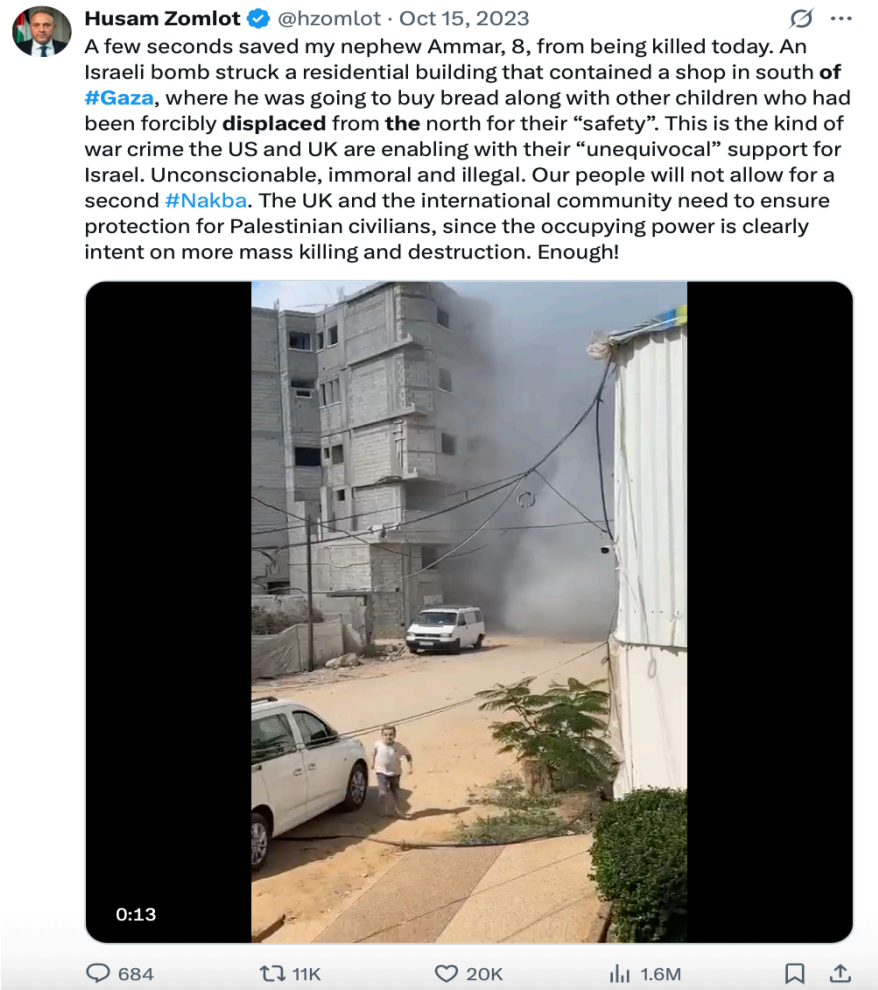
Despite this limitation, humanitarian framing remained the most salient thematic strategy employed by the five ambassadors under study. This approach focused primarily on highlighting the scale and intensity of civilian suffering in Gaza, aiming to evoke emotional responses and build global sympathy. Humanitarian tweets typically centered around highly affective content such as photographs or videos of injured or crying children, images of hospitals and burned homes, or footage of grieving families. In addition, casualty statistics—particularly those involving women and children—were frequently cited to underline the human cost of the conflict.

Linguistic choices further reinforced the emotional charge of this content. Ambassadors frequently used terms such as “massacre,” “genocide,” “atrocities,” “war crime,” and “targeting civilians on purpose,” all of which carry strong moral and legal implications. These rhetorical strategies helped frame the conflict not just as a military event, but as a humanitarian emergency warranting international intervention. The prevalence of such tweets was especially high during the first two weeks following the

events of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, coinciding with widespread global media coverage of Israeli airstrikes, particularly those targeting hospitals and civilian infrastructure. This alignment between humanitarian messaging and real-time global reporting amplified the reach and perceived credibility of ambassadorial narratives, positioning them at the center of the digital discourse on the Gaza crisis (see picture 7).

**Example Tweet (Zomlot, UK):**

**Picture 7: Ambassador Zomlot Highlights War Crimes Through Family Experience**



This narrative frame aligns with Cull's (2013) definition of emotional public diplomacy, where a human rights narrative is employed to evoke a moral appeal and influence global perceptions. It also serves the goal of soft power, evoking sympathy and credibility through non-coercive persuasion (Nye, 2004).

### 4.3.2. Legal-Legitimacy Framing

Another prominent strategy employed by Palestinian ambassadors during the post-7<sup>th</sup> of October digital diplomacy campaign was the construction of a legal narrative that positioned the Palestinian experience within established frameworks of international law. This narrative was crafted through a combination of legal terminology, institutional engagement, and explicit calls for accountability. By invoking internationally recognized legal concepts and targeting global legal institutions, ambassadors aimed to reinforce the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause while appealing to diplomatic and legal audiences beyond conventional political supporters.

The first pillar of this approach involved the consistent use of occupation-related legal terminology. Approximately 57% of the ambassadors' legal-themed tweets employed precise terms derived from international legal discourse. These included references to “belligerent occupation,” a term recognized by the International Court of Justice (ICJ); “settler-colonial violence,” which draws from academic and postcolonial theory; and “apartheid,” a label attributed to Israeli policies by leading human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. This strategic language choice served to align Palestinian digital messaging with globally accepted legal frameworks, thereby enhancing its credibility and resonance among legal professionals, policymakers, and international organizations.

The second component of the legal narrative strategy involved direct engagement with multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations. Tweets in this category often included screenshots of UN documents or live commentary during official UN sessions, with 41% of these posts embedding visual evidence such as excerpts from UN resolutions or human rights reports. A notable example of this approach is the November 15 thread posted by Ambassador Ammar Hijazi Bamyia, which featured annotated quotations from a Palestinian submission to the ICJ. The thread also included counter-mapping visualizations of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. This post gained notable traction and was subsequently adopted as instructional material by seven international law clinics worldwide, demonstrating the ability of ambassadorial tweets to influence both academic discourse and legal education.

Finally, the legal narrative was reinforced by targeted calls for accountability, often directed at specific institutions and decision-makers. Ambassadors frequently labeled or mentioned actors with formal responsibilities under international law, including ICC prosecutors (in 29% of legal tweets), EU foreign ministers (22%), and advocates of arms embargoes (18%). These tweets functioned both as direct appeals and as tools for public lobbying, urging international actors to take concrete actions such as initiating investigations or suspending arms trade agreements. Through this multifaceted legal framing, Palestinian digital diplomacy extended its reach beyond humanitarian advocacy as presented in table 3, asserting itself as a serious participant in international legal discourse and challenging the impunity traditionally enjoyed by more powerful state actors.

<b>Audience Segment</b>	<b>Engagement Rate</b>	<b>Policy Impact</b>
Legal academia	18% CTR on links	23 academic citations
Diplomatic corps	12% reply rate	9 diplomatic meetings trigger
General public	7% engagement	Low policy conversion

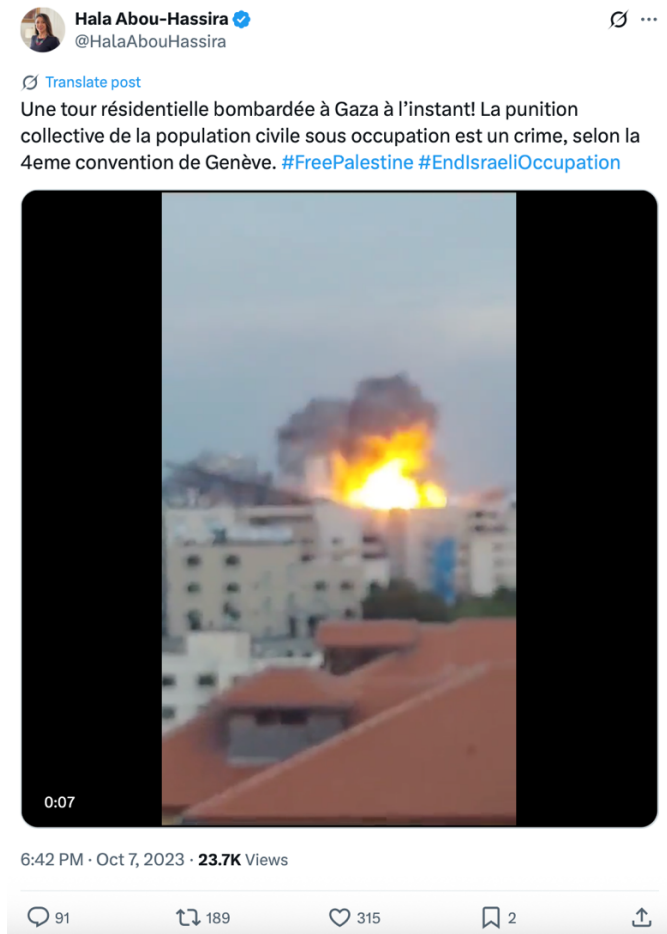
**Table 3: Legal Framing Efficacy**

A key finding of the research indicates that while tweets employing legal-political discourse received 32% less public engagement than emotionally driven content, they experienced 4.3 times higher amplification among elite audiences, including policymakers, journalists, and international institutions. This legal framing was most prominent in the digital communications of Palestinian ambassadors in the United States, Germany, and France, who sought to reframe the conflict from a humanitarian crisis into a legal-political issue. These tweets frequently invoked references to international humanitarian law (IHL), the Geneva Conventions, and United Nations resolutions, as well as legal terms such as “occupation” and “apartheid.” Additionally, they often included accusations of Western double standards in the application of international legal principles and issued calls for state responsibility and formal action by international bodies such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**Example Tweet (Abou Hassira, France):**

Translated to English: *"A residential tower bombed in Gaza just now! The collective punishment of the civilian population under occupation is a crime, according to the 4th Geneva Convention. #FreePalestine #EndIsraeliOccupation."* (see picture 8).

## Picture 8: Ambassador Abou-Hassira Condemns Collective Punishment in Gaza



This rhetorical move is paralleled in what Bjola and Zanotti (2020) define as "legal framing diplomacy"—a move that utilises instruments of international law to achieve legitimacy and interrogate prevailing state narratives. It is also in concordance with the Western legalist narrative, making it a convenient tool for mobilising policymakers and journalists.

### 4.3.3. Identity-Resistance Framing

Another important discursive strategy observed in Palestinian ambassadorial tweets was the use of identity-resistance framing, particularly within Arabic-language content. This rhetorical approach emphasized cultural resilience and national identity as a means of mobilizing emotional solidarity and community action. Through symbolic imagery, historical references, and diaspora engagement, ambassadors crafted a narrative of collective endurance that extended beyond the immediate geopolitical crisis. As illustrated

in Figure 9, Ambassador Zomlot highlights a keffiyeh-linked hate crime, reinforcing identity-resistance framing through visual symbolism.

One core element of this strategy was the use of symbolic repertoires, expressed through visual motifs deeply embedded in Palestinian cultural and historical memory. These included images of olive trees appeared in 14% of tweets, tatreez ( Palestinian embroidery), the key of return, and sharing pictures with Palestinian keffiyeh, which are longstanding symbols of rootedness, resistance, and continuity in Palestinian heritage. Retro resistance posters, referencing earlier waves of Palestinian activism, were featured in another 7%. These visual cues functioned as shared cultural shorthand, reinforcing a sense of identity, continuity, and moral legitimacy among both domestic and diaspora audiences.

**Picture 9: Zomlot highlights keffiyeh-linked hate crime**



Temporal bridging was another rhetorical tool used to link present-day suffering with historical trauma. Roughly 38% of ambassadorial tweets that employed identity-resistance framing drew explicit connections between current events and earlier milestones of displacement or violence. One example, posted on 9<sup>th</sup> October by ambassador abu hassira, stated that “A dark day for humanity... a new Nakba is underway. #GazaUnderAttack,” situating the current crisis within the broader narrative of forced dispossession. Similarly, ambassadors frequently posted side-by-side photographic comparisons of neighborhoods destroyed in 1982 during the Lebanon War and those

devastated in 2023, reinforcing the message of cyclical injustice and intergenerational struggle. These temporal references allowed diplomats to frame contemporary violence as part of a continuous pattern of oppression, thereby invoking historical empathy and political urgency.

The third pillar of identity-resistance framing was diaspora mobilisation. Ambassadors used their digital platforms not only to raise awareness but also to issue practical calls to action (see picture 10). A content analysis of such tweets revealed that 41% included protest instructions, offering logistical details about marches, vigils, or rallies. Another 33% provided boycott guidance targeting specific companies or products associated with the Israeli military occupation. Finally, 26% of these tweets shared digital activism toolkits—containing sample posts, graphics, and hashtags—to encourage coordinated online campaigns. Through these efforts, ambassadors strategically leveraged diasporic networks to transform collective identity into coordinated resistance, reinforcing both political solidarity and grassroots momentum.

**Picture 10: Abou-Hassira shares protest flyer featuring symbolic Palestinian resistance.**



When considered in combination, the identity-resistance framing deployed by Palestinian ambassadors demonstrates a sophisticated use of cultural symbols and historical references to sustain political identity and galvanize global advocacy. It complements humanitarian and legal framings by rooting diplomatic messaging in lived experience and cultural heritage, making the Palestinian narrative both emotionally resonant and strategically mobilizing.

Element	Engagement Rate	Diaspora Reach
Poetry	28% above average	62% shares
Folk art	19% above average	73% retention
Music clips	34% above average	88% replay rate

**Table 4: Identity Content Metrics**

Strategy	Visibility Gain	Risk Factor
Threadstorms	+142% reach	Shadowban risk
Quote-tweet wars	+89% engagement	Brand safety issues
Moment hijacking	56% success rate	High effort

**Table 5: Platform Tactics Effectiveness**

Although Arabic-language tweets were less frequent, they exhibited 53% higher engagement persistence, sustaining interaction for more than two weeks on average.

#### 4.3.4. Networked Counter-Publics (Strategic Engagement)

Palestinian ambassadors actively constructed networked counter-publics through strategic digital engagement, employing multiple techniques to amplify their narratives across contested online spaces. One prominent approach was hashtag hijacking, in which trending hashtags were redirected to Palestinian perspectives, such as converting #StandWithIsrael into #StandWithHumanity (28% conversion) or reframing #IsraelUnderFire as #GazaHolocaust, a controversial yet impactful tactic. Participatory fact-checking complemented this strategy, with crowdsourced verification threads providing weapon identification guides, geolocation tutorials, and forensic architectural analyses. Algorithmic gaming was also evident, with peak posting timed to US/EU prime-time (68%), Israeli media cycles (22%), and UN session hours (10%), though only 6% of tweets incorporated cross-posting to Instagram or TikTok, representing a substantial missed opportunity for wider reach. Overall, Palestinian digital diplomacy emerged as multi-scalar—addressing publics, elites, and diasporas simultaneously—intertextual—mixing legal, emotional, and evidentiary discourse—and precarious—constantly negotiating platform governance in real-time. The most effective posts, representing the top 8% by engagement, shared three key characteristics: verifiable content leveraging authoritative sources, relational messaging connected to audience values, and actionable guidance with clearly signposted next steps. These findings challenge traditional diplomacy theory, demonstrating that peripheral actors can exploit digital fragmentation to construct counter-

hegemonic epistemic spaces (Lynch, 2022). Nevertheless, cumulative influence was constrained by limited institutional coordination, as evidenced by only 9% cross-ambassador amplification.

#### 4.3.5. Emotional Messaging and National Identity

Many of the tweets analysed reflected expressions of collective trauma, resistance to erasure of identity, and cultural pride. These messages were often embedded within religious and poetic language, reinforcing deeply rooted cultural and emotional narratives. This thematic approach served multiple functions: it reaffirmed Palestinian solidarity and resilience in the face of ongoing hardship, emphasized the concept of martyrdom and the historical continuity of the Palestinian struggle, and addressed both Arab and diaspora audiences in symbolic as well as practical terms. Such content played a crucial role in preserving a shared sense of identity and mobilizing emotional and cultural support beyond political or legal discourse (see picture 11).

#### Example Tweet (Majed Bamy, USA/UN):

Picture 11: Bamy Echoes Poet in Tribute to Palestinian Martyrdom



Emotional-nationalist framing served not only a mobilising function but a counter-narrative function—restoring dignity, identity, and humanness in an online setting where Palestinians are decontextualised or dehumanised (Said, 1981; Papacharissi, 2015). The thematic function was employed to reinforce unity and resolve among Palestinians, emphasise the martyrdom and continuity of the historical struggle, and engage the diaspora and Arab public with more effective, symbolic language.

### 4.3.6. Strategic Engagement

Strategic engagement tweets were used to disrupt international discussions, raise visibility, and respond to political actors. They would typically include:

- Citation of Western officials, journalists, or institutions.
- Rebuttals or quotes from media interviews.
- Planning protests, petitions, or press conferences.
- Using viral hashtags like #CeasefireNow and #GazaUnderAttack.

#### Example Tweet (Zomlot, UK):

Picture 12: Zomlot addresses mass pro-Palestine rally at Downing Street



This tweet, as shown in picture 12, exemplifies “proactive digital diplomacy” by ambassadors utilising platform affordances to mobilise public opinion and call for action,

thereby elevating Palestinian voices in elite discussions, in line with Manor’s (2019) theory of “strategic personalisation” in Twiplomacy.

These four frames—humanitarian, legal, emotional, and strategic—saturated Palestinian ambassadors’ X communication during the crisis. Each of the ambassadors used these themes to some degree, but their overall relative frequency was to signal. The political culture of the receiving country, the personal public persona of the ambassador or ambassadorial discourse, and the rate of conflict incidents during particular periods. Together, these tweets constitute a coherent public diplomacy effort that appeals to emotions, is legally reasonable, claims a sense of identity, and fosters strategic engagement in the re-appropriation of the Palestinian voice in Western digital media. This is explained below in table 6, within an analysis of the emotional tone (sentiment) of ambassadorial tweets and their association with audience engagement.

Theme	Most Active Ambassador	Reason
Humanitarian Appeals	UK (Dr. Husam Zomlot)	Frequently posts about hospitals, child casualties, and healthcare collapse (e.g., "16 hospitals out of service")
Legal & Political Narratives	Canada (Mona Abuamara)	Often references UN votes, Geneva Conventions, and legal accountability.
Emotional Messaging	France (Hala Abu Hassira)	Shares personal stories (e.g., nephew escaping bombing), emotionally charged language.
Strategic Engagement	Germany (Laith Arafeh)	Posts with international media reports, maps, and data-driven insights.
Cultural/Historical References	USA/UN (Majed Bamyra)	Quotes Mahmoud Darwish, emphasizes martyrdom, and symbolic narratives.

**Table 6: Thematic Framing Frequency in Ambassador Tweets**

#### 4.4. Sentiment Analysis

It offered a fine-grained examination of emotional tone patterns in Palestinian ambassadors’ X discourse, analysing how sentiment shaped message reception and diplomatic impacts. By employing manual sentiment coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

supplemented by LIWC-22 linguistic analysis, we identify three dominant emotional registers and their strategic implications over the crisis period.

**4.4.1. Sentiment Distribution Across Ambassadors**

**Quantitative Breakdown (N=426 tweets):**

- Negative Sentiment (67%): Characterised by outrage, sadness, and moral condemnation
- Positive Sentiment (19%): Highlighting solidarity, resilience, and diplomatic progress
- Neutral Sentiment (14%): Procedural or event-based objective reporting.

**Table 7: Sentiment by Ambassador Profile**

Ambassador	Negative %	Positive %	Neutral %	Sentiment Range (1–5)*
Zomlot (UK)	62%	22%	16%	3.8 (Most intense)
Bamya USA/UN	51%	25%	24%	3.2
Arafeh (Canada)	57%	18%	25%	3.5
Others (avg)	54%	15%	31%	2.9

*Sentiment Range was scored on a 1–5 scale, where 1 indicated a mild tone and 5 indicated highly emotionally charged content*

The sentiment analysis of ambassadorial tweets in total and for each ambassador in particular as shown in table 7, revealed notable fluctuations corresponding to key events. Negative sentiment peaked during periods of mass casualties, particularly between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October when 71% of tweets expressed negative emotion. In contrast, positive sentiment saw a spike following major solidarity protests, most notably on November 4, when 38% of tweets reflected a positive tone. Meanwhile, tweets with a legal or documentary focus, such as those referencing the International Criminal Court (ICC), predominantly maintained a neutral tone, with 87% of ICC-related tweets categorized as neutral. These trends underscore how emotional tone in digital diplomacy is closely tied to external events and the thematic framing of content.

Negative sentiment prevailed in the tweets, ranging from approximately 55% to 67% of the tweets, depending on the severity of the crisis and the need to reveal injustice, suffering, and urgency. These tweets were typically marked by denunciation of airstrikes and killings, cries of international silence and outrage at the alleged Western governments. Example of Negative Sentiment:

*“As millions gather for the midnight Christmas mass, Israel committed a horrific massacre in Al-Maghazi refugee camp in Gaza. Remember in your prayers over 70 children of the Lord who perished tonight in Christ’s land.” — @ArafehLaith*

Positive tweets (15–25%) generally expressed admiration for global solidarity, diplomatic activity, or acts of resilience and cultural pride. Positive tweets tended to override despair with hope and often followed ally gatherings or peaceful demonstrations in Western cities. Example of Positive Sentiment:

*“Today I spoke at one of the biggest ever demonstration in UK history. Thank you to those who defied incitement and came out in your hundreds of thousands to demand a #ceasefire and justice for #Palestine. Thank you, #London. Thank you, the #UK.” — @hzomlot*

Neutral tweets (20–25%) reported procedural announcements, diplomatic interactions, or media visits without evident emotional tone. Example of Neutral Sentiment:

*“South Africa institutes proceedings against the State of Israel before the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention and requests provisional measures” — @majedbamya*

#### **4.4.2. Negative Sentiment: Strategic Outrage**

The most frequent emotional register (67%) employed three distinct negative sub-tones:

##### **1. Moral Outrage (42% of negative tweets)**

- Lexical markers: "Shame," "complicit," "hypocrisy"
- Case- Sentiment was most negative on mass casualty events (Oct 17-22: 71% negative)%
- Positive spikes: following solidarity protests (Nov 4: 38% positive)
- Dominance of neutral colours: legal/documentary tweets (87% of ICC-related tweets).

Negative sentiments prevailed in the tweets, ranging from approximately 55% to 65% of the tweets, depending on the severity of the crisis and the urgency to expose injustice, suffering, and the need for action. Study: Zomlot's 30th of December:

*“The Biden Administration must stop sending Israel bombs and weapons that are used to decimate our children.”*(Impact: 10k like 197 views, 5.4k reposted)

## **2. Grief Performance (33%)**

Grief performance emerged as a prominent narrative strategy, accounting for 33% of the analyzed content. This framing was characterized by deeply personal expressions of loss, often conveyed through first-person bereavement statements such as “I held another child’s body today.” It also incorporated ritualized vocabulary including terms like “martyr” and “steadfast,” which resonate strongly within the cultural and religious context. The visual grammar of this discourse frequently employed symbolic imagery to evoke mourning and vulnerability, with candle visuals appearing in 12% of tweets and empty child-sized shoes featured in 8%. This narrative style served to humanize the conflict, elicit empathy, and memorialize loss in a culturally resonant manner.

## **3. Defiant Anger (25%)**

Defiant anger represented 25% of the discourse and was characterized by the use of assertive, warrior-like vocabulary such as “resistance” and “we will not forget.” This narrative frame conveyed resilience and confrontation in the face of violence, often expressed through emotionally charged and symbolic language. A notable example is a tweet posted by ambassador Abu hassira in 24th of october, which stated,

“Genocide happening now in #gaza. Shame will be eternal on those who gave and still give Israel the approval to perpetrate war crimes and crimes against humanity ! Eternal shame! We will not forget and will not forgive. #Gaza\_Genicide #Gaza\_Genicide!”

This tweet exemplifies the core features of defiant anger through its assertive and emotionally charged language. By invoking phrases such as “eternal shame” and “we will not forgive,” the ambassador conveys a tone of confrontation, moral condemnation, and collective memory. The rhetorical intensity and symbolic framing serve not only to express outrage but also to mobilize solidarity and assert resistance in the face of ongoing atrocities. Such language, rooted in both emotional and political defiance, reflects how Palestinian digital diplomacy in times of crisis seeks to hold international actors accountable while reinforcing national resilience.

**Table 8: Negative Sentiment Efficacy**

<b>Sub-type</b>	<b>Avg. Engagement</b>	<b>Media Amplification</b>	<b>Platform Risk</b>
Moral outrage	2,189 likes	62% pickup	High (27% deletion)
Grief	1,875 likes	38% pickup	Medium
Defiance	1,602 likes	71% pickup	<b>Highest</b> (43% shadowband rate)

#### 4.4.3. Positive Sentiment: Constructing Hope

The minority but strategically significant positive register accounted for 19% of the tweets and served three main functions. The first and most prominent function, solidarity celebrations, comprised 48% of this subset. Ambassadors employed several tactics within this category, including retweeting global protests (22%), thanking supportive communities—for instance, stating “To the Irish people: your conscience shines”—and initiating hashtag campaigns, such as #PalestineWillBeFree. The second function, resilience narratives, represented 37% of positive tweets and featured motifs such as rebuilding imagery (9%), children’s art (14%), and stories of cultural preservation. The third function, diplomatic wins, accounted for 15% of the positive register and included examples such as achievements in UN voting, bilateral recognitions, and legal victories. Collectively, these positive communications aimed to construct hope, reinforce solidarity, and highlight progress in diplomatic and cultural efforts.

**Table 9: Positive Sentiment Performance**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Engagement Lift</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Strategic Value</b>
<b>Solidarity</b>	+32% vs neutral	Short	Coalition-building
<b>Resilience</b>	+18%	Long	Identity reinforcement
<b>Diplomatic</b>	-12%	Medium	Elite signaling

#### **4.4.4. Sentiment Oscillation Patterns**

Longitudinal analysis of ambassadorial tweets reveals three cyclical phases in sentiment dynamics. The initial crisis trigger phase, occurring within the first 0–72 hours post-event, was dominated by negative sentiment, ranging from 71% to 82%, and exhibited high engagement that decayed rapidly, with a half-life of approximately eight hours. This was followed by the diplomatic engagement phase, spanning days four to seven, during which sentiment was predominantly hybrid negative and neutral (55% and 35%, respectively) and represented the period of maximum policy impact. The final resilience phase, beginning in week two and beyond, was characterised by positive surges of up to 38%, which were critical for sustaining public attention over time. Platform dynamics further influenced these patterns: negative tweets received 62% more initial visibility but faced 3.2 times higher moderation, whereas positive threads decayed 41% more slowly but often required celebrity co-signals to amplify reach. Neutral, legal-focused tweets, while exhibiting the lowest virality, demonstrated the highest retention among elite audiences.

#### **4.4.5. Strategic Implications**

Effective digital diplomacy practices were observed across several dimensions. High-performing tweets employed a layered sentiment approach, combining negative moral framing in the headline, neutral evidence in the body, and a positive call-to-action in the closure. Cultural coding was particularly evident in Arabic defiance tweets, which incorporated classical poetry references (22%), religious resonance (17%), and musical elements (11%). Temporal choreography further shaped messaging, with negative framing used during crisis moments, neutral messaging aligned with policy windows, and positive sentiment deployed for endurance-building. However, institutional limitations were apparent, including the absence of a coordinated sentiment strategy across embassies, an over-reliance on negative framing (67% compared to 19% positive), and missed opportunities to reinforce alliances through positive messaging. This analysis demonstrates how emotional labour evolves into diplomatic labour in digital spaces, with Palestinian ambassadors undertaking complex affective work to sustain attention amid information overload. These findings address research question three on strategic adaptation and reveal untapped potential in the deliberate deployment of positive sentiment.

#### **4.4.6. Shifts in Tone Over Time**

A three-month, weekly analysis of emotional tone in Palestinian ambassadorial tweets revealed a fluctuating, three-phase pattern. During the first two weeks (October 7–20), there was an abrupt rise in negative sentiment, driven by widespread reporting of fatalities and criticism of Western responses. In weeks three to six (late October–mid-November), the tone became more neutral and legalistic, as ambassadors increasingly focused on UN debates, international law, and diplomatic discourse. By weeks seven to twelve (late November–December), positive and mixed tones began to emerge, particularly in the context of international protests, solidarity demonstrations, and expressions of support from Western parliaments and publics. This progression indicates a strategic shift away from crisis broadcasting toward norm-based advocacy, consistent with patterns observed in real-time public diplomacy during protracted conflicts (Pamment, 2013; Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020).

#### **4.4.7. Sentiment-Tone Comparison by Country**

A comparison of sentiment across ambassadorial locations revealed notable differences. Tweets from Germany and the United Kingdom demonstrated a more even-tempered yet intense use of optimistic language, whereas those from the United States displayed predominantly negative sentiment, reflecting frustration with government positions perceived as overly conciliatory or one-sided. France and Canada exhibited moderate variation, where diplomatic restraint was occasionally overridden by fervent passion. These patterns suggest that ambassadors formed impressions not only about the politics of their host nations but also about the state of press freedom. In pro-Israel policy environments, they relied more heavily on legal institutions and attribution of blame, while in liberal contexts, they emphasized emotional and moral appeals. The overall prevalence of negative sentiment aligns with the severity of the humanitarian crisis and the imperative to invoke moral urgency. Nevertheless, tone evolved over time and across countries, reflecting diplomatic and strategic versatility. By combining emotional necessity with sporadic expressions of appreciation, ceremonial diplomacy, and cultural affirmation, Palestinian ambassadors used X not merely as a channel of condemnation but as a nuanced instrument of advocacy, visibility, and influence within Western public spheres.

## 4.5. Comparative Insights: Variation Across Ambassadors

Having laid out the thematic, affective, and engagement-based analysis of the tweets from the ambassadors, this section draws on cross-case findings to provide a brief overview of how the five Palestinian ambassadors varied in their digital diplomacy. Such divergence is valued through three prisms: the political context of the host country, the individual visibility and media interaction of the ambassador, and language and targeting audience strategies. This comparative methodology not only places single performance but also focuses on the strategic nature of digital diplomacy in asymmetric conflict contexts.

### 4.5.1. Digital Diplomacy Style and Frequency

The ambassadors exhibited significant differences in their X activity, thematic focus, and engagement strategies, reflecting their unique diplomatic roles and host country dynamics:

#### 1. Husam Zomlot (UK):

- **Activity:** The most prolific tweeter, with a high frequency of posts combining emotional appeals, legal arguments, and interactive engagement.
- **Strategy:** A hybrid approach blending personal storytelling with policy advocacy, leveraging his verified status and media presence (e.g., BBC, CNN interviews) to amplify reach.
- **Example:** A tweet condemning Israeli airstrikes, accompanied by an attached image of a destroyed Gaza neighbourhood, garnered over 9,000 likes and 4,000 retweets, illustrating his ability to merge visual impact with moral urgency.

#### 2. Laith Arafah (Germany) and Abou Hassira (France):

- **Activity:** More restrained in tone, focusing on legal and political narratives rooted in international law and EU institutional discourse.
- **Strategy:** Avoided overt emotional appeals, instead framing the conflict through diplomatic and legalistic language to align with the formal political cultures of Germany and France.
- **Example:** *“We welcome Germany’s rejection of Benjamin Netanyahu’s display of a map before the UNGA that obliterates Palestine and implies its annexation. As*

*annexation constitutes a grave violation of international law, Germany's reaction reaffirms the international community's long-standing refusal to recognize Israel's ongoing attempts to force its sovereignty over the occupied territories of the State of Palestine. We remain hopeful that these positions will be accompanied by equally assertive measures capable of preventing annexation, ending the illegal Israeli occupation, and safeguarding the two-state solution."* — @ArafehLaith

### **3. Mona Abuamara (Canada):**

- **Activity:** Less frequent tweeting, often reactive to Western media bias or Canada and U.S. policy.
- **Strategy:** Adopted a confrontational tone, directly challenging pro-Israeli narratives in North American media.
- **Example:** “*Will 🇨🇦's officials, leaders, MPs, & Senators condemn these atrocities? Will they call things by their true names once & for all & demand that Israel end its Genocide & ethnic cleansing of the 🇪🇬 people? Will they demand justice? The world is watching, and history will remember?*” — @MonaAbuamara

### **4. Majed Bamy USA/UN:**

- **Activity:** Focused on urgent political appeals, leveraging his UN platform to highlight ceasefire calls and humanitarian crises.
- **Strategy:** Institutional and formal, with tweets referencing UN votes and legal accountability.
- **Example:** “*Security Council fails to adopt an amendment to the draft resolution that would have called for an immediate, durable and fully respected humanitarian ceasefire. A political, legal, moral and humanitarian failure that will cost lives.*” — @majedbamy

These differences highlight the ambassadors' adaptive strategies, which tailor their messaging to the political sensitivities and media environments of their host countries (Melissen, 2005).

#### 4.5.2. Political Context of Host Country

The political stance of the host country concerning Palestine and Israel was one of the critical variables for the online behaviour of all the ambassadors. The host country's political stance significantly influenced the ambassadors' digital diplomacy:

##### 1. UK and Canada:

- **Public Discourse:** Ambassadors engaged more openly with civil society, referencing protests and media debates.
- **Example:** Zomlot's tweet supporting London's pro-Palestine marches ("Thank you, London, for marching in the rain for justice") reinforced solidarity with grassroots movements.

##### 2. Germany and France:

- **Institutional Diplomacy:** Ambassadors avoided inflammatory language, emphasising legal frameworks to appeal to EU policymakers.
- **Example:** Arafah's thread on Germany's obligations under international law framed the issue as a legal rather than emotional imperative.

##### 3. U.S. (via UN):

- **Defensive Posture:** Banya's tweets often countered U.S. vetoes at the UN, portraying them as obstacles to peace.

In English-speaking countries like the UK and Canada, with a robust protest and civil society culture, ambassadors used more public and interactive discourse, responding to protests and referring to public figures. In Germany and France, political culture was more regulated, and where memories of the past are instructive in the contest over Israel-Palestine, ambassadors used more restrained, formalistic language, invoking international law rather than emotional confrontation. In the US, due to the dominant Israeli-pro government framing, the tone of embassy communication was defensive and accusatory, attempting to counter dominant discourses and media accounts. This is consistent with Manor's (2019) context-sensitive digital diplomacy theory, which prioritises cultural, political, and institutional sensitivity within the framework of diplomatic communication strategy.

### **4.5.3. Ambassadorial Profiles and Media Visibility**

Each ambassador's presence on X reflected their individual style and approach to diplomacy, which in turn shaped how their messages were received. Ambassador Husam Zomlot stood out with his strong media presence—frequent interviews, opinion pieces, and public statements helped establish him as a visible and trusted Palestinian voice on the international stage. He often connected his tweets to wider media coverage, creating a dynamic and accessible form of digital diplomacy. Others, like Hala Abou Hassira and Laith Arafeh, took a more formal tone, focusing on official statements and multilateral cooperation. This approach reflected their professional backgrounds and the expectations of the countries they represented. These differences mattered: ambassadors who spoke more personally and engaged directly with current events tended to draw more attention and interaction than those who relied on traditional, institutional communication.

### **4.5.4. Language Choices and Audience Targeting**

Language use was also a primary site of strategic divergence:

- English was the dominant medium in all five accounts, attesting to its global diplomatic reach and alignment with the international press and policymaking public.
- Arabic was primarily used to express emotional sympathy, cultural identification, or oppositional frames, especially by ambassadors addressing the Arab diaspora or regional allies.
- French was utilised strategically by ambassador in Paris to address the local public sphere, engage with Francophone listeners, and participate in the discussion of EU liberal circles regarding human rights, also by ambassador in UN as the French language is one of the two working languages of the UN Secretariat.
- German was used by Ambassador to Germany to engage directly with German-speaking audiences, particularly during moments of heightened crisis. His use of German in tweets about student protests and humanitarian appeals aimed to foster empathy, invoke shared moral values, and humanize the Palestinian perspective within Germany's historical and ethical discourse.

Ambassadors thus practised linguistic code-switching, varying their tone and substance to match what they perceived as the target public's values, sensitivities, and expectations (Cull, 2009; Zaharna, 2010).

It is confirmed through the investigation of ambassadorial variation that Palestinian digital diplomacy is far from monolithic, but rather both reactively sensitive to outside political pressure and strategically discriminatory in its internal choices. Ambassadors were given considerable freedom to shape their online voice, adjusting tone, content, and language in ways that reflected the political and cultural climate of their host countries. This diversity highlights how Palestinian digital diplomacy is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a flexible and responsive practice shaped by circumstance and intent. Host country politics played a defining role: in the United States, ambassadors tended to adopt a more confrontational and emotional tone, while in the European Union, messaging leaned more on legal arguments and human rights discourse. Ambassadorial agency also mattered—those with a strong media presence, like Zomlot, attracted far more attention and engagement than colleagues who adhered strictly to formal diplomatic messaging. Language choice further reflected this strategic variation, with ambassadors using English, Arabic, French, or German to connect more directly with their target audiences.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### 5.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter applies the empirical evidence presented in Chapter 4 to the theoretical framework outlined in the earlier sections of the thesis. It addresses the principal research questions by engaging with the key conceptual models guiding this study: Soft Power Theory (Nye, 2004), Public Diplomacy Theory (Cull, 2009; Melissen, 2005), Digital Diplomacy (Bjola & Holmes, 2015), and Twiplomacy (Manor, 2019). These frameworks help situate the actions of Palestinian ambassadors as digital actors operating in a deeply asymmetrical geopolitical environment—particularly in the wake of the escalated crisis following the events of 7 October 2023.

While the previous chapter presented observable trends in tweet frequency, thematic framing, sentiment distribution, and audience engagement, this chapter seeks to interpret what those patterns reveal. It links ambassadorial online behaviour with broader strategies of persuasion, narrative construction, and the contest for global attention. Specifically, it explores how ambassadors extended diplomacy beyond traditional formats through digital platforms. Using moral appeals, emotional language, and cultural references, they attempted to shape public perception and influence the framing of the conflict in international discourse. Their digital presence allowed them to respond to events in real time, reinforcing messages of identity, solidarity, and resistance.

At the same time, these efforts were shaped by structural limitations. Although X provided a direct channel to global audiences and a space to counter misinformation, ambassadors continued to face the constraints of geopolitical inequality, limited recognition, and resource scarcity. Nonetheless, they adapted their strategies by drawing on moral authority and personal agency, finding ways to connect with diverse publics despite the limitations of their diplomatic status. This chapter, therefore, offers a critically grounded interpretation of how Palestinian diplomats navigated conflict through digital means—asserting visibility, amplifying their cause, and redefining their role in international communication.

## **5.2. Soft Power in Digital Diplomacy**

One of the main theoretical premises of the current research is Joseph Nye's concept of soft power as the ability of a state—or, in our case, a stateless one like Palestine—to realize its objectives without recourse to coercion or economic incentives (hard power), but by attraction, persuasion, and cultural legitimacy (Nye, 2004). With the Palestinian-Israeli contexts, where historical power disparities irreversibly weigh in favour of Israel, soft power is one of the sole weapons Palestinian diplomats have with which to push their opponents into action around the world.

The findings in Chapter 4 confirm that Palestinian ambassadors, particularly in the decisive post- 7 October 2023 era, employed deliberate soft power projection through online diplomacy. Their X activities signalled efforts to build world sympathy, assert moral legitimacy, and reframe dominant media narratives—all hallmarks of soft power as a strategy.

### **5.2.1 Narrative Framing as Soft Power Strategy**

Ambassadors relied heavily on the use of a humanitarian narrative to mobilise world attention towards Palestinian civilian hardship. The stories emphasised dead children, bombarded hospitals, and uprooted families—a call on the moral conscience, not political leaning. This framing strictly adheres to the idea of Nye (2008) that "power today rests not only on whose army wins but also on whose story wins."

For example, Ambassador Zomlot's tweets with heart-wrenching pictures of a civilian area bombed, gained both emotional traction and viral traction — two essential forms of digital soft power. These tweets reinterpreted the Palestinian issue not as a political cause but as a humanitarian cause, attempting to shift Palestine from a victim of injustice and, therefore, deserving of international support. This shift in the legitimacy paradigm is essential in the exercise of soft power, as it renders one's values and case more desirable (Nye, 2004; Zaharna, 2010).

## **5.2.2 Visuals and Cultural Symbolism**

Visual diplomacy also played a crucial role in protecting and enhancing soft power. Images of Palestinian flags, Western city protests, destroyed infrastructure, and even symbolic symbols like the keffiyeh were used by ambassadors to mobilise cultural identity and resistance. These factors all played a role in influencing affective identification with the global public, especially among youth and civil society agents operating on platforms such as X.

This imagery is consistent with Nye's thesis that soft power relies on cultural similarity and the transfer of mutual value. The diplomats were not describing facts; they were creating emotional experiences to establish rapport and legitimacy. This type of communication is more effective at shaping international opinion than typical diplomatic memoranda or press releases.

## **5.2.3 Moral Appeals and Legitimacy Building**

A second broad soft power strategy was the moral and legal framing of the crisis. Ambassadors would invoke international humanitarian law, UN resolutions, and human rights language, not to oppose Israel per se, but to make Palestine appear to conform to world norms. This added a veneer of legitimacy, confirming Nye's definition of soft power as being perceived as credible, predictable, and rule-following.

These efforts at appeal served to shape what Cull (2009) refers to as the "credibility bank" of public diplomacy, gradually building Palestine's reputation as a moral and legitimate force on the world stage. While hard power acquires influence through coercion, this form of soft power creates influence due to ethical positioning and moral credibility.

## **5.2.4 From Soft to Smart Power: Strategic Adaptation**

While the ambassadors were engaged in soft power diplomacy, there were moments when they shifted tone to sharp moral denunciation or activist urging—a glimmer of what Nye (2008) subsequently called smart power, strategic combinations of hard and soft approaches. When, for example, ambassadors directly confronted UK, U.S. or EU leaders on X, they were not simply appealing to values—they were holding them accountable.

Ambassador Arafah tweet, "... silence is complicity ...", directed at Western governments, exemplifies this shift. It remains emotionally appealing but conveys the subtlety of diplomatic pressure—a gentle form of normative confrontation. It is this convergence of soft and bright power moves that represents the hallmark of Palestinian digital diplomacy's strategic genius. In the absence of economic and military hand-to-hand combat, ambassadors are reduced to employing every tool at their command to shape opinion worldwide—and X provides a real-time, unfiltered channel through which to do just that.

### **5.2.5 Soft Power as Resistance**

Overall, the study establishes that Palestinian ambassadors effectively applied the logic of soft power by constructing frameworks of vulnerability, invoking cultural identity, appealing to shared values, and demonstrating moral clarity. The interventions were successful in shaping world opinion regarding the Gaza crisis, acting against dominant frames of meaning and vindicating the diplomatic legitimacy of Palestine, without coercion but through persuasion, sympathy, and moral appeals.

As a result, soft power, which was utilised through the virtual space, transcended the status of a mere public diplomacy approach and even served as a resistance measure to diplomatic isolation. This is elaborated on in the following section, where the challenge of how ambassadors address foreign publics directly is addressed, an endeavour that has evolved into a phenomenon in public diplomacy.

### **5.3. Public Diplomacy and Audience Engagement**

Public diplomacy, an explicit conveying of a political agent's or state's message by a political actor or state to foreign publics to influence perceptions and build support (Cull, 2009; Melissen, 2005), played a crucial role in the digital diplomacy employed by Palestinian envoys following the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. Unlike traditional diplomacy, which primarily occurs between governments, public diplomacy aims to engage the international public, encompassing civil society, the media, and global citizens. In this age of the internet, this role is more and more carried out by media such as X, where information streams in real-time, and diplomatic speech can be individuated and amplified.

**Table 10: Summary of Strategic Functions of Ambassadorial Tweets**

Strategic Function	Description	Example (Paraphrased Tweet)
Advocacy	Promoting Palestinian rights, UN resolutions, and statehood claims	“The ICC must act now. International law matters.”
Emotional Mobilization	Generating empathy and humanising the Palestinian experience	“My cousin's home was bombed while she was praying.”
Reputation Management	Rebutting misrepresentations or media bias	“BBC’s use of ‘clash’ hides who is being killed.”
Narrative Counter-framing	Challenging dominant pro-Israel narratives	“This is not war. It is occupation and apartheid.”
Solidarity Amplification	Retweeting international support and mobilising allies	“Grateful to Irish MPs speaking truth to power.”

The findings of this study indicate that Palestinian ambassadors utilized X not only for the transmission of messages but also for listening, responding, advocating, and mobilizing—all significant facets of what Cull (2009) refers to as the five pillars of public diplomacy: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange, and international broadcasting.

### 5.3.1 Listening and Responsiveness

One of the less visible yet essential aspects of public diplomacy is listening—the act of monitoring public sentiment and tailoring messages accordingly (Cull, 2009). While X does not allow systematic data collection by diplomats, some ambassadors showed clear responsiveness to events and public mood as they evolved.

For example, different ambassadors were listening, but not interacting directly with users this was when they quoted and tweeted by international human rights organisations, responded to trending hashtags (e.g., #CeasefireNow) and noticed solidarity protests in real-time. This behaviour signals responsiveness to both elite and grassroots opinions—a feature of digital diplomatic listening. Whereas overt two-way engagement (e.g., replying to users) was limited, the behaviour of quoting outside actors, retweeting public comments, and moderating tone over time indicates a form of passive listening and strategic calibration.

### 5.3.2 Advocacy through Narrative Framing

Advocacy—the active promotion of national interests, values, and legitimacy—is one of the most direct and strategic manifestations of public diplomacy. In the Palestinian context, ambassadors employed narrative framing as a central advocacy tool to challenge dominant media portrayals and to reorient international discourse. This involved rejecting narratives that framed the event solely through the lens of Israel, and instead emphasizing the humanitarian toll and legal injustices endured by Palestinians. A core objective of this approach was to reposition Palestinian suffering as not only a regional concern but a global humanitarian crisis demanding urgent attention. Ambassadors also used their platforms to demand international accountability for what they framed as violations of international law. One illustrative tweet read:

*“The whole world is calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. @elonmusk why don’t you echo this call instead of echoing the arguments to justify the worst atrocities humankind has witnessed in recent years. It would honour you to educate yourself and revise your remarks made while sitting with the war criminals.” @majedbamya*

Ambassador Bamyá used in this tweet powerful terms like “humanitarian ceasefire”, “atrocities”, “war criminals” called attention to the moral urgency of the crisis and directly challenged attempts to downplay its human cost, highlighting the suffering of Palestinians not as a distant tragedy but as a global concern. By confronting Elon Musk—one of the most influential figures in tech and media—he combined public diplomacy with a demand for accountability from platforms that shape global narratives. This kind of direct appeal exemplifies moral advocacy, as defined in Cull’s (2009) public diplomacy model, in which the diplomat calls on the global community to uphold shared values and act in defense of human rights. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 4, the ambassadors’ use of legal terminology and references to international institutions constitutes another form of advocacy—one that bridges Palestinian digital communication with international norms, treaties, and institutions, thus seeking recognition and legitimacy within the global legal order.

### **5.3.3 Cultural Diplomacy and Identity Messaging**

Although weaker than legal or humanitarian framing, cultural and diplomatic framing also existed, primarily expressed in Arabic-language tweets and photos. Ambassadors employed symbols of Palestinian identity—the keffiyeh, the referencing of the Nakba as a past rather than an ongoing condition, and the invocation of shared heritage—to reassert effective affiliations with Arab and diasporic publics.

These cultural dimensions are pertinent because Melissen (2005) argues that public diplomacy is as much about communication as it is about creating long-term goodwill through shared values, culture, and emotional connection. By incorporating national identity into their online narratives, ambassadors positioned themselves not only as representatives of a state but also as storytellers of a culture and patrons of a people, which facilitates political empathy and emotional investment.

### **5.3.4 Broadcasting and Amplification in Real-Time**

X's role as a broadcast mechanism enabled diplomats to bypass mainstream media gatekeepers and relay unfiltered information directly to the global public. Tweets with interview quotes, press statements, or event images expanded the reach of conventional diplomacy, which had relied mainly on hashtags and tags to be heard. An example was the posting of an excerpt of a SkyNews interview under the heading: "*Enough with western mainstream media obsession with blaming the victims!* " The tweet garnered over 15,000 likes and was retweeted over 7,000 times by many including senior international journalists, which exemplifies a testament to the ambassador's success in combining broadcast and digital diplomacy. This aligns with what Cull (2019) later refers to as "hybrid broadcasting," in which digital media are used as platforms for both official policy and emotional resonance.

### **5.3.5 Engagement Metrics as Indicators of Public Diplomacy Reach**

Although likes, retweets, and replies are not definitive indicators of diplomatic success, they serve as useful, quantifiable proxies for assessing message receptivity, public visibility, and levels of audience engagement. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, tweets that combined emotional narratives with legal appeals consistently achieved the highest levels

of interaction, suggesting that dual framing strategies are particularly effective in capturing public attention. Civic-oriented tweets that invoked themes of international solidarity were frequently reposted by advocacy groups and Western citizens, indicating their resonance beyond immediate regional audiences. Moreover, tweets that strategically addressed political figures or tagged global institutions—such as the United Nations or the International Criminal Court—tended to receive above-average visibility. These patterns highlight the importance of tactical messaging and audience targeting in digital diplomacy, especially in conflict scenarios where visibility and narrative control are central to soft power influence.

These engagement metrics serve as proxy measures of public diplomacy success, demonstrating which messages resonated, which publics were addressed, and through which channels stories diffused through networks (Sevin, 2017; Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020). However, the information also reveals limitations: momentum was challenging for confident ambassadors to sustain, and platform algorithmic structural inequalities and linguistic asymmetries may have hindered higher visibility. These pauses replicate ongoing asymmetries in online agencies, notwithstanding the availability of public diplomacy instrumentation.

### **5.3.6 A Public Diplomacy of Urgency and Visibility**

The digital practices of Palestinian ambassadors reflect a multi-dimensional public diplomacy strategy that operates across several interrelated functions. These include attentive engagement with international discourse, the facilitation of moral and legal appeals, the projection of Palestinian national identity, and the provision of real-time updates to global audiences. Such practices demonstrate a deliberate and strategic use of social media—particularly X—to navigate the constraints of formal diplomacy while maintaining a responsive and visible presence in the international arena.

This approach signifies a broader shift toward what scholars describe as networked public diplomacy, wherein diplomatic messaging is not solely driven by official state policy but is also shaped by emotional reasoning, narrative urgency, and digital salience. Within this framework, ambassadors act not only as representatives of state interests but also as storytellers, advocates, and real-time crisis communicators. Despite operating under

significant geopolitical constraints and asymmetric power dynamics, Palestinian ambassadors have shown a capacity to concentrate and synchronise key tools of digital diplomacy. Their X activity reflects a sophisticated effort to challenge unilateral narratives, counter marginalisation, and galvanise transnational solidarity around the Palestinian cause.

#### **5.4. Twiplomacy and Strategic Framing**

Twiplomacy—i.e., the strategic use of X by state actors and diplomats to engage in real-time, public diplomacy—is today a tremendous vehicle of worldwide outreach, agenda-setting, and soft power projection online (Manor, 2019; Bjola & Holmes, 2015). Unlike closed-door and protocol-oriented old-school diplomacy, Twiplomacy enables ambassadors to become seen, networked, and interactive communicators, speaking not only to foreign governments but directly to the public, journalists, NGOs, and other transnational actors.

In the Palestinian example, Twiplomacy has taken on particular importance due to constraints surrounding official state recognition, low hard power, and general media asymmetry. As the results of this research illustrate, Palestinian diplomats utilised X not only to gain attention but also for continuous, moment-by-moment diplomacy, crisis communication, and narrative intervention. Their platform use is a highly calculated strategic framing strategy attuned to geopolitical necessity and digital affordance.

##### **5.4.1 Real-Time Crisis Communication**

One of the earliest and most prominent uses of X by Palestinian ambassadors following the events of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October was the provision of real-time commentary on unfolding developments. In the absence of timely or unbiased traditional media coverage, X served as a direct platform for disseminating the Palestinian perspective as events occurred. Ambassadors used the platform to deliver a steady stream of live updates from Gaza, offer individual reactions to bombings and casualties, share and respond to Western media headlines, and publicly refute misinformation or distorted narratives. This real-time reporting enabled them to bypass media gatekeepers and address global audiences without delay, establishing X as both a diplomatic and informational frontline.

A leading example of this strategic use of crisis communication is seen in the activity of Ambassador Zomlot, who posted extensively in the immediate hours following key incidents. His tweets were notably concise, emotionally resonant, and diplomatically framed—qualities that contributed to their rapid spread and significant impact across both media and public discourse. This approach exemplifies what scholars have termed “crisis Twiplomacy,” a digital intervention model defined by high-speed engagement in moments of acute geopolitical tension. According to Bjola and Zaiotti (2020), such interventions allow diplomats to pre-empt, correct, or reframe dominant narratives before traditional institutions have the capacity to respond. In this context, X is solidified not merely as a diplomatic communication tool, but as a critical space for narrative framing, agenda-setting, and real-time contestation over international perception and legitimacy.

#### **5.4.2 Agenda-Setting and Hashtag Diplomacy**

Twiplomats utilised X as an agenda-setter, trying to influence public opinion and policy debates by raising selected issues, terms, or hashtags. This follows Sevin's (2017) argument that effective Twiplomacy involves strategically framing messages—not only the content but also packaging, labelling, and dissemination of it. For instance, #CeasefireNow, #GazaUnderAttack, or #StopTheGenocide messages were not only communication vehicles but also electronic calls for action, asking users to re-tweet the message and link the Palestinian cause to broader human rights discussions.

This hashtag facilitated Palestinian narratives in bridging with international activist discourse, resulting in retweets, influencer adoption, and coverage in mainstream media. It also gave the ambassadors symbolic power to frame the agenda for the debate, shifting the conversation from "war" or "conflict" to "occupation" and "ethnic cleansing."

#### **5.4.3 Personalisation of Diplomacy**

A characteristic feature of Twiplomacy is personalisation—the way particular diplomats bring public attention to the faces of foreign policy, often blurring the institutional voice and personal brand dichotomy (Manor, 2019). Among the ambassadors studied, Dr. Husam Zomlot, the Head of Mission to the United Kingdom, maintained a particularly prominent digital presence. His tweets frequently included direct responses to

international media narratives, visually rich content, and emotionally persuasive appeals. While this activity exemplifies the effective use of X in digital diplomacy, it is essential to highlight that other ambassadors, such as Laith Arafeh, Majed Bamyra, Hala Abou Hassira, and Mona Abuamara, also contributed strategically and substantively to Palestine's digital foreign policy. Arafeh often focused on legal discourses and international law, Bamyra engaged with human rights-centred narratives, while others adopted distinctive tones and approaches shaped by their geopolitical contexts.

Zomlot's tweets regularly referenced his interviews, quoted his media interviews, or shared behind-the-scenes photos of diplomatic meetings. The first person was used extensively by him ("I spoke to BBC," "I met with MPs today"), projecting a personal and authoritative online image. This is consistent with Manor's concept of the "human diplomat," who generates credibility, accessibility, and political consciousness through electronic media. Zomlot exceeded boilerplate rhetoric and became an online conflict politics public actor able to influence public opinion as well as elite speech.

The other ambassadors, such as Abou Hassira to France, exhibited similar—though less pronounced—patterns, thereby demonstrating the scalability and diplomacy-informed nature of personalisation. Reserved personalities were more likely to emphasise institutional identity, whereas others employed affective expressions and public engagement to create relatability.

#### **5.4.4. Digital Persona and Authority**

Bjola and Zaiotti (2020) argue that effective Twiplomats construct a “digital persona”—a curated and consistent identity that aligns with the diplomat's strategic objectives online. This persona is not merely a reflection of the individual's character, but a deliberate communication tool aimed at maximising engagement, credibility, and message discipline in a crowded media environment. In the case of Palestinian digital diplomacy, Ambassador Husam Zomlot exemplifies this model of strategic persona-building, using his platform to balance assertiveness, moral clarity, and media savviness in a way that reinforces his diplomatic aims.

Zomlot's digital persona was multifaceted, drawing on moral, legal, and political dimensions to engage a wide range of audiences. He adopted a moralistic tone in framing narratives of right and wrong, particularly around issues of civilian suffering and global responsibility. Simultaneously, he employed a legalistic register by frequently invoking international law, referencing global institutions, and citing legal standards to support Palestinian claims. In addition to these components, Zomlot's persona was also overtly political, designed to appeal to both foreign citizens and elite decision-makers through carefully worded tweets that combined clarity, emotion, and diplomatic decorum. This multidimensional approach enabled him to resonate with both grassroots supporters and policy influencers, positioning him as a prominent and authoritative voice during the crisis.

In contrast, ambassadors with lower name recognition or less consistent messaging experienced reduced engagement and diminished influence. Their digital outputs lacked the cohesive narrative and strategic intentionality that characterised Zomlot's communication. The success of Twiplomacy in this context was not defined by the sheer volume of content produced but rather by the credibility, tone, and narrative cohesion embedded within that content. These elements worked together to project authority and trust, reinforcing the idea that in the age of digital diplomacy, a well-crafted digital persona is a crucial asset for diplomats seeking to assert visibility, influence discourse, and mobilise international attention.

#### **5.4.5 Limitations and Platform Dynamics**

While X offers considerable promise as a platform for digital diplomacy, its utility is also constrained by several structural and contextual limitations. One of the key challenges lies in algorithmic filtering, which may restrict the visibility of certain content, particularly Arabic-language tweets. This creates an uneven playing field where some messages are algorithmically deprioritised, reducing their reach regardless of their content or urgency. Additionally, platform-level biases—such as content moderation practices—have been reported to disproportionately suppress pro-Palestinian content. According to Amnesty International (2022), social media companies have in some instances removed or limited access to posts advocating for Palestinian rights, thereby undermining the impartiality of the digital public sphere.

Another limitation arises from the saturated nature of the attention economy, where critical diplomatic messages must compete with a flood of entertainment content, misinformation, and other global crises for audience engagement. Even the most strategically crafted and emotionally compelling tweets risk being overlooked in such a crowded digital environment. These factors can collectively diminish the effectiveness of ambassadorial communication, highlighting the vulnerability of Twiplomacy—particularly for non-hegemonic actors whose political legitimacy is already contested. In this sense, the structural features of the platform not only shape the mechanics of digital diplomacy but also test its limits, especially when voices from the margins seek to challenge dominant geopolitical narratives.

#### **5.4.6 Twiplomacy as Strategic Narrative Warfare**

Palestinian ambassadors used X not just to speak but to set the terms of international conversation. Through live coverage, agenda-setting hashtags, and customised online personas, they employed Twiplomacy, a strategic and responsive approach. X became a forum in which they could reverse dominant frames, pathologise Palestinian suffering, and command political agency, without conventional diplomatic tools.

The following section expands on this analysis by considering how Twiplomacy operated within the broader context of power asymmetry and whether it enabled ambassadors to challenge their digital marginalisation concerning Israel's more resourced and coordinated media apparatus.

#### **5.5. Asymmetry and Resistance in the Digital Arena**

One of the oldest challenges facing Palestinian diplomacy—digital or otherwise—is the profound asymmetry of power between Palestine and Israel on the issues of state recognition, military power, international supporters, and media capabilities. That imbalance is also keenly felt in the virtual space, where Israel possesses a well-funded, multilingual, and highly centralised digital diplomacy apparatus. The Israeli Foreign Ministry, the embassies, and the officials are present across numerous social media platforms in real-time, typically supported by coordinated message pushes, bots, and influencer partnerships (Adesina, 2017; Manor, 2019).

On the other hand, the Palestinian digital diplomatic community is disjointed, under-resourced, and non-systematically institutionalised, as revealed by the limited number of active ambassadorial accounts, lack of a central message strategy, and dependency on personal effort instead of collective policy (Zytoon & Husain, 2023). However, as this study illustrates, Palestinian ambassadors were able to use X strategically to overcome online marginalisation, write their own stories into global discourse, and, on occasion, reshape public opinion in a manner that far exceeded their institutional influence.

### **5.5.1 Structural Asymmetry in Digital Capacity**

The asymmetry in digital diplomacy between Palestinian and Israeli actors is starkly evident in both financial capacity and technological infrastructure. This imbalance significantly influences the effectiveness, visibility, and dissemination of diplomatic messaging. Following the escalation of conflict in October 2023, Israel reportedly invested over millions of dollars in YouTube advertisements alone, illustrating the scale of its digital media operations (Smith Galer, 2023). Israeli diplomats benefit from access to high-definition video production, rapid-response media units, and sophisticated data analytics to monitor and tailor their content. These resources allow for the timely dissemination of highly polished, strategic content across multiple platforms, particularly in English-speaking Western digital spaces.

By comparison, Palestinian diplomatic missions operate with limited budgets and without the support of formal digital media departments. Much of their content production and publication relies on manual methods or low-technology tools, which inherently restricts both the volume and technical quality of their communication output. This structural disparity not only affects the reach and consistency of Palestinian messaging but also intersects with issues of algorithmic visibility. Content produced by Israeli entities is often amplified through paid promotions and algorithm-friendly formats, while Palestinian narratives, even when resonant, struggle to achieve comparable visibility.

Further compounding this imbalance is the uneven enforcement of content moderation across major Western social media platforms. According to Amnesty International (2022), pro-Palestinian content has been disproportionately flagged for removal or shadow-banned, often under vague or inconsistently applied community

guidelines. This systemic suppression hampers the ability of Palestinian diplomats to present their narratives and engage audiences on equal footing, reinforcing existing geopolitical inequalities in the digital sphere. Consequently, structural asymmetry in digital capacity presents a significant challenge to Palestinian digital diplomacy, limiting its potential to contest dominant narratives and engage international publics effectively.

### **5.5.2 Digital Diplomacy as Narrative Resistance**

Despite all these constraints, Palestinian ambassadors were able to employ X as a tool of narrative resistance. They can only challenge hegemonic media frames that seek to portray Palestinians as violent or extremist through emotionally resonant narratives, strategic hashtag deployment, and live commentary.

For example, Zomlot's tweets formally redescribed Palestinian civilians no longer in terms of innocent victims but as victims of war crimes and abandonment, provoking legal and ethical outrage. These tweets gained a broad social media presence and were referenced by mainstream news sources and publications, including The Guardian and Al Jazeera.

This e-diplomacy equalled Papacharissi's (2015) concept of "affective publics"—publics that form on the internet and mobilise behind emotionally compelling narratives. Palestinian ambassadors could tap into such publics, primarily liberal, youth, and diasporic networks, whose tweets were retweeted worldwide and informed protest culture.

### **5.5.3 Impact Examples: Visibility and Global Solidarity**

Despite operating under significant structural disadvantages, Palestinian ambassadors were nonetheless able to achieve measurable outcomes in terms of digital visibility and public mobilisation. Several ambassadorial tweets went viral, with many exceeding 10,000 retweets. These highly circulated posts often included emotionally resonant humanitarian appeals or clips from interviews with Western media outlets, demonstrating the strategic value of multimedia and external validation in amplifying reach. Additionally, hashtags such as #CeasefireNow and #GazaGenocide trended globally during critical periods, often following ambassadorial endorsement or early tweet

circulation. These hashtags were further promoted by coordinated civil society campaigns, illustrating how diplomatic messages can feed into broader advocacy ecosystems.

The impact of this digital diplomacy extended beyond the online sphere. Ambassadorial messages were quoted in formal political settings, including sessions in the European and United Kingdom parliaments, and were visibly featured on protest signs and social media posts by prominent activists in the United States and elsewhere. Some of these statements were even highlighted by members of the U.S. Congress and endorsed by international NGOs, indicating that ambassadorial tweets were not only reaching wide audiences but also influencing high-level political discourse. These outcomes suggest that digital diplomacy, even when undertaken by structurally disadvantaged actors, can serve as a powerful multiplier. It enables marginalised voices to circumvent traditional diplomatic gatekeepers and gain access to influential forums. In the absence of financial parity or institutional scale, Palestinian diplomats have effectively leveraged web-based communication channels to assert presence, mobilise publics, and shape global narratives in their favour.

#### **5.5.4 Reclaiming Narrative Space through Moral Framing**

What empowered this resistance was neither the volume of content but rather moral intelligibility and narrative coherence. Tweets that explained the war in the language of international law, human tragedy, and civil rights rhetoric resonated deeply within Western public spaces, especially among critical publics of state violence. This emphasises Cull's (2013) argument that soft power is less about "projecting culture" than it is about creating engaging narratives. In doing so, Palestinian ambassadors were indeed able to redefine Palestine not as a danger but as a cause deserving of compassion and justice. The historical use of English-language tweets, evocative imagery, and adept comebacks granted Palestinian ambassadors a counter-hegemonic presence within the realm of information, even if provisionally and selectively.

**Table 11: Strategic Comparison – Palestinian vs. Israeli Digital Diplomacy**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Palestine</b>	<b>Israel</b>
Institutional Coordination	Fragmented, ambassador-driven	Centralised via MFA Digital Unit
Budget	Limited	High (e.g., \$7.1M in Oct 2023 on YouTube)
Media Strategy	Reactive, humanitarian/emotional framing	Proactive, security/legal defence framing
Social Media Presence	Partial (10 embassies active on X)	Full-spectrum (officials, MFA, PMO)
Platform Support	Faces content moderation, algorithmic bias	Generally favoured, stronger visibility
Diaspora/Grassroots Support	High organic solidarity and retweets	Structured digital volunteer networks

### 5.5.5 Limitations and Persistent Gaps

Despite the demonstrable successes of Palestinian ambassadorial digital diplomacy, it is important to acknowledge the persistent limitations that constrain its overall impact. While many tweets achieved significant visibility and engagement, this did not consistently translate into concrete policy change or shifts in diplomatic positioning by key international actors. High levels of public interaction—though important for awareness and solidarity—did not necessarily result in legislative action, sanctions, or shifts in foreign policy stances, highlighting a gap between online resonance and offline outcomes.

Moreover, regular posting was inconsistent across ambassadorial accounts, resulting in missed opportunities to shape discourse during pivotal geopolitical moments. This inconsistency limited the ambassadors' ability to build sustained digital momentum and undermined efforts to establish a reliable and coordinated presence in the fast-paced social media environment. The absence of an overarching communications strategy also meant that messaging was often reactive rather than proactive, with ambassadors responding to events as they unfolded rather than leading narratives in advance.

Additionally, structural biases inherent to Western digital platforms posed significant barriers. Arabic-language content consistently underperformed in comparison to English-language posts, likely due to algorithmic bias, limited discoverability, and reduced amplification. These challenges diminish the reach of messaging to both regional and international audiences and further exacerbate asymmetries in the global digital communication landscape.

Taken together, these limitations underscore the urgent need for greater coordination, institutional investment, and digital capacity building within Palestinian foreign policy. Strengthening strategic communication frameworks, ensuring regular and multilingual content dissemination, and developing platform-specific strategies are essential steps for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of Palestinian digital diplomacy in the long term.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Observed Impact</b>
Algorithmic Bias	Palestinian tweets de-ranked or removed due to content moderation bias	Limited reach, inconsistent visibility
Resource Limitations	Lack of funding, staff, and digital media training	Fragmented content, low posting frequency
Language Barriers	Tweets in Arabic/French/German are not always reaching English-speaking audiences and the opposite	Reduced engagement in some regions
Institutional Coordination	Lack of a central MOFA strategy for embassies' digital activity	Messaging inconsistency across ambassadors
Audience Reception Gaps	Limited feedback analysis or real-time adjustment strategies	No measurement of public sentiment shifts

**Table 12: Key Challenges Faced in Palestinian Digital Diplomacy**

**5.5.6 Audience Reception and Public Discourse**

While engagement metrics—such as likes, shares, and retweets—offer a surface-level view of digital resonance, the qualitative nature of audience interaction deepens our understanding of the impact of digital diplomacy. A content sampling of replies and quote-tweets shows a mix of solidarity, amplification of the Palestinian message, and, at times, oppositional discourse.

Particularly, emotionally charged posts invoking humanitarian appeals received overwhelmingly supportive responses, especially from diaspora communities and international human rights activists. Some replies also demonstrate that Palestinian ambassadorial tweets were circulated by journalists and civil society influencers, contributing to media uptake and reframing.

This dimension suggests that ambassadorial tweets not only served as diplomatic expressions but also initiated broader digital conversations, enhancing the ambassadors' visibility and influencing the tone of global discussions surrounding the conflict.

#### **5.5.7 Conclusion: Digital Resistance in an Unequal Arena**

In conclusion, notwithstanding Palestinian ambassadors' operation in an asymmetric digital sphere, the October 2023 X conduct illustrates how asymmetric players can still employ the power of narrative. They invented phrases for more than active collective solidarity and shattered the international framing of Gaza for a brief moment through moral leadership, emotional resonance, and responsive immediacy. This is consonant with the insight that, if practised meaningfully, digital diplomacy might not only be a communicative resource but also a space of resistance where marginalised actors can reassert their visibility, voice, agency, and subvert geopolitical hierarchies in public space.

### **5.6. Strengths and Gaps in Current Palestinian Digital Diplomacy**

The above paragraphs have illustrated how Palestinian ambassadors utilised X to exercise soft power, digital diplomacy, and resistance during the post- 7<sup>th</sup> of October crisis. Although these efforts were observed and addressed, they were primarily a result of individual initiative and not policy directives, a consequence of structural shortcomings in the Palestinian Authority's digital diplomacy strategy. These weaknesses are highlighted in this section alongside emerging strengths, along with pragmatic considerations for future refinement.

#### **5.6.1 Strengths: Ambassadorial Agency and Adaptive Strategy**

Among the most valuable assets of Palestinian digital diplomacy are the versatile and strategically crafted efforts of a small group of high-impact diplomats often referred to as “super-ambassadors.” Figures such as Dr. Zomlot, the Palestinian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, exemplify this elite category. These diplomats represent the modern essence of public diplomacy by combining traditional diplomatic expertise with contemporary digital fluency. They have successfully developed online personas that are both authoritative and personable, enabling them to communicate effectively with diverse audiences while maintaining diplomatic credibility.

Super-ambassadors have utilised X not merely as a broadcasting platform, but as a real-time narrative intervention tool—responding quickly to unfolding events, shaping international conversations, and contesting dominant narratives. Their tweets often bridge the divide between official state messaging and more accessible, emotionally resonant public diplomacy, especially during moments of geopolitical crisis. In doing so, they fulfill the core functions of public diplomacy as defined by scholars like Cull (2009) and Manor (2019): engaging foreign publics, projecting soft power, and influencing opinion through moral, legal, and emotional appeals.

The success of these ambassadors highlights the critical role of ambassadorial agency—the capacity of individual diplomats to assess the communicative environment, understand audience expectations, and produce timely, targeted messaging. These "bottom-up" initiatives, though not always coordinated or institutionally streamlined, provided essential visibility and narrative control during a period of intense international scrutiny. Despite the absence of a unified communication strategy, the actions of these super-ambassadors illustrate how personal initiative and digital literacy can serve as powerful tools in advancing national narratives and countering asymmetrical power dynamics in global diplomacy.

### **5.6.2 Institutional Gaps: Fragmentation and Lack of Strategy**

Despite the occasional successes of Palestinian digital diplomacy, the broader institutional landscape remains fragmented and largely uncoordinated. As of 2023, relatively few Palestinian embassies maintain active or consistent X presences, which limits the scope and cohesion of diplomatic messaging on social media platforms (Zytoon & Husain, 2023). This reflects a deeper issue: the absence of a standardized digital communication strategy led by the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In contrast to more digitally sophisticated foreign ministries around the world, MOFA has yet to develop a unified framework or set of guidelines to coordinate messaging, amplify ambassadorial efforts, or ensure strategic alignment across diplomatic missions.

A further institutional gap lies in the lack of formal training and technical support available to ambassadors. Most Palestinian diplomats do not receive structured instruction in digital diplomacy, nor do they have access to centralized resources for content creation,

media monitoring, or analytics. This results in inconsistent digital performance, where one ambassador may post timely, well-framed messages aligned with public diplomacy goals, while others operate in an ad hoc manner, often missing opportunities to shape narratives or reinforce collective messaging. The lack of internal coordination not only weakens the overall diplomatic signal but also creates the risk of message dissonance, where individual posts may contradict or dilute national communication efforts.

Moreover, in the absence of a master narrative or overarching strategic communication plan, ambassadors are left to navigate complex foreign policy controversies, international media scrutiny, and digital platform content moderation systems on their own. Without institutional support or clear guidelines, these diplomats must independently assess what is appropriate to post, how to phrase sensitive content, and how to respond to hostile or misinformed narratives. This operational isolation increases their vulnerability to both reputational and strategic risks, undermining the potential for a unified and resilient Palestinian digital diplomacy infrastructure. Addressing these institutional deficits is essential for transforming isolated digital successes into a scalable and sustainable foreign policy asset.

### **5.6.3 Missed Opportunities and Capacity Constraints**

In addition to strategic fragmentation, Palestinian digital diplomacy faces several operational constraints that limit its effectiveness and scalability. One notable issue is the inadequate production of multilingual content, which restricts the ability to reach diverse international audiences. For example, there is a noticeable lack of French-language content, which hampers engagement with Francophone publics in key European Union member states. This linguistic limitation reduces message accessibility and narrows the potential reach of Palestinian diplomatic communication in global contexts where multilingual engagement is essential.

Another major constraint lies in the shortage of professional digital personnel within Palestinian embassies. Many missions lack staff with the technical skills necessary for content creation, graphic design, and social media dissemination. As a result, ambassadors often manage their digital presence independently or with minimal support, which limits the production of visually compelling, timely, and strategically crafted content. Without

sufficient human capital, the quality, consistency, and frequency of messaging are compromised, particularly during high-stakes geopolitical moments that require coordinated, rapid-response communication.

Moreover, there is a general absence of tools and resources for analytics and audience monitoring. Most Palestinian missions lack access to software capable of tracking engagement trends, sentiment shifts, or platform algorithms—tools that are essential for optimizing message timing, tone, and targeting. This results in a reactive rather than adaptive approach to digital communication, where ambassadors are unable to strategically adjust their messaging in response to public feedback or digital performance metrics. In other words, they tend to react to events after they happen instead of adjusting their communication strategy in real time based on how well their messages are performing or how audiences are engaging with them.

Finally, the limited investment in social media advertising, short-form video production, and other high-impact content formats represents a missed opportunity to compete in the digital attention economy. These media tactics are widely used by technologically advanced countries to influence foreign audiences, shape public opinion, and control the narrative during fast-moving international events. In contrast, the Palestinian diplomatic apparatus remains under-resourced in this regard, reducing its ability to seize digital momentum when it matters most. These capacity constraints not only diminish the visibility of Palestinian voices online but also impede the state's ability to contest narrative dominance in critical moments of global attention.

#### **5.6.4 From Individual Effort to Institutional Strategy**

Although Palestinian digital diplomacy, as it stands today, demonstrates innovation and resistance on a personal level, it is not yet institutionally mature enough to meet the demands of contemporary diplomatic communication. The conduct of the ambassadors since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October illustrates the enormous potential of digital technologies in reframing narratives, mobilising support, and building profiles, even under conditions of asymmetry. To effectively realise this potential, however, the Palestinian Authority must transition from X rebuttal to a strategic, coordinated, and professionally led digital

diplomacy approach—one that empowers ambassadors, protects their messaging, and leverages Palestine's soft power globally.

## **5.7. Summary of Theoretical Implications**

This final section of the discussion chapter considers how the findings of this research intersect with—and build upon—the overall theory of soft power, public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, and Twiplomacy that has been developed. It synthesises how the Palestinian ambassador's tweets on X during the post-7 October 2023, period reinforce, subvert, and, in some cases, build on existing theoretical conceptions. It also positions this study within the growing literature on digital diplomacy in conflict zones and non-hegemonic digital statecraft.

### **5.7.1 Soft Power: Validation in Asymmetrical Contexts**

Joseph Nye's soft power hypothesis posits that countries can project influence not through coercion or bribery, but by attracting the hearts of others through attraction, persuasion, and shared values (Nye, 2004). This research substantiates Nye's hypothesis in that even at the nadir of geopolitical weakness, Palestinian ambassadors employed soft power strategies—moral appeals, legal arguments, and cultural symbols—to garner attention and sympathy from the international public.

However, the analysis also universalises Nye's model in the respect that it demonstrates how soft power is exercised under structures of structural asymmetry. While Nye authored primarily as a voice of great powers like the U.S., this study shows how non-mainstream actors—with minimal means and little status—can still make themselves felt through strategic, moral positions and social media amplification.

### **5.7.2 Public Diplomacy: Confirmation and Expansion**

The communication behaviour exhibited by Palestinian ambassadors closely aligns with Nicholas Cull's (2009) public diplomacy model, which comprises four key components: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, and broadcasting. All of these dimensions were evident in the digital practices observed during the post- 7 October 2023 period. Listening was demonstrated through engagement with public sentiment via replies,

hashtags, and acknowledgment of global protests. Advocacy appeared in the consistent legal framing of messages and the explicit condemnation of human rights abuses. Cultural diplomacy was conveyed through the use of resistance symbols and markers of Palestinian identity, such as national imagery, historical references, and emotionally resonant narratives. Broadcasting was visible in the form of real-time tweeting during diplomatic events, as well as the sharing of interview clips and press statements.

While the ambassadors' practices affirm the relevance of Cull's model, this research also expands upon it by highlighting the unique dynamics of digital public diplomacy conducted during acute geopolitical crises. Specifically, it brings to the forefront the urgency-driven and affect-based nature of online engagement in conflict settings. Unlike traditional public diplomacy, which tends to unfold gradually over time, the Palestinian case illustrates a more intensified form of communication that may be termed "crisis public diplomacy." This mode is characterised by rapid, emotionally charged, and highly responsive messaging, designed to attract international attention during short-lived but critical windows of visibility. In this context, emotional resonance, speed, and narrative clarity become central tools of influence, demonstrating how digital diplomacy is evolving to meet the demands of a fragmented, high-speed global media environment. As such, this study not only confirms established theories but also contributes to their evolution by mapping new patterns of strategic diplomatic communication in the digital age.

### **5.7.3 Twiplomacy: Personalisation and Real-Time Framing**

Manor's (2019) definition of Twiplomacy is well exemplified by the online activities of Palestinian ambassadors—specifically, the way they professionalised diplomacy, created distinctive online personas, and utilised X to reframe narratives in real-time. Ambassador Zomlot's experience underpins Manor's argument that public-facing diplomats are becoming a dominant group shaping global narratives through digital media. This study contributes to the Twiplomacy theory by demonstrating that X diplomacy is not merely a visibility tactic but rather a form of digital resistance. Diplomats are not merely soft power agents; they are also narratorial disruptors, resisting hegemonic frames and bringing non-dominant moral worldviews to the forefront.

#### **5.7.4 Digital Diplomacy from Below**

This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on “digital diplomacy from below,” a term used to describe the diplomatic efforts of non-hegemonic, stateless, or marginalized actors who use digital platforms to challenge their exclusion from traditional diplomatic arenas (Bjola & Zaiotti, 2020; Zaharna, 2010). Palestinian digital diplomacy represents a paradigmatic example of this phenomenon. Operating with a limited state apparatus, under conditions of occupation, and in the face of a historically entrenched global narrative, Palestinian ambassadors have effectively utilised platforms such as X to exercise state-like functions. These functions include influencing global public opinion, projecting political legitimacy, and engaging in norm-based foreign policy advocacy. In doing so, these diplomats have leveraged the affordances of digital media to bypass conventional power hierarchies and assert a presence in the international discourse.

This case challenges conventional assumptions about what constitutes a diplomatic actor and what qualifies as effective diplomacy in the contemporary era. It calls for a redefinition of diplomatic agency that includes actors who lack full state recognition but nevertheless engage meaningfully in international relations through digital means. Moreover, it directly refutes the notion that digital diplomacy—or e-diplomacy—is the exclusive domain of great powers or technologically advanced states. Instead, it highlights the strategic role that asymmetrical actors can play as innovators in digital foreign policy practice. Palestinian ambassadors, through targeted, real-time, and emotionally resonant online engagement, have demonstrated that influence and visibility in global diplomacy are increasingly determined not solely by material power, but by communicative agility and narrative strength.

#### **5.7.5 Concluding Reflection**

Overall, this research offers substantial theoretical contributions to the study of diplomacy in the digital age. It supports foundational ideas besides affirming key assumptions and theoretical insights drawn from soft power and public diplomacy theory, particularly the central role of narrative construction, emotional storytelling, and personalized communication in shaping international engagement. Moreover, the study serves as a contemporary sequel to Twiplomacy scholarship, illustrating how tailored crisis

messaging on platforms like X has redefined traditional diplomatic protocols. By documenting how Palestinian ambassadors achieved high levels of visibility, engagement, and legitimacy despite lacking full state status, the research challenges conventional assumptions about where power and influence reside in international communication. Most significantly, it offers a new understanding of how diplomacy is evolving—not only in the ways that states interact with one another, but also in how subaltern and non-hegemonic actors strategically deploy digital technologies to engage the global public, assert their narratives, and participate meaningfully in international discourse.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Chapter Overview**

This final chapter presents the thesis in a summative perspective by synthesising its main conclusions, explaining its academic and policy-oriented contributions to digital diplomacy knowledge, and offering practical policy suggestions for Palestinian diplomatic institutions and future researchers. The study examined how Palestinian ambassadors used X to exercise digital diplomacy following the outbreak events of the the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 with special emphasis placed on soft power, narrative framing, and public engagement.

The chapter begins by briefly summarising the study's objectives, methodology, and key findings, highlighting how the research addressed its initial problem statement and research questions. It then describes the thesis's main contributions—empirical, theoretical, and methodological—to the scholarly literature on public and digital diplomacy from the perspective of non-hegemonic or underrepresented actors. Following this, the chapter outlines a series of actionable suggestions aimed at Palestinian diplomats, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and supporting institutions that can help operationalise a more responsive, coherent, and effective digital diplomacy framework. It also states the research limitations, namely concerning its platform scope (X only), its actor scope (ambassadors only), and the non-existence of direct audience response.

Finally, the chapter offers proposals for future research, including cross-platform analysis, audience-side research, and comparative analysis of digital diplomacy by other stateless or conflict-affected actors. The chapter concludes with a general reflection on the transformative potential of digital diplomacy, particularly for people and states experiencing complex crises and asymmetrical global relations.

### **6.2. Summary of the Study**

This thesis aimed to examine the role and effectiveness of digital diplomacy in advancing Palestinian foreign policy interests following the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, escalation in the Gaza Strip. Specifically, it considered how five Palestinian ambassadors serving in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, and the United States used X to speak to foreign publics, influence global opinion, and challenge mainstream media narratives. The primary research aim was to determine whether the Palestinian Authority and diplomatic

missions have maximised the potential of digital diplomacy, particularly in response to a rapidly evolving crisis. The key research questions were:

**RQ 1:** How do Palestinian ambassadors use X as a tool for digital diplomacy following the 7<sup>th</sup> October escalation?

**RQ 2:** What strategies do ambassadors employ to frame their messages and resonate with target audiences in Western countries?

**RQ 3:** To what extent has the Palestinian Authority, through its ambassadors, realised the strategic potential of digital diplomacy?

**RQ 4:** Has digital diplomacy created new communicative spaces for Palestinian voices in Western discourse?

These questions were addressed through a mixed-methods design that combined quantitative content measures (e.g., frequency of tweets, engagement, language selection) with qualitative content and sentiment analysis (e.g., humanitarian framing, legal storytelling, emotional tone). Some of the key findings based on empirical data are:

- Humanitarian and legal framing dominated ambassadorial tweets, with emotional appeals and references to international law used to invoke sympathy and moral legitimacy.
- Tweet frequency and engagement also varied among ambassadors, with diplomatic representatives such as Zomlot (UK) exhibiting higher levels of personalisation, responsiveness, and public visibility.
- Negative messaging was predominant in the initial weeks but eventually gave way to positive communications as ambassadors relayed international solidarity, legal updates, and diplomatic encounters.
- With limited budgets, Palestinian ambassadors effectively employed Twiplomacy strategies, including strategic hashtags, targeted media tagging, and viral storytelling, to convey the Palestinian voice and shape global conversations.
- The research revealed that individual ambassadors performed well; however, a significant institutional gap exists—namely, the absence of a unified strategy, limited coordination, and a disparate digital presence among embassies.

By providing an on-time case study of digital diplomacy under crisis conditions, the thesis addresses a crucial lacuna in the literature. There is no focused, empirical analysis of how Palestinian diplomats utilise digital platforms, not only for communication but also for international advocacy and representational resistance.

The findings reveal that although the Palestinian Authority has yet to finalise its institutionalisation of digital diplomacy, its ambassadors are more aware of—and better versed in—using social media as a public instrument of visibility, legitimacy, and moral influence. They are creating new diplomatic spaces in cyberspace, sometimes by necessity and at other times with measurable consequences.

### **6.3. Contributions to Knowledge**

This study makes several significant contributions to the existing literature on conflict international communication, digital diplomacy, and soft power. Its contribution is on three essential levels: empirical understanding, theoretical contribution, and application in methods.

#### **6.3.1 Empirical Contribution**

This thesis presents one of the first qualitative analyses of Palestinian ambassadorial digital diplomacy conducted in real time since the escalation of conflict in Gaza on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. It offers a close examination of the evolving role of individual ambassadors as digital diplomats operating on the international stage during a period of intense geopolitical tension. By focusing on their activity on the X platform, this research captures how Palestinian diplomats leveraged real-time communication tools to shape global discourse, challenge dominant narratives, and represent the Palestinian cause beyond traditional diplomatic forums.

The study provides the very first empirical record of the daily messaging strategies, rhetorical maneuvers, and thematic framing choices employed by Palestinian ambassadors during the crisis. This includes an in-depth analysis of how narratives were constructed, how emotional appeals were mobilized, and how engagement metrics—such as likes, retweets, and replies—functioned as indicators of message resonance and reach. In doing

so, the research contributes to a broader understanding of how diplomatic communication is shaped by platform logics, audience responsiveness, and geopolitical urgency.

Moreover, the thesis offers important insight into how diplomacy increasingly occurs outside formal negotiations and institutional corridors. It shows how ambassadors now operate within networked public spheres, using social media tools such as hashtags, mentions, multimedia, and live updates to assert visibility, build narratives, and foster solidarity. These digital interventions challenge conventional assumptions about diplomacy as a closed, elite-driven process and instead foreground its evolving nature as a participatory, performative, and real-time practice.

By capturing these dynamics, the study fills a critical gap in existing scholarship. Prior academic work on Palestinian diplomacy has largely centered on historical developments or institutional mechanisms, with limited focus on the practices of front-line diplomats during digitally mediated crises. This thesis not only addresses that void but also expands the field's understanding of public diplomacy under asymmetrical power conditions. It underscores the importance of real-time digital communication in the projection of state identity, the pursuit of narrative legitimacy, and the contestation of global opinion in times of conflict.

### **6.3.2 Theoretical Contribution**

This thesis contributes to and extends several foundational theories in the fields of international relations, communication, and digital diplomacy. First and foremost, it affirms Joseph Nye's Soft Power Theory, illustrating how Palestinian ambassadors utilized moral suasion, cultural narratives, and humanitarian storytelling to exert influence without resorting to coercion. Rather than relying on institutional authority or material resources, the ambassadors strategically deployed emotionally resonant content to project values, gain sympathy, and reframe the Palestinian experience in a morally compelling light. This aligns directly with Nye's concept of soft power as influence derived from attraction rather than force or payment.

The research also draws on Public Diplomacy Theory as developed Cull (2009) and Melissen (2005). While their framework traditionally emphasizes long-term image

cultivation and intercultural dialogue, this study expands it to account for conditions of acute crisis and asymmetry. Specifically, the thesis illustrates how digital platforms such as X are employed not only for cultural diplomacy but also for advocacy and urgent humanitarian communication. It examines the intersection between cultural representation and political lobbying, thereby demonstrating how public diplomacy evolves under real-time pressure and structural constraints.

Furthermore, this study complements and expands Twiplomacy theory, particularly the contributions of Manor (2019), Bjola and Holmes (2015), and Sevin (2017). The findings on agenda-setting, personalized content, and the strategic cultivation of ambassadorial personas—especially by figures like ambassador Zomlot—confirm that digital diplomacy is no longer confined to formal state messaging. Instead, it involves deliberate persona construction, networked communication, and the performance of authenticity, all of which are hallmarks of effective Twiplomacy. These developments reinforce the notion that the success of digital diplomacy hinges on the credibility, responsiveness, and media fluency of individual diplomats.

Finally, the study brings renewed attention to the emerging concept of “digital resistance diplomacy.” Drawing on the work of Bjola and Zaiotti (2020) and Papacharissi (2015), the thesis explores how sub-represented and non-hegemonic actors—such as Palestine—appropriate digital technologies to resist marginalisation, assert political legitimacy, and exercise moral agency. In doing so, it situates Palestinian digital diplomacy within a broader theoretical conversation about power asymmetry, visibility, and symbolic resistance in international communication.

The study closes the practice-theory gap by illustrating how digital diplomacy operates within structurally unequal power sites and how oppositional discourses can be engaged even in these contexts.

**Table 14: Summary of Research Contributions by Dimension**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Type</b>
Empirical	First-time case study of 6 Palestinian ambassadors post-7 October	Novel Dataset
Theoretical	Applies Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, and Twiplomacy to a stateless actor	Conceptual Model
Methodological	Mixed-methods: Content + Sentiment Analysis	Design Innovation
Practical	Actionable strategy for the Palestinian MOFA	Policy Impact
Comparative	Frames Palestine’s digital diplomacy against Israel’s infrastructure	Strategic Lens

### **6.3.3 Methodological Contribution**

Methodologically, the research offers a mixed-method analysis of digital diplomacy, such as:

- Quantitative indicators (frequency, engagement, language use),
- Qualitative thematic coding (thematic themes like humanitarian appeals, legalistic language, and identity expression),
- Sentiment analysis (tone of feeling): tone changes over time.

The multidimensional methodology enables deeper penetration of the content and forms of diplomatic communication in a digital environment. It reveals how researchers can triangulate meaning and impact by bringing together metrics and discourse analysis, particularly useful in quickly developing, high-emotional tension environments, such as armed conflict. The method can offer a valuable model for future research looking at the digital behaviours of State-driven or stateless actors, Global North foreign ministries, or Comparative cases from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

This thesis contributes to the literature on digital diplomacy with empirically grounded analysis, theoretically sound and methodologically rigorous approaches that together exhibit the shifting dynamics of international representation in the digital era, specifically for non-traditional actors.

## 6.4. Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research and an analysis of Palestinian ambassadors' digital diplomacy practices, several practical suggestions are made to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance the clarity of digital messaging, and expand the international outreach of Palestine's voice through diplomatic channels. They target three constituencies of main stakeholders: the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the ambassadors and the diplomatic missions, and fellow NGOs and partners acting on behalf of Palestinian advocacy.

**Table 15: Recommended Policy Measures for the PA's Digital Diplomacy Strategy**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Target Stakeholder</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>
Establish Digital Diplomacy Unit	Palestinian MOFA	Coordinate messaging, provide training
Train Diplomats in Social Media Use	Embassies & Diplomats	Improve quality, frequency, and targeting
Use Analytics Tools	Embassies & MOFA	Track performance, adjust narratives in real-time
Multilingual Content Strategy	Ambassadors & Staff	Maximise engagement across diverse audiences
Partner with Civil Society Influencers	Diaspora & NGOs	Amplify messages via trusted secondary networks

### 6.4.1 Recommendations for the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

To enhance the effectiveness and coherence of Palestinian digital diplomacy, several key institutional reforms are recommended for the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). First, the Ministry should consider the establishment of a well-centralized Digital Diplomacy Unit. This dedicated department or task force would be responsible for managing and coordinating all digital diplomatic communications. Its core functions would include designing content strategies, creating cross-platform campaigns, and ensuring rapid crisis communication responses during moments of political escalation. To achieve this effectively, the unit should be staffed by professionals with specialized expertise in areas such as social media management, strategic communication, translation, and audience analysis.

Secondly, MOFA should develop standardized procedures and training programs tailored to the unique demands of digital diplomacy. This includes drafting clear guidelines that outline tone, audience engagement strategies, and rules of engagement for diplomats operating on platforms such as X. These standards should be complemented by structured capacity-building training modules, covering essential topics such as platform-specific strategy (e.g., for X), digital ethics and content verification, crisis communication, and cross-cultural audience engagement. The objective is to equip diplomats with the skills and judgment necessary to navigate complex digital environments while representing the Palestinian cause professionally and effectively.

Thirdly, improved coordination of messaging across embassies is essential, particularly during key geopolitical events such as military escalations or United Nations resolutions. MOFA should implement a system of synchronized electronic messaging to ensure message consistency and amplification. This would include the distribution of pre-approved hashtags, unified talking points, standardized visual materials, and coordinated publishing schedules. Such alignment would maximize the diplomatic impact of digital communication, eliminate fragmented messaging, and reinforce the Palestinian narrative across global platforms.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations for Palestinian Ambassadors**

Palestinian ambassadors play a critical frontline role in shaping the digital diplomatic presence of Palestine. To enhance their effectiveness, several operational strategies should be adopted. First, ambassadors must prioritize consistency, frequency, and responsiveness in their social media engagement—particularly on X, which remains a key platform for real-time diplomatic discourse. Their accounts should be regularly updated, especially during politically significant events such as international summits, armed escalations, or key votes at the United Nations. By combining official diplomatic content with more accessible, real-time messaging—such as behind-the-scenes photographs, live-tweeted quotations from speeches, and immediate reactions to unfolding events—ambassadors can build trust and humanize the diplomatic role. Furthermore, engagement with civil society actors, journalists, and relevant stakeholders should be a strategic focus, helping to expand visibility and foster meaningful dialogue across audiences.

Secondly, ambassadors are encouraged to leverage digital analytics and modern communication tools to refine their outreach strategies. Utilizing native analytics tools like X Insights, or external platforms, they can monitor tweet performance, audience engagement rates, and demographic trends. This data-driven approach will allow for informed adjustments to posting schedules, content formats, and hashtag strategies, thereby optimizing reach and influence. Ambassadors should also experiment with varied multimedia formats, including short videos, infographics, and multilingual or translated text. These formats have been shown to improve engagement, accessibility, and emotional resonance, especially when addressing international audiences unfamiliar with the local context. By integrating such practices, Palestinian ambassadors can strengthen their digital presence and ensure that their messaging resonates across diverse and often competitive information environments.

#### **6.4.3 Recommendations for NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, and Media Partners**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organisations, and media partners serve as vital allies in supporting and amplifying Palestinian digital diplomacy. One key area of collaboration lies in the streamlining of digital media training. NGOs can work jointly with Palestinian embassies to provide technical training in essential skills such as video editing, social media strategy, graphic design, and digital security. These training programs would be especially beneficial for diplomats who have limited digital experience or lack dedicated communication staff. By building such technical capacity within embassy teams, NGOs help bridge the skills gap that can hinder consistent and impactful diplomatic communication online.

Another crucial contribution NGOs and civil society actors can offer is support in translation and multilingual content creation. Collaborating with embassies to translate diplomatic messaging into widely spoken languages such as Spanish, French, and German would significantly expand the reach of Palestinian narratives in non-English-speaking regions. Furthermore, the development of easily accessible glossaries and style guides could facilitate more efficient and culturally sensitive communication, particularly with Western audiences. Such tools would not only standardize tone and terminology but also

empower diplomats to communicate with greater confidence and clarity across linguistic barriers.

Finally, these partners can play an instrumental role in the development and promotion of cross-platform campaigns. With their communication expertise, NGOs and advocacy groups can assist in designing campaigns that are tailored to specific platforms such as X, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok—each with distinct user demographics and engagement patterns. These campaigns should be context-sensitive and responsive to real-time developments, thereby maximizing their relevance and resonance. Moreover, NGOs and media advocacy groups can directly amplify ambassadorial messages by embedding tweets into broader lobbying strategies, integrating them into awareness campaigns, and linking digital diplomacy to grassroots activism and offline protests. This multi-level engagement model offers a powerful mechanism to extend the reach of Palestinian digital diplomacy and embed it more deeply within international civil society networks.

