Masters of Science Thesis

Social media as a tool for diplomacy:

A case study of the Netherlands

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Summary

Old fashioned classic state-to-state diplomacy is no longer deemed sufficient by most governments. Diplomats are now required to become active in the network society. A part of this new job description is public diplomacy. One can separate public diplomacy into two parts: internal public diplomacy and external public diplomacy. The former is an attempt to build towards a better national reputation. External public diplomacy has a different target group, it tries to build a positive reputation under a foreign public. Afterwards it tries to facilitate a policy change by harnessing the aforementioned good will.

However, this “new” way of diplomacy is not the only change that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to implement. Utilizing technology has become even more important for governments. This awareness for the potential of technology has trickled down to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The internet has made the world even more interconnected than before. Furthermore, the invention of the internet also led to the establishment of various social media platforms. Users of these platforms can almost instantly send out messages to their friends or family. Subsequently, these platforms have become objects of interest for the governments trying to participate in public diplomacy. The main reason for this is that social media allows them to reach their target audience more easily.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands tried to implement the idea of public diplomacy and social media in their policies in 2013. An advisory commission set out all the opportunities for the Dutch government regarding new modern diplomacy. However, this document did not explain how exactly these opportunities should be achieved. Interviews with several diplomats showed vast differences of implementation. Furthermore, coded social media messages showed that the Dutch diplomats hardly carried out external public diplomacy. They were mostly focused on a Dutch audience. Additionally, the hypothesis that diplomats would abuse their freedom of implementation for the pursuit of self-interests was rejected. Only one case was found whereby the diplomat deviated from his mandate. There were several reasons for these two main findings. First of all, diplomats copied the social media behavior of their Minister. Who sets out what kind of behavior is appropriate for diplomats. Additionally, there were external, internal and personal causes that led to the rejection of the hypotheses. Afterwards several recommendations were set up to improve the social media use of the Dutch diplomats. An example of one of these is the necessity of going into dialogues with the public. Simply making statements does not lead to any kind of results. Topics need to be discussed if they want to have any kind of impact.

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1. Preamble

The preamble will lead in the document and consists of three parts. Part one is a general introduction to the research. This part is followed up by the problem definition, wherein the preliminary research is displayed. And lastly, the preamble is wrapped up in the central research question which defines the scope of the research.

1.1 Introduction

The modern state has been constantly trying to fit in today's social and technological context, this is necessary to tackle new issues deeply entrenched within contemporary society. Waves of change and innovation even hit former "old fashioned" state institutions such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In this case the focus will be on the introduction of social media as a tool for diplomacy. This introduction has however led to a multitude of cases in which according to newspapers the government and civil servants have clashed. Preventing this clash is of primary concern for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the reputation of the entire nation is at stake. One slip up of a diplomat could potentially lead to deal breakers for multinational companies investing abroad, the fall of the responsible Minister as well as damage trade relations between states. This paper will delve into the new 'Modern Diplomacy' policy of the Netherlands to see whether giving the diplomats the freedom of posting on social media has changed their work and thought process. Do they follow the 'Merchant approach' and purely post with economic benefits in mind or are they willing to make politically charged statements (Priest approach)? And what limits the effectiveness of posting on social media and how can it be improved? Those are some of the questions that will be answered in this paper.

1.2 Problem Definition

To understand the problem at hand, several concepts that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now has to deal with need to be explored. The first concept that is explored is the modern view on diplomacy and how the Dutch government deals with this new view. One of the reasons behind the “reinvention” of diplomacy was the drive for more managerial practices, therefore this is the second concept set out in this chapter. Thirdly, some research was done about the governments on social media. Lastly, there is the societal and scientific relevance wherein the benefits of the research from an academic and non-academic viewpoint are summarized.

Modern Diplomacy

Diplomacy has been an integral part for functional relationships between states since the creation of nation states. It is according to Toscano defined as: “the mediation of estranged peoples organized in states which interact in a system” (2001 :p. 44). This definition focuses on embroiled relationships between states. However, in the contemporary times diplomacy and international relations have changed.

The accumulation of power is no longer the main goal of a state. A large state can no longer easily conquer smaller states by force due to globalization and emerging supranational organizations. The “dog eat dog world”, has changed in correspondence with the new complex set of interconnectivities and interdependencies between states. The number of other actors trying to influence the governments has increased (Saner & Yiu, year of publication unknown). These new policies are no longer only focused on security but have now shifted to competing on resources, markets and legitimacy. This allows smaller states that might lack in military strength to become increasingly more important and more able to influence modern day international relations.

Secondly, another reason for the change of how diplomacy is carried out is the “invasion” of the mass media. The media has become less compromising and more insistent on being present than ever before. This in turn, forces the former hidden forms of communication between states into the open. Creating a situation, in which in your adversary and constituency almost immediately become aware of your policy decisions (Eban, 1985). As a result, compromises that you are willing to make to one party are now visible to all interested parties, changing the opinion of those other interested parties. Additionally, the players of the diplomatic game are no longer necessarily diplomats. Nowadays it has become increasingly more common to see statesmen take on this role in international organizations or on diplomatic visits to other nations. This in turn has led to a decline in power of ambassadors and has put the decision-making power in the hands of the national governments instead (Eban, 1985).

Lastly, ethics has started to play an increasingly more important role. For some states ethics have become more important than accumulating power or economic wealth e.g. Scandinavian states. The role of ethics is further exemplified in the extensive preambular parts of international treaties and covenants. Their function is to define the problem at hand and to introduce the operational clauses (Toscano, 2001).

The Dutch government formulated a new strategy regarding modern diplomacy based on recommendations of the advisory committee 'Modernisering Diplomatie'. The new strategy was necessary as it would lead to an increase in professionalism in the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Netherlands and it would expand the know-how on interacting within a network society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). The latter, in turn additionally serves as a way to further improve the reputation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The original reason for the plan was the package of budget cuts that the Ministry had to implement due to the multiple economic crises that hit the global market and that severely affected the Dutch economy.

In the introduction the following five activities of the Dutch state are described:

1. Active participation in opportunities to improve security, stability, the rule of law and to improve human rights around the world;
2. Strengthening the position of the Netherlands in Europe and of Europe in the world;
3. Improving the Dutch economy by facilitating trade and investments;
4. Creating an excellent service to companies, knowledge institutions and citizens abroad;
5. Contributing to a fair and durable world with chances for everyone.

However it stresses that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a hard time carrying out all of its desired tasks because of the budget cuts. As a result a large portion of the document is used to explain how the Ministry should deal with these budget cuts. To keep an effective diplomatic service it advises the Ministry to change its way of operating. It needs to be turned into a network organization with diplomats able to operate in classic state diplomacy and public diplomacy.

Managerial practices

The New Public Management movement, has appeared the last twenty years as a response to technological changes, globalization and further demands for competitiveness. This has led to a multitude of changes within the Public Sector. There was a major paradigm shift from the traditional model of public administration to the new managerialism model. One of the vast changes within the public sector was the way how public management deals with accountability. In contrast to the prior situation it is now far more fluid and political (Hughes, 2003). The managerial approach to accountability increased the direct accountability of politicians and civil servants to the public. However, the new view on accountability has led to internal changes as well. Public servants themselves have become increasingly more personally accountable for their achievements and actions. This was done by adopting three principles from the private sector: clearer specification of what is done by all organizations within the government, ensure personal accountability for failure and success and lastly the adaptation of retrospective accountability (Hughes, 2003). The latter is particularly interesting as it amounts to increasing the trust placed in the civil servants by granting them more freedom. This places more power in the hands of the civil servants. They are now allowed to make more choices based on their own considerations, due to being evaluated retrospectively instead of constructing their behavior prospectively. In short, trust from the government in the actions of the civil servants becomes crucial.

Derived from this newly placed trust is the concept of discretionary power, whereby civil servants are more freely allowed to use their powers as they see fit (Derksen & Schaap, 2007). The concept was originally introduced for police officers and judges allowing them to decide whether they thought a certain punishment was suitable or not. It has a number of advantages such as being able to make exceptions when situations asks for them or when situations arrive without a set policy, allowing a civil servant to intervene without having to wait on “orders”. Lastly, it allows the organizations to learn based on the experience of individuals practicing the law. This experience is later then shared by the aforementioned retrospective evaluations. If the evaluations end up showing common trends or patterns it shows opportunities for new policies or changes thereof, improving the practices of the government in general (Derksen & Schaap, 2007). Nevertheless, it has disadvantages as well. First and foremost, it damages the legal security of citizens as it allows civil servants to choose which cases they think are important. Secondly, the legal equality is diminished as each civil servant will tackle issues differently (Derksen & Schaap, 2007).

Social Media

Government agencies all over the world are starting to use social media. They do so to rapidly connect to those they serve and to increase engagement with their citizens, in an effort to improve the overall quality of government services (Hrdinova, Helbig and Peters, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the potential dangers of using social media and how to make an effective social media strategy. Social media refers to a group of online web kits that are designed around social interaction between multiple actors. It differs greatly from traditional media as it allows for a many-to-many interaction instead of a one-to-many approach such as TV or radio (Bertot, Jaeger and Hansen, 2011). Furthermore, employment of social media offers key opportunities for governments. Firstly, it enhances democratic participation and engagement as it fosters a participatory dialogue between the government and the general public. This dialogue allows the public to voice their concerns on policy development and implementation. Additionally, the aforementioned concerns can be used to co-produce new policies. Thirdly, it offers the opportunity of crowdsourcing for information and solutions. The government can now seek innovation through public knowledge, to enable crowdsourcing all it has to do is share data with the public. Afterwards, the government can simply cherry pick which solutions it finds probable.

Societal and scientific relevance

In a time of uncertainty and a changing view on diplomacy the use of social media might offer some advantages to the Dutch government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). How the Dutch government plans to do so remains unknown. The government therefore puts a great deal of trust in the diplomats abroad to use social media wisely. The potential dangers, as mentioned in the introduction, are numerous ranging from damaged state relationships to the loss of economic opportunities. Thus, the use of Social Media by an ambassador is not necessarily only of the government's concern but instead it is a concern of all citizens of the nation it represents. Lastly, at the end of the research recommendations will be made to start using social media more effectively.

Additionally, the use of social media as a tool for public diplomacy abroad has yet to be evaluated by the Dutch government. There is currently a gap of knowledge about whether social media is beneficial for the Dutch state and its citizens or whether it is damaging instead. Therefore it is important to evaluate how diplomats working all over the world use their discretionary power differently in regards to what they post on social media. Secondly, the conclusions could perhaps expand the knowledge about the decision-making process of governmental actors.

1.3 Central research question

The influence of economic crises and critiques were significant enough to completely overhaul the Dutch diplomacy. Significant changes were introduced to the diplomats' modus of operandi in an effort to unleash their potential in the network society. These changes included an expectation of diplomats to be more active on new communication platforms. Public diplomacy through social media is a completely new phenomenon, as such it is an interesting topic to investigate.

Therefore the goal of this research paper is to: "*Analyze the new modern diplomacy approach of the Netherlands concerning the use of social media as a tool for public diplomacy.*"

The following central research question has been derived from this goal:

"In what way does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and her ambassadors utilize social media for public diplomacy and how can this be improved?"

Sub questions derived from the main research question:

1. What is the new Dutch modern diplomacy plan?

2. How is the new modern diplomacy plan implemented?

3. In what way do the users post on social media?

4. What is currently limiting the use of public diplomacy on social media?

Deductive research revolves around using theory to solve the central research question (Van Thiel, 2007). In this case the central research question will be tackled by four sorts of theory. Firstly, communication theory is used to explain the allegedly "new" types of state interactions. Furthermore, behavioral theory and managerial theory are used to analyze the decision-making of individual diplomats. Theory regarding public diplomacy is used to further interpret and evaluate the Dutch modern diplomacy. Any conclusions of the paper might add additional substance to the aforementioned theories or bring up new issues to research.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the theories that will be used to shape this research. The first theory is the communication theory that explains basic interactions between actors. These theories will then be applied to state communication. This type of communication has changed over the years due to the influence of soft power and the network society that are also introduced later on in this chapter. Furthermore, there is the cultural approach theory which will help analyzing the behavior of the diplomats.

In addition to these communication models are the principal-agent and rational choice models. These models will then be operationalized into hypotheses and indicators. Lastly, there are several figures that depict the relations of the theories to each other and to the subject at hand.

2.1 Communication theory

There are many theories about communication, the definition of Cherry was chosen for its influence on contemporary theories. To this day, his classic definition of communication still remains true.

Communication according to Cherry (1957) is in essence a social affair. Human communication, in particular human speech and language, greatly differs from the sign system of animals. Man is able to express all of his thoughts through speech instead of having to rel on instinctive cries for mating or panic. Speech and writing are however by no means man's only forms of communication. Social intercourse through gestures of hands or face are used to convey subtle understanding. However, even the money we use or the clothes we wear sendoff signals to other humans. Communication therefore makes behavior predictable and in turn allows humans to organize themselves. In essence communication means "a sharing of elements of behavior, or modes of life, by the existence of sets of rules." (Cherry, 1957 :p. 6).

The question remains what humans actually communicate that brings these sets of rules into existence. Physically, humans transmit the earlier mentioned signals or signs (audible, visual or tactual). In addition, every time humans communicate information is shared. However, the meaning of this information is potentially different for the other party that the speaker is trying to communicate with. This is a result of everyone communicating in a different way because of the large variety of languages, symbols and accents. Context is therefore vital to confer the intended meaning of the speaker (Cherry, 1957).

2.2 State Communication

As mentioned above every actor communicates in a different way. Grunig (2002) tried to summarize the way a state interacts with other actors. His theory was chosen because it puts the original classic definition of Cherry (1957) into a modern perspective. He starts of by describing the classical one-way interaction of the state that mainly tried to consciously influence the behavior of society through information and policy. Additionally, he mentions the more interactive models that fit better with today's network society.

Table 1: The Excellence Theory of Public Relations

	Asymmetrical models	**Symmetrical models**
One-way interaction	**Press agency/Publicity:** *Utilizes persuasion and manipulation as tools to influence the public to behave as the state desires.*	**Public Information model:** *Communication is done by press releases and other similar techniques to spread information to the public.*
Two-way interaction	**Two-way asymmetrical model:** *Utilizes persuasion and manipulation to influence the public. The difference now is however that the state uses information given by the public to maximize their influence.*	**Two-way symmetrical model:** *Communication focused on negotiating with the public and to further promote mutual understanding between actors.*

Source: Grunig (2002)

The four models of state interaction displayed in table 1 are nowadays used in a parallel fashion, this was not the case before the information age. In the years prior and during the Cold War power was purely defined by the military strength of a state. The fall of the Berlin Wall and Soviet Union resulted in a strong realignment in the international sphere and therefore in the international relations theory. Factors such as technology, education and economic growth became significantly more important when defining international power

(Nye, 1990). As a result the proof of power shifted from being able to occupy another country on a whim to subtly shifting a states' behavior. This is the core of the soft power theory, defined by Nye as: "If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow. If it can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it can support institutions that make other states wish to channel or limit their activities in ways the dominant state prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise or hard power." (Nye, 1990: p. 154). To establish international norms that are consistent with society a strong network is needed and as such soft power can be seen as one of the reasons for popularity of networks. No longer is a strong military the only way to influence another state. A strong network involving key players is now able to influence others more easily.

Within states a second transformation became visible. The internet and other technologies lowered the costs of access to information, weakening the monopoly of the state. As a result the network society emerged forcing the state into the two-ways types of interaction. The communicator with the strongest and most tight network now becomes the power player within a state. This surplus of information results in a "paradox of plenty" in which attention instead of information becomes the primary sought after resource (Yepsen, 2012). States can no longer entirely control the media and the audience can reply spontaneously. The aim changed from executing one campaign, to building long-term relationships with the public.

This trickled down to states' foreign policies resulting in different strategies and in different behaviors of diplomats abroad. Inter-state business was previously conducted by a small group of rich and white males meeting in salons to discuss treaties. These treaties were their primary concern and they were considered the bread and butter of diplomacy. But with the crave for attention and introduction of soft power, states have become increasingly less concerned with simple treaties. Most bilateral exchanges nowadays are not expressed within political treaties but remain influential within the financial, commercial and cultural sectors. The ambassadors now have to become the primary agent within the network, like a spider within a web (Henry, 2012).

2.3 The Cultural Approach

Creating a strong network also requires a different approach regarding building lasting relationships. Culture plays a central role during the process of building those relationships. Dialogues, as a form of communication, serve as a medium for the exchange of cultures. These dialogues have become the main facet of diplomacy between two states but also between a state and the public. Relationship building, in this context, is no longer driven by set goals. On the contrary, the idea of persuading another actor to adopt certain values or norms has been let lose in this approach in favor of developing a mutually satisfying relationship. The acknowledgement and respect for each other's value systems provide a basis for a dialogical process built on trust between the actors. Mutual trust is however only achievable by letting go of the competitive framework and short-term commitments. Only sincerity and long-term commitment can result in the emergence of mutual trust (Dutta-Bergman, 2006).

Furthermore, central to the culture-centered approach is the location of power. By actively becoming aware of critical role of power, both actors can now create a space for dialogues that is equally accessible and therefore minimizing the possibility of one player being dominated by the other (Dutta-Bergman, 2006).

2.4 Principal – Agent Theory

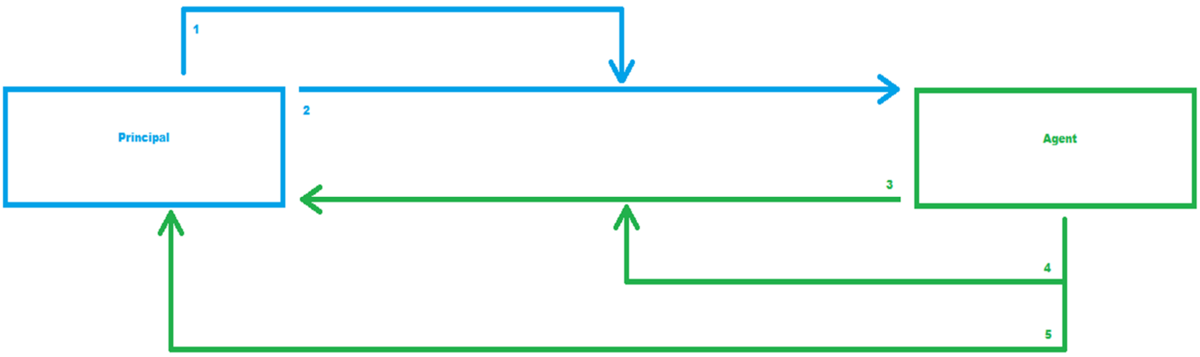
To truly capture e-diplomacy it is necessary to acknowledge the struggles between diplomats working abroad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Originally an economic theory, the Principal- Agent theory deals with the divergence of goals of the managers (agents) and shareholders (principals) within a private firm. The principal is the actor that disposes the resources to the other actors within the company. Those other actors, the agents, accept these resources and are then expected to use their skills to realize the interests of the principal (Braun & Guston, 2003). The interests of the principal and the agent can diverge, it is therefore necessary to find incentives for the agents to ensure they act in the interests of the principal (Hughes, 2003). This divergence often leads to two typical collective action problems: moral hazard and adverse selection. These problems are based on the rational behavior of the agent that is self-interested and seeks to maximize personal welfare. As a result they end up shirking due to an information advantage vis-à-vis the principal, in short this comes down to the principal being unsure of whether the requested task is carried out (moral hazard) or if the chosen agent was the one best suited for the task (adverse selection). Although this system seems unfavorable, especially to the principal, both actors have an interest in entering such a relationship. First and foremost, the principal gets something done which he otherwise would be unable to do. Secondly, the agent receives remuneration of some kind, ranging from money to social recognition and so on. Thirdly, the principal also has the opportunity to shirk e.g. by not delivering the requested resources. However if both parties end up shirking, the end result will be sub optimal. Another limiting factor to the principal-agent system is the sheer amount of agents. Often one principal works together with multiple agents. This affects how much attention can be given to each principal at any time, potentially leading to more deviant behavior. Nevertheless, monitoring and control mechanisms can be implemented to reduce shirking (Braun & Guston, 2003).

As the influence of management techniques from the private sector grew within the public sector, actors became more partial to the principal – agent theory. However in reality it is hard to define principal and agent. It is even harder to find out what these organizations truly want to realize, as there is no profit motive, no market in shares or a concept similar to bankruptcy. Nor do the principals have the agents on a leash to make sure their will is carried out. The idea sprung up to make the public sector more effective with the introduction of semi-public organizations (quango's) as agents. They would be less constrained by bureaucratic practices, work in a way that would be similar to the private sector and they would be more accountable. The Ministry would then function as the principal who contracted out a certain task to the agent (Hughes, 2003).

Nevertheless, even a set-up such as this is prone to failure within the public sector. The aforementioned control and monitoring mechanisms to keep the agent(s) in check are less powerful within the public sector due to a larger physical and mental distance between the two actors. Nor do incentive schemes such as performance management work in the public sector, as the goals of the principal and thus the task of the agent are often hard to define. Whereas in the private sector the goal is often derivable to making profit, a statistic that is easily measureable. Some of the following controlling mechanisms have had a definite impact in the public sector: limiting the scope of the agent, subsequently making clear targets and enlisting multiple actors (Bekkers, 2007).

Even though diplomats are regularly considered to be employees of the ministry, their position is similar to that of an agent. Firstly, they have an increased amount of freedom compared to regular employees. By being far away from the main hub that would normally constitute the behavior of an employee or agent, deviant behavior could become more attractive. Subsequently, the agent is more aware of the opportunity to pursue self- interests. However, the pursuit of self-interests is, especially in the public sector, frowned upon and the Ministry will try to avoid having diplomats go "rogue". A diplomat that acts purely out of self-interest could harm the reputation of the nation resulting in (severe) consequences. Lastly, the agents are constantly trying to push their own interests even if that results in an increase of costs for another agent or party. It creates a form of ‘bureau politics’ whereby actors clash to ensure their resource or policy dominance (Bekkers, 2007). This idea is similar to the concept of departments focused on international relations clashing with domestic politics. These two-levels have become more entangled with each other throughout the years due to an increase of globalization leading to more conflict between departments (Putnam, 1988). According to Putnam (1988) domestic groups pursue their interests on a national level to pressure them into adopting favorable policies while the politicians seeks power by establishing coalitions among said groups. However at an international level the national government seeks to maximize their ability to satisfy domestic pressure while minimizing the consequences of developments in international politics. For this paper one could argue that the government becomes the broker between the domestic groups and the diplomats working abroad ensuring a balanced policy in regards to national and international focus. Diplomats might have self-interests based on a feeling that they are unable to do their job properly abroad or in an international organization and thus need more resources. Below you will find a depiction of this model:

Figure 1: Principal - Agent



#	Description
1	Self-interests of the principal.
2	Hires and disposes resources.
3	Carries out tasks.
4	Pursues self-interest in carrying out task.
5	Tries to persuade principal for more resources etc.

Figure 1 showcases how the principal-agent theory works within this paper. The model works as follows: Firstly, the principal offers a job to the agent coupled with the necessary resources to carry out the job. Subsequently, the agent performs the task he or she is asked to do by the principal. If however, either of the two actors feels carrying out its self-interests is more beneficial to them than carrying out the task the other party expects them to do, they might pursue this option instead. This will influence how the system works by decreasing the efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time the agent tries to create attention to its needs and preferred policy by appealing to the principal. Whether or not the large distance between the principal (Ministry) and the diplomat (Agent) is beneficial for modern diplomacy remains to be seen and mostly comes down to the decisions being made by both actors.

2.5 Rational Choice Theory

To understand the decisions diplomats make it is necessary to understand their decision-making process. If one assumes diplomats are rational then the rational choice theory could shed some light on their decision-making process.

According to the rational choice theory the common man is assumed to have all knowledge of the relevant aspects of his environment. By having all the necessary information he is able to make the best choice for himself. This choice is often an economic choice, as by nature the mankind is in search of wealth (Simon, 1995). To carry out this search, mankind is prone to create a well-organized and stable system of preferences based on calculations. These calculations are made by using the aforementioned expansive amount of information one possesses. After having calculated multiple alternative options the one that results in the highest attainable point on his preference scale will be chosen (Simon, 1955).

Furthermore Hechter & Kanazawa (1997) mention that although the theory is originally focused on the economic side of decision-making it has become a fundamental pillar in most of the social sciences. They did however criticize the theory from the perspective of social scientist. Firstly, they mention that the realism of rational choice in its assumption to calculate all expected consequences and to have all knowledge necessary of every relevant aspect of the environment are simply lacking. Instead, people act impulsively, emotionally or by a force of habit. They give a multitude of examples such as the depressive nature of making decisions about jobs, spouses or children. If for example one's most beneficial option would be to divorce his partner than according to rational choice this would be an easy process. However reality shows it takes an emotional toll preventing them from behaving in such a manner (Ibid, 1997).

Secondly, in mainstream decision-making theory the different layers of rational choice are forgotten. Assumptions are made about an individual's cognitive capacities and his or her values that all result from a social structure originating from earlier events. As a result, they forego the influence of these concepts on the decision making of an individual. Therefore, they separate the theory in two models of individual action, the thin and the thick models. Thin rational choice models are not concerned with particular values (or goals) that individuals pursue.

Additionally, there are thick models of individual action that take into consideration some of the aspects of intentionality. It assumes that people are driven by a certain motivation and that knowing their motivation makes them predictable. Values and norms are thus taken into account. A thin model would focus on the assumption that individuals seeks maximum quantities of exchangeable private goods (wealth, power or prestige) however a thick model allows individuals to also value nonexchangeable goods. This comes down to a situation, in which any individual's values can outweigh common rationality. Predictability is however increased when the focus shifts from individuals to groups as then values appear to cancel each other out (Ibid, 1997). These models are based on the assumption: that preferences are stable and transitive, meaning that if someone prefers a > b and b > c then they must prefer a > c (Ibid, 1997).

Lindblom (1959) was already aware of this and reflected upon policy-making with this in mind. His 'Muddling through' or 'Incrementalism' theory denies that policy-makers are rational. They are, according to him, not all-knowing and therefore their decision-making is based on making a satisfying decision. This decision is made build on the factors they know, this is similar to the concept of bounded rationality introduced in 1961 by Simon. Furthermore, decisions are often similar to decisions made in the past. In addition, Norms and values also play a large role within the decision-making process. Because of the lack of knowledge, importance of prior made decisions and the presence of norms and values policy-makers tend to take small steps when creating policy. These small incremental steps then over time result into a larger policy change. He called this incremental way of working the "branch method". The differences between the "root method" (rational) and "branch method" (incremental) of policy making are displayed in table 2 below.

Table 2: Root method vs Branch method

Rational approach (root method)	Incremental approach (branch method)
Starts off with formulating clear values, criteria and targets that are distinguishable from all available means.	Starts off with formulating values, criteria and targets that are indistinguishable of each other and are therefore often intertwined.
Policy-making is primarily the formulation of a means-end relationship. First are the ends decided upon and then does one choose the means to attain said ends.	The interweavement of means and ends results into a situation whereby it is impossible to decide on means-end relations.
It sees a policy as successful when it is based on means that can be expected to realize a certain goal.	It sees a policy as successful when it is based on political agreement between policymakers.
Analysis is all-embracing as each relevant factor is taken into the equation.	Analysis is limited as not every factor is known.
Theory plays a supporting role.	As alternatives are hardly compared, theory plays next to no role.

Source: Bekkers (2007)

The aforementioned values are defined as “relatively general and durable internal criteria for evaluation” (Hechter, 1994: p. 321). They differ from other concepts such as preferences and norms. Preferences for example are liable to change and norms tend to have an external locus. These concepts and their differences are summarized in figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Differences between internal states

	Values	Preferences	Norms
Generality	high	low	high
Durability	high	low	high
Locus	internal	internal	external

Source: Hechter (1992)

One can further categorize values into instrumental and immanent values. The former being focused on the search for fungible resources (wealth, power and prestige). And the latter is focused on the pursuit of ends that are valued by one alone rather than for their exchange value (Hechter, 1994). As an example every actor that has to pick prize X (a certain monetary amount) or prize X+i (a certain monetary amount + noticeable increment in size) will pick X+i. The reason why they do so is different, one could take prize X+i to further invest in a company or take the prize to spend it on poverty reduction. Differences in values do not necessarily lead to differences in behavior. And that instrumental values are shared across mankind but the reason behind doing pursuing these values is however based on immanent values (Hechter, 1994).

Secondly, norms are, as mentioned before, similar to values except that their locus is external. As a result of norms, individuals feel a need to behave in a certain manner that they find appropriate for the situation they find themselves in (March & Olsen, 2004). Theoretically this concept is defined as the logic of appropriateness: “The logic of appropriateness is a perspective on how human action is to be interpreted. Action, policy making included, is seen as driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behavior, organized into institutions. The appropriateness of rules includes both cognitive and normative components” (March & Olsen, 1995 :p. 30-31).

This concept is in stark contrast to logic of consequences, whereby one acts rationally, based on whether pursuing a certain option is worth the risk of breaking rules.

Diplomats might have different personal norms and values compared to the official mandate of the Dutch state. This discrepancy could lead to them pursuing their self-interests if they feel there is a possibility to do so. These self-interests could of course be of financial gain but also personal satisfaction gained from fighting for their norms and values. In these cases they will make a tradeoff between the gains and losses of their actions, a form of the logic of consequences. Or they might follow the logic of appropriateness by feeling pressured into certain behavior by the actions of their colleagues on social media.

2.6 Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is the effort of states trying to influence public or elite opinion of other states to sway the policy of the other nation to its own advantage (Potter, 2003). It can be defined as the convergence of the earlier mentioned changes in diplomacy. A full definition is provided by Hans Tuch it is: “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goal and current policies." (1990). It consists of short-term action such as media relations and long-term actions e.g. cultural programs undertaken by official bodies of a state. No longer is diplomacy restricted to state-state interaction, the public is now targeted to "force" change within another state. Public diplomacy also differs from the regular role the Foreign Ministry takes in regards to the national public. They do use similar activities however those are directed at their own citizens, to help them interpret the outside world from a national perspective and to further raise awareness for their own international role.

According to Dasgupta (2011) there are several key components for a successful communication strategy, which is the most vital part of a public diplomacy policy:

1. Polices have to be credible as the receiver of the policy does not accept lies or a bad product. If however credibility is lost it is hard to regain it. The focus should thus be on the content and not on marketing or "packaging".
2. If the targeted audience immediately rejects or heavily critiques the message, stop propagating it as they will not be persuaded. A new messages or policy is necessary to achieve something.
3. The message should have a powerful conviction behind it.
4. Ensure that you understand the targeted audience and their culture. The language needs to be adapted to cultural sensitivity.
5. A vital part of trying to build support is making the customer feel important while keeping in mind that you should not forget your previously made 'friends'.
6. Ensure transparency and openness when talking or sending a message. The goal and reason for the message need to be clear for the audience.
7. Forego 'us versus them' scenarios or messages. Confrontations are the worst-case scenario in marketing strategy as portraying an actor in a negative light will result in a reaction and perhaps lock up the audience's mind.

2.7 Operationalization

The preliminary literature review carried out in the problem definition and the theoretical framework, led to the creation of the following two hypotheses:

H1: Diplomats mostly use social media as a medium for public diplomacy.

Social media has two innate characteristics that make it suitable for public diplomacy. First of all, popular social media platforms have large amounts of users. These users range from world leaders to the typical everyman. It therefore creates a platform on which the average citizen and government officials can go into a dialogue with each other. An active diplomat on social media could use these dialogues to create good will under the citizens of his own or those of another country. Furthermore, these citizens have their own networks. Swaying the opinion of one user can therefore lead to a snowball effect. Additionally, social media has another advantage over older forms of public diplomacy: its speed. Visits to opinion leaders take up considerably more time than posting a 140 character message on Twitter.

Furthermore, the hypothesis is also is based on the 'Voor Nederland, Wereldwijd' policy document (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). In this document the use of social media was explicitly promoted as a tool for building interest in the Dutch state, culture and companies.

Lastly, other countries have already used social media for public diplomacy. Examples are Canada (Dasgupta, 2011) and the United States of America (Yepsen, 2012). Their take on public diplomacy is mostly about building a favorable opinion abroad for policy decisions taken by the Canadian and American governments respectively. For example: trying to promote human rights or harsher punishments for drug related crimes. The Netherlands, a country that prides itself on innovation, therefore is reasonably expected to follow in the footsteps of these front running countries.

Because of these reasons, it is highly likely that the Dutch diplomats make use of social media as a medium for public diplomacy.

H2: The substantial freedom diplomats have when implementing the social media policy has resulted in them pursuing self-interests.

A diplomat has a large amount of freedom to decide on how he implements the mandate given to him by the government. This is similar to an agent in the principal-agent theory as he is also free to decide on how to carry out his tasks. However, the agent is prone to shirk in favor of pursuing self-interests. The main reason for this, is the considerable mental and physical distance between the principal and the agent (Braun & Guston, 2003). A way to remove the opportunity for pursuing self-interests is the introduction of guidelines and clear targets (Bekkers, 2007). Therefore, one can expect that if the diplomat does not receive specific guidelines on how to use social media, he will post matters that he himself finds important and that he perhaps does not act on his mandate.

Interviews, social media messages and policy documents are analyzed to validate these hypotheses with following indicators in mind.

1. *Public diplomacy with an inner locus*

   The job of a diplomat is no longer restricted to working abroad. They are now also required to nationally work on their employers' reputation. For example one of the reasons for the creation of the modern diplomacy plan was the ignorance of the Dutch people about the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Data that corresponds with trying to build goodwill under the Dutch people will be put into this category.

2. *Public diplomacy with an external locus*

   As mentioned in the theoretical framework, public diplomacy is commonly used as a strategy to sway the citizens of another country to be in favor of the policies of the diplomats' country. A successful public diplomacy strategy would then result in a change of policies in the foreign country, creating a policy more similar to that of the diplomat's country. To achieve this, it is necessary to implement two-way interaction models. Political statements or discussions about sensitive topics will be placed into this category.

3. *The cultural approach*

   As described in the theoretical framework public diplomacy involves a lot more than just making political statements and trying to change policy. Building mutual understanding about each other's cultures has become a vital part of modern diplomacy. Dialogues (two-way interactions) have become even more important to exchange cultures, norms and values. Data about these exchanges will be categorized under the cultural approach.

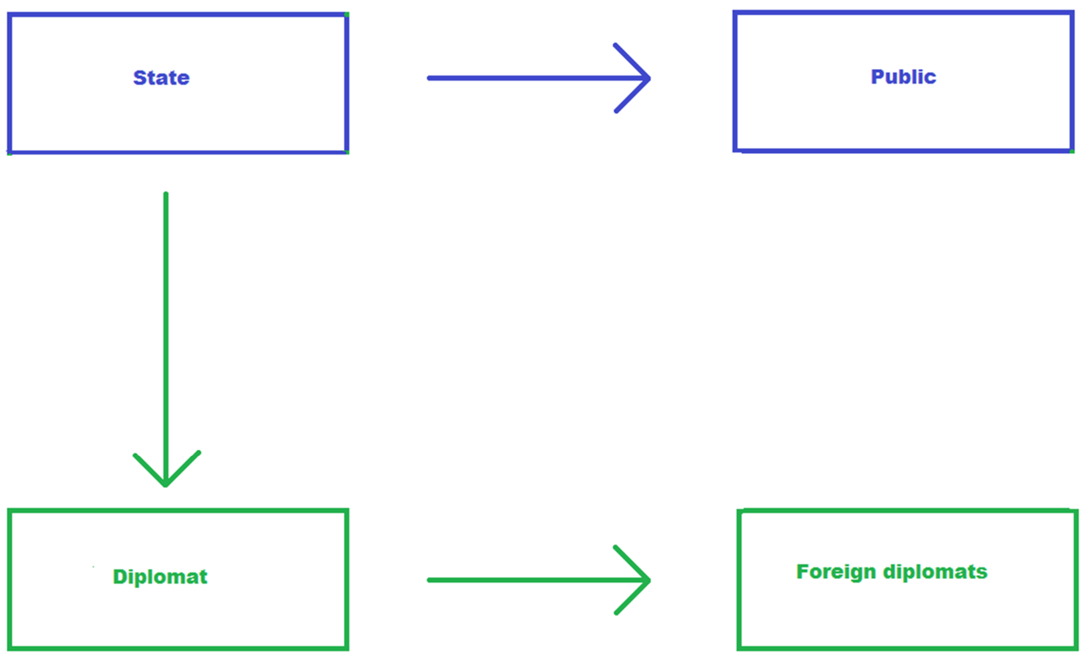
4. *Rational choice from the perspective of the diplomat*

   The significant freedom the diplomat has to carry out his tasks from the Ministry is similar to the freedom of the agent in the principal-agent theory. As mentioned before under hypothesis two the result is that an agent is prone to shirk. This deviant behavior is based on the fact that the agent, diplomat in this case, acts rationally. According to the rational choice theory this behavior will sometimes be more beneficial for the diplomat than following his mandate. The diplomats will weigh their options and the one most satisfactory will be chosen. This decision could be based on the search for maximum quantities of exchangeable goods (wealth, power or prestige) as the thin model of rationality describes. It could however also be satisfaction derived from chasing personal norms or values (thick model). Furthermore, the diplomats will also weigh out their options against potential punishments as is expressed in the logic of consequences. In addition, it is possible that the actor does not reflect his options based on punishments but instead on what is perceived as appropriate. Norms and values constitute what people find the appropriate action to undertake, in the theoretical framework this was called the logic of appropriateness. A case of a diplomat acting rational would be him posting a message that does not conform with the Dutch government's position.

Hypothesis one is accepted if indicator one and two are overly present within the data. Indicator three could be an example of embassies moving towards public diplomacy but embodies far more than just this concept. If indicator four is a common sight then hypothesis two will be accepted.

Prior to the end of the Cold War and subsequently the introduction of the information age state communication was primarily a one-way ordeal. This type of classical state communication is represented in figure 3:

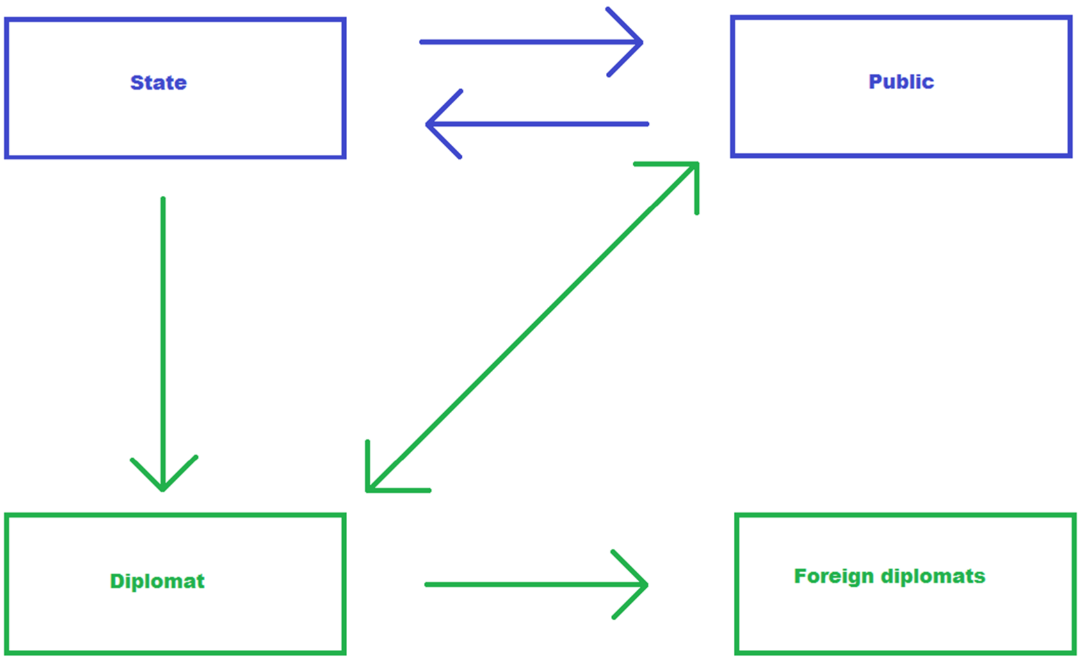
Figure 3: State communication prior to the information age



The state mainly interacted with its own citizens and that of others in a one-way interaction model. This model could then either be the press agency model or public information model. At the same time the state's diplomats purely interacted with other government officials in a salon-type of fashion. They discussed treaties and tried to persuade each other into changing them into the states' previously determined goals. There were no two-way interactions between the state and the public, nor was there any type of interaction between diplomats and the public. In this research the definition of the public is restricted to the citizens of a state. The public in this case can be split up in to two groups: the national public and the foreign public.

As society began to change, state interactions changed as well. More channels of communications were opened, most of them having a two-way interactive nature. These additional channels are added to figure 3 creating the follow situation:

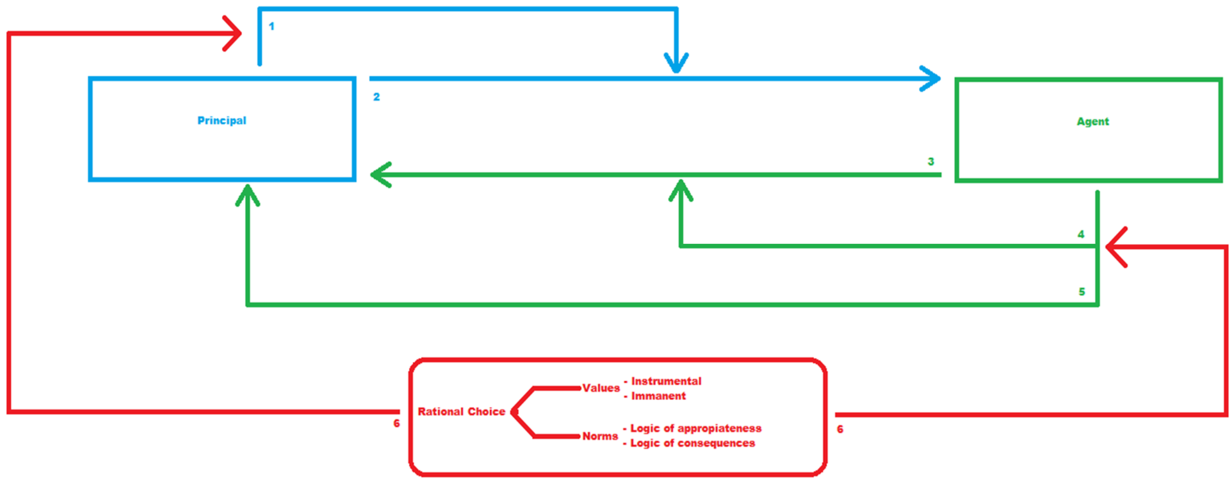
Figure 4: State communication after the fall of the Berlin Wall



The cultural approach began to trend within foreign policies and states began to realize that the public was a useful tool. To make effective use of the public they however needed to change their way of interacting. No longer were one-way interactions sufficient, two-way interactions between the state and the public became increasingly more common. These interactions are graphically displayed in figure 4. Interaction with a foreign public could result in a favorable policy change abroad. In addition, two-way interactions with the national public could further legitimize the actions of the governments. This way of interacting is expressed in the aforementioned theory of public diplomacy.

2.8 Rational agents

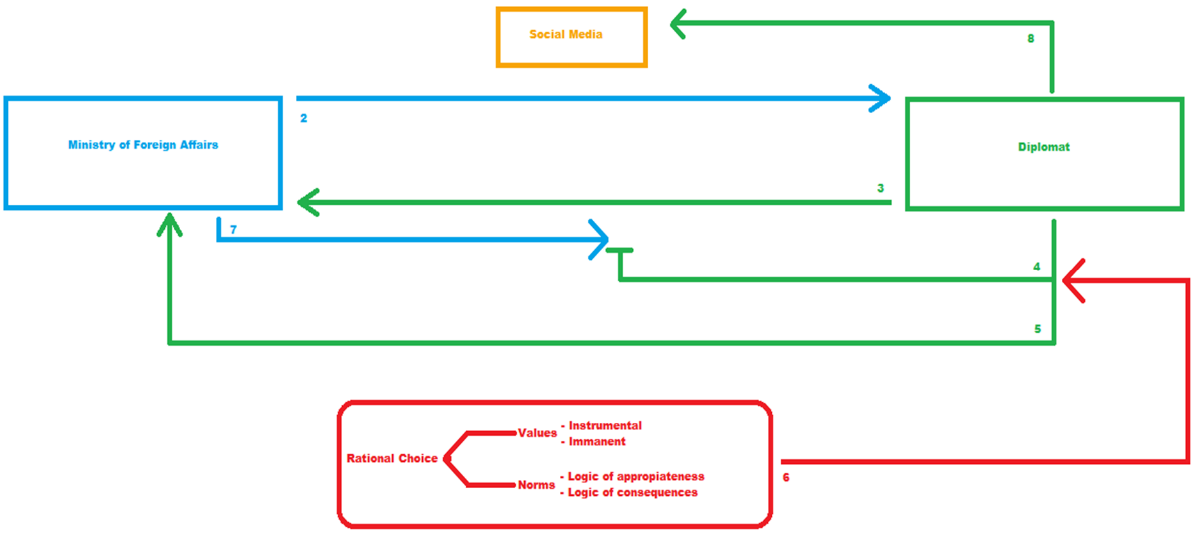
Figure 5: Principal agent + Rational choice theory



#	Description
1	Self-interests of the principal.
2	Hires and disposes resources.
3	Carries out task.
4	Pursues self-interest in carrying out task.
5	Tries to persuade principal for more resources etc.
6	The decision-making process behind a choice of pursuing a path of self-interests.

Figure 5 combines the two theoretical models of the principal-agent theory and the rational choice theory. The fundamentals of figure 1 still stand but added to this figure is the rational choice theory that explains the decision-making process. This theory, from the perspective of a thick model, is then further derived into values and norms. Preferences are left out as they are far from durable and therefore extremely hard to predict. The concept of values is constructed out of instrumental and immanent values, whereby the norms, or lack thereof, reflect the choice of which logic is taken. Arrow number 6 thus offers a possible explanation for the behavior of diplomats on the social media platform. Other actors could potentially influence the principal or agent but they are left out for a reason. Including third party actors would not fit within the scope of the research. The research tries to explain in what way diplomats post on social media. It does however not set out to explain why the diplomats display this specific behavior. The theory and findings related to this question are therefore rather general instead of going in-depth into what influences every decision a diplomat makes.

Figure 6: Theoretic models applied to modern diplomacy

