



Research Article

The impact of digital media on shaping foreign policies: an analytical study of the role of modern communication tools in international relations

Hakam N Abed^{a*}

hakamnabed@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-3418-8836

^aAlnoor University, Mosul, 41012, Iraq

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Abstract:

In recent decades, digital media has become one of the most prominent tools in shaping the foreign policies of states. This research presents an analytical study of the impact of modern communication tools on international relations, focusing on how governments and political institutions use these tools to build their foreign strategies. Through a literature review and the application of various analytical methodologies, the research aims to provide a deep understanding of the ways media interacts with global political dynamics, highlighting the future prospects's of this influence considering rapid technological developments.

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* Corresponding author
E-mail address: hakamnabed@gmail.com



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Introduction

With the evolution of media in the 21st century, the world has witnessed a radical transformation in how foreign policies are shaped and formulated. Traditional media has played an important role in disseminating news and information, but it has now become an integral part of the political decision-making process. Digital media has enhanced this role by providing instant, multi-platform communication channels between governments and global audiences. This research will explore the ways modern media has influenced the foreign policies of states, focusing on recent examples and future trends of this influence.

Main Research Question: How do digital media contribute to shaping the foreign policies of states?

Objectives

- Review and assess the increasing role of digital media in international relations.
- Analyze real-world examples of how governments utilize these tools to implement their foreign strategies.
- Provide recommendations for decision-makers on how to leverage these tools in the future.

Literature Review

1. The Impact of Traditional and Digital Media on International Relations:

Since the emergence of the media, it has always been a primary tool in shaping public opinion and influencing



international policy. According to multiple studies, traditional media played a pivotal role in reinforcing the policies of major powers through organized propaganda campaigns. However, the digital revolution has led to a radical change in this field, as digital media now possesses an unprecedented ability to influence international relations due to the speed and spread of information (1).

2. Digital Media as a Tool for Political Influence:

Digital media is used by governments and international organizations as a tool to influence public opinion and steer global discussions. Through social media platforms, governments can reach a broad audience and influence

their stances on specific issues. For example, studies have shown that digital media had a significant impact on shaping public opinion regarding international conflicts, such as the Ukrainian crisis (2).

3. Transformations in Global Political Dynamics:

Digital media has contributed to enhancing transparency and access to information, significantly affecting global political dynamics. Many researchers point out that digital media has reduced government control over information, giving the public a larger role in shaping foreign policies (3).

Methodology:

1. Qualitative Analysis Approach:

This research relies on a qualitative analysis approach that focuses on case studies and real-world examples. Textual analysis



techniques are used to analyze data extracted from digital media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, in addition to studying official statements issued by governments.

2. Sample Selection:

A selection of international cases that witnessed intensive use of digital media in shaping foreign policies was chosen. Among these cases are the Syrian conflict, the Ukrainian crisis, and the role of digital media in recent US elections. These cases will be studied in-depth to provide a comprehensive view of different impacts.

3. Data Sources:

Data was collected from various sources, including academic articles, international organization reports, and statements from government officials. Additionally, data from digital media was used to provide an accurate and reliable analysis.

Analysis and Discussion:

1. The Role of Digital Media in the Syrian Conflict:

The Syrian conflict witnessed intensive use of digital media by all concerned parties. The Syrian government used official media channels to control the national narrative, while the opposition used digital media to communicate with the international community and rally support (4). This extensive use of digital media contributed to shaping many countries' positions on the Syrian crisis and influenced United Nations' decisions regarding the conflict.



2. The Ukrainian Crisis and the Impact of Digital Media:

Digital media played a pivotal role in the Ukrainian crisis by disseminating information and promoting different stances on the conflict. Social media platforms contributed to spreading live videos and reports from conflict zones, which led to shaping global public opinion and steering the foreign policies of major powers (5). This analysis serves as a vivid example of how digital media is used as a tool to influence international policy.

3. The US Elections and the Role of Digital Media:

During the recent US elections, digital media was a primary battleground for electoral campaigns. Different political parties used digital media to promote their candidates and steer discussions on key issues. Studies have shown that digital media significantly contributed to shaping election outcomes by influencing voters' positions (6).