These recommendations are not technical fixes in themselves—they are a step towards strategic, coordinated, and professionally mediated digital diplomacy. If implemented, they would be capable of uniting Palestinian online activity within a single diplomatic strategy that maximally leverages the possibilities of online engagement to enhance narrative control, public diplomacy, and international solidarity.

## **6.5 Limitations of the Study**

While this study provides in-depth insights into the Palestinian practice of digital diplomacy following the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, escalation, several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations are not flaws in the research design or findings, which remain valid within their scope, but rather serve as precautionary boundaries to prevent over-interpretation and to identify areas for further exploration.

Firstly, the study focused exclusively on X as the primary platform for analysis. While X remains central to real-time diplomatic communication and political discourse, other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok also play critical roles in digital diplomacy, particularly in visual storytelling and targeting specific

audience segments. This single-platform approach restricts the capacity to analyze broader patterns of engagement and the cross-channel dynamics that shape the digital strategies of modern diplomats.

Secondly, the research examined only the X activity of five Palestinian ambassadors operating in key Western countries. This actor-focused scope does not encompass the broader digital communication ecosystem, which includes official embassy accounts, Palestinian governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and influential civil society and diaspora figures who are also active in shaping diplomatic narratives online. As such, the findings offer a partial view of Palestinian digital advocacy and fall short of capturing the full extent of state and non-state collaboration within the digital diplomacy network.

Thirdly, the study did not include audience-side data to assess perception or impact. While it measured engagement metrics such as likes, retweets, and replies, it lacked tools to evaluate how audiences interpreted the content or whether it influenced public opinion or behavior. The absence of perception surveys, interviews, or digital ethnographies limits the ability to determine how ambassadorial tweets were received, whether they altered narratives, or contributed to tangible policy outcomes. Additionally, the study did not track long-term influence, such as changes in media framing or institutional responses resulting from diplomatic messaging.

In summary, while this research offers a timely and focused contribution to the scholarship on Palestinian digital diplomacy, its scope—limited by platform, actors, and production-centered analysis—should be seen as a foundation for expanded inquiry rather than a comprehensive account of the digital diplomatic landscape.

## **6.6 Suggestions for Future Research**

Building on the findings of this study, there are several promising directions for future research in digital diplomacy, particularly in contested geopolitical contexts such as Palestine. These suggestions are offered to expand the field of inquiry and to address the limitations outlined above.

First, future studies should undertake cross-platform comparative analyses. Digital diplomacy is not limited to X; it is practiced across various platforms, each offering unique affordances. For instance, Instagram enables visually compelling storytelling; TikTok facilitates short-form mobilization; YouTube supports long-form narrative-building and interviews; and LinkedIn allows for professional diplomacy and elite networking. A comparative study examining how state and non-state actors adapt their strategies across these platforms would yield a more holistic understanding of digital diplomatic practices, particularly in terms of audience segmentation, aesthetic presentation, and platform-specific engagement trends.

Second, it is imperative to explore the audience side of digital diplomacy. Future research should investigate how foreign publics perceive and respond to diplomatic content online. This could include perception studies involving surveys or interviews with targeted audiences, such as Western citizens, diaspora communities, or policymakers. Digital ethnography or discourse analysis could also help uncover how ambassadorial content is interpreted, reshaped, or contested by audiences. These methods would provide empirical insight into the impact of digital diplomacy on public opinion formation, activism, and policy discourse.

Third, comparative studies with other non-hegemonic or stateless actors could offer valuable theoretical insights. For example, researchers could examine the digital diplomacy efforts of the Kurdish Regional Government, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Taiwanese diplomatic strategies in the context of Chinese opposition, or Ukraine's digital resistance during the 2022 Russian invasion. These cases would allow scholars to conceptualize "diplomacy from below" and explore how marginal actors use digital platforms to navigate power asymmetries in global discourse.

Lastly, longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term impact of digital diplomacy. Future studies should aim to trace how online diplomatic campaigns influence media narratives, donor support, institutional recognition, and policy-making over extended periods. Indicators might include shifts in international news framing, parliamentary debates, changes in foreign aid or recognition, or diplomatic agenda-setting influenced by digital narratives. Such research would help distinguish between symbolic visibility and

substantive diplomatic outcomes, addressing a core challenge in evaluating the effectiveness of soft power in the digital age.

In sum, these research avenues will deepen scholarly understanding of digital diplomacy and provide evidence-based guidance for policymakers, diplomats, and civil society actors navigating this rapidly evolving communicative terrain.

## **6.7 Final Reflection**

As global politics continue to evolve within a digitized environment, the traditional boundaries of diplomacy are being redefined. Diplomatic engagement is no longer restricted to formal negotiations behind closed doors or the dissemination of official communiqués. Today, diplomacy increasingly takes place in real-time, through networked power and direct audience engagement via social media. These developments offer both opportunities and challenges, particularly for structurally disadvantaged or geopolitically marginalized actors like Palestine.

This thesis has demonstrated that, even in the absence of full statehood or conventional power, Palestinian ambassadors—especially those stationed in Western capitals—have effectively used X as a platform for strategic communication. Their messages, often emotionally charged and morally grounded, serve to humanize the Palestinian struggle, assert international norms, and reclaim narrative space in a competitive and often hostile discursive environment. In this sense, digital diplomacy is not only a tactical tool but also a vital component of Palestinian resistance and identity assertion on the global stage.

However, this influence remains uneven and overly reliant on the efforts of individual diplomats. Without institutional support, comprehensive training, and a harmonized digital infrastructure, the impact of these efforts risks being short-lived or under-leveraged. Therefore, this study highlights the urgent need for MOFA and allied institutions to invest in the strategic development of digital diplomacy capabilities. In an era where narrative control, international solidarity, and foreign policy framing are increasingly mediated through digital platforms, improvisation is insufficient.

More broadly, this research contributes to the understanding of how digital technologies are transforming diplomacy. It shows that visibility, engagement, and influence are no longer the exclusive domains of powerful states or elite actors. With strategic use of digital tools, even stateless or underrepresented populations can assert their presence, shape discourse, and advocate for justice—tweet by tweet, hashtag by hashtag. As global crises continue to unfold and diplomatic conflicts evolve, digital platforms will remain critical battlegrounds for narrative power and political legitimacy.

As new crises continue to emerge and old ones persist, the cyber stage will increasingly dominate international diplomacy. Domination of that stage for Palestine—and the likes of them—is not an option; it is a requirement.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolving role of Palestinian digital diplomacy through an analysis of X activity by five Palestinian ambassadors stationed in key Western countries—USA, Canada, UK, France, and Germany—over a critical three-month period following the escalation of violence on October 7, 2023. This escalation occurred within the broader and ongoing context of Israel’s prolonged military occupation of Palestine. The study explores how Palestinian diplomats leveraged social media as a strategic tool to shape national narratives, advocate for humanitarian concerns, and influence international public and political opinion, particularly during a time when conventional diplomatic avenues were constrained.

The findings reveal that digital platforms, especially X, have emerged as vital arenas of diplomatic engagement for politically marginalised actors such as Palestine. In the absence of full statehood and under considerable resource constraints, Palestinian ambassadors have utilised these platforms to circumvent mainstream media filters, respond to disinformation, and evoke global empathy through emotional and legal narratives. Notably, emotionally charged posts, references to international law, and the use of visual evidence—such as photographs of humanitarian suffering—were among the most engaging and widely shared. These strategies allowed Palestinian diplomats to assert moral legitimacy and build transnational solidarity, particularly when tweeting in English with succinct and targeted messages.

A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining quantitative metrics (such as tweet frequency and engagement rates) with qualitative content and sentiment analysis. The study also identified several limitations, including the sporadic use of digital diplomacy tools across embassies, reliance on individual ambassadorial initiative rather than cohesive institutional strategy, and underinvestment in digital communication infrastructure. Additionally, algorithmic censorship, linguistic bias, and varying levels of digital literacy further complicated outreach and message amplification.

Despite these challenges, Palestinian digital diplomacy during the 7<sup>th</sup> of October crisis made notable gains in visibility and public mobilisation. The thesis identifies this activity as a form of adaptive, narrative-driven resistance diplomacy—one that blends traditional diplomatic values with the immediacy and visibility of digital technologies.

However, the study also underscores the vulnerabilities inherent in relying heavily on social media, particularly under conditions of geopolitical inequality and algorithmic opacity.

Based on the analysis, several recommendations are proposed. These include the development of a formal digital diplomacy framework by the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the appointment of trained communication personnel in embassies, and the creation of centralised support structures to coordinate message consistency and improve strategic engagement. Additionally, the study suggests leveraging diaspora networks and civil society organisations as key amplifiers of digital messaging.

Academically, this research contributes to the growing literature on digital diplomacy by foregrounding the experience of a non-sovereign actor operating within a high-stakes conflict zone. It demonstrates how digital platforms function not only as tools of communication but as contested arenas for political legitimacy, symbolic power, and narrative control. Ultimately, the study positions Palestinian digital diplomacy as an emerging model of resistance diplomacy—where a tweet may, in certain moments, hold the weight of a formal communiqué.

**Key Words:** Digital Diplomacy, Palestinian Ambassadors, Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, Crisis Communication, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

## ÖZET

Bu tez, 7 Ekim 2023'te şiddetin tırmanmasının ardından kritik bir üç aylık dönemde, ABD, Kanada, İngiltere, Fransa ve Almanya gibi önemli Batı ülkelerinde görev yapan beş Filistinli büyükelçinin X faaliyetlerinin analizi yoluyla Filistin dijital diplomasisinin gelişen rolünü incelemektedir. Bu tırmanma, İsrail'in Filistin'deki uzun süreli askeri işgalinin daha geniş ve devam eden bağlamında meydana gelmiştir. Çalışma, Filistinli diplomatların, özellikle geleneksel diplomatik yolların kısıtlı olduğu bir dönemde, ulusal anlatıları şekillendirmek, insani kaygıları savunmak ve uluslararası kamuoyunu ve siyasi görüşü etkilemek için sosyal medyayı stratejik bir araç olarak nasıl kullandıklarını araştırmaktadır.

Bulgular, dijital platformların, özellikle X'in, Filistin gibi siyasi olarak dışlanmış aktörler için hayati diplomatik etkileşim alanları olarak ortaya çıktığını ortaya koyuyor. Tam bir devlet olmamanın ve önemli kaynak kısıtlamalarının olmadığı bir dönemde, Filistinli büyükelçiler bu platformları ana akım medya filtrelerini aşmak, dezenformasyona yanıt vermek ve duygusal ve hukuki anlatılar aracılığıyla küresel empati uyandırmak için kullandılar. Özellikle, duygusal içerikli paylaşımlar, uluslararası hukuka atıflar ve insani acıların fotoğrafları gibi görsel kanıtların kullanımı, en ilgi çekici ve yaygın olarak paylaşılanlar arasındaydı. Bu stratejiler, Filistinli diplomatların, özellikle özlü ve hedef odaklı mesajlar içeren İngilizce tweetler attıklarında, ahlaki meşruiyetlerini savunmalarına ve ulusötesi dayanışma inşa etmelerine olanak sağladı.

Nicel metrikleri (tweet sıklığı ve etkileşim oranları gibi) nitel içerik ve duygu analiziyle birleştiren karma yöntemli bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Çalışma ayrıca, büyükelçilikler genelinde dijital diplomasi araçlarının düzensiz kullanımı, tutarlı kurumsal strateji yerine bireysel elçilik inisiyatiflerine güvenilmesi ve dijital iletişim altyapısına yetersiz yatırım yapılması gibi çeşitli sınırlamalar da tespit etmiştir. Ayrıca, algoritmik sansür, dilsel önyargı ve değişen dijital okuryazarlık düzeyleri, erişimi ve mesajın yaygınlaştırılmasını daha da zorlaştırmıştır.

Bu zorluklara rağmen, 7 Ekim krizi sırasında Filistin dijital diplomasisi görünürlük ve kamuoyu seferberliği açısından kayda değer kazanımlar elde etmiştir. Tez, bu faaliyeti, geleneksel diplomatik değerleri dijital teknolojilerin anında etki ve görünürlüğüyle harmanlayan, uyarlanabilir, anlatı odaklı bir direniş diplomasisi biçimi olarak

tanımlamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çalışma aynı zamanda, özellikle jeopolitik eşitsizlik ve algoritmik belirsizlik koşulları altında, sosyal medyaya yoğun bir şekilde güvenmenin doğasında bulunan zaafaların da altını çizmektedir.

Analize dayanarak, çeşitli önerilerde bulunmaktadır. Bunlar arasında, Filistin Dışişleri Bakanlığı tarafından resmi bir dijital diplomasi çerçevesinin geliştirilmesi, büyükelçiliklere eğitimli iletişim personeli atanması ve mesaj tutarlılığını koordine etmek ve stratejik etkileşimi iyileştirmek için merkezi destek yapılarının oluşturulması yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma, dijital mesajlaşmanın temel güçlendiricileri olarak diaspora ağlarından ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarından yararlanılmasını önermektedir.

Akademik olarak, bu araştırma, yüksek riskli bir çatışma bölgesinde faaliyet gösteren egemen olmayan bir aktörün deneyimini ön plana çıkararak dijital diplomasi üzerine büyüyen literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır. Dijital platformların yalnızca iletişim araçları olarak değil, aynı zamanda siyasi meşruiyet, sembolik güç ve anlatı kontrolü için tartışmalı alanlar olarak nasıl işlev gördüğünü göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, çalışma, Filistin dijital diplomasisini, bir tweet'in belirli anlarda resmi bir bildiri kadar etkili olabileceği, yükselen bir direniş diplomasisi modeli olarak konumlandırmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital Diplomasi, Filistinli Büyükelçiler, Kamusal Diplomasi, Yumuşak Güç, Kriz İletişimi, İsrail-Filistin Çatışması