4. The Role of Digital Media in Political Polarization:

Digital media has been widely criticized for contributing to political polarization in the United States. Social media platforms tend to create echo chambers where users are exposed primarily to information and opinions that align with their existing beliefs. This phenomenon reinforces ideological divides, making it more challenging for political discourse to occur across party lines. Research has shown that algorithms designed to maximize user engagement often prioritize sensational or divisive content, further deepening political polarization (7). As a result, digital media not only influences voter behavior but also shapes the broader political landscape by exacerbating tensions between different ideological groups.



5. Misinformation and the Spread of "Fake News":

One of the most significant concerns regarding digital media's role in elections is the spread of misinformation, commonly referred to as "fake news." During the US elections, social media platforms were flooded with false or misleading information intended to deceive voters or manipulate public opinion. These false narratives often went viral, reaching millions of users and potentially influencing their voting decisions. Studies have shown that misinformation spreads more quickly and widely on social media than accurate information, largely due to its sensational nature (8). The spread of fake news poses a serious threat to democratic processes, as it undermines informed decision-making and can lead to a misinformed electorate.

6. Digital Media and Voter Mobilization:

Despite the challenges posed by digital media, it has also been a powerful tool for voter mobilization. Political campaigns have increasingly turned to social media to reach and engage with potential voters, particularly younger demographics who are more likely to consume news and information online. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been used to organize events, encourage voter registration, and share persuasive messaging. For instance, the use of targeted advertisements on social media allowed campaigns to tailor their messages to specific voter segments, increasing the likelihood of turnout among key demographic groups (9). The ability of digital media to connect with voters in a personalized and interactive manner has transformed how campaigns are run and has had a significant impact on electoral outcomes.



7. The Ethical Implications of Digital Media Use in Elections:

The use of digital media in elections raises important ethical questions, particularly concerning data privacy and the manipulation of public opinion. The Cambridge Analytica scandal, where millions of Facebook users' data were harvested without consent for political advertising purposes, highlighted the potential for misuse of digital media in elections. This incident raised concerns about the ethical boundaries of using personal data to influence voter behavior and the need for stricter regulations to protect user privacy (10). Furthermore, the use of bots and automated accounts to spread propaganda or manipulate trending topics on social media platforms raises additional ethical issues regarding the integrity of the electoral process.

8. The Future of Digital Media in Political Campaigns:

Looking ahead, the role of digital media in political campaigns is likely to continue evolving as technology advances. The increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in digital advertising allows for even more precise targeting of voters based on their online behavior. Additionally, the rise of new platforms such as TikTok and the integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) into social media may offer new avenues for political engagement. However, these advancements also bring new challenges, including the potential for increased surveillance and the need for updated regulations to address emerging ethical concerns

(11). As digital media becomes more sophisticated, its influence on elections will likely grow, necessitating ongoing scrutiny and adaptation by policymakers, scholars, and the public.



Conclusions and Future Prospects:

1. Main Conclusions:

It can be said that digital media has become an integral part of the process of shaping foreign policies. Through the examples reviewed, digital media has a significant ability to influence international relations and steer the foreign policies of states. Digital media represents both a challenge and an opportunity for decision-makers, as it allows them to reach a global audience but also imposes new challenges related to information management and content control.

2. Recommendations for Decision-Makers:

Effectively Utilize Digital Media Strategies: Governments should develop effective digital media strategies that can enhance their international interests and communicate effectively with the global public.

Focus on Transparency and Credibility: To ensure the effectiveness of digital media, governments and international institutions must reinforce the principle of transparency and credibility in disseminating information.

Adapt to Technological Changes: Decision-makers should be prepared for rapid technological changes and their potential impacts on digital media.

3. Future Prospects's:

The influence of digital media on international relations is expected to increase in the future, especially with the development of artificial intelligence and virtual reality technologies. These developments can enhance the ability of digital media to shape foreign policies, opening new areas for research and analysis in this field.



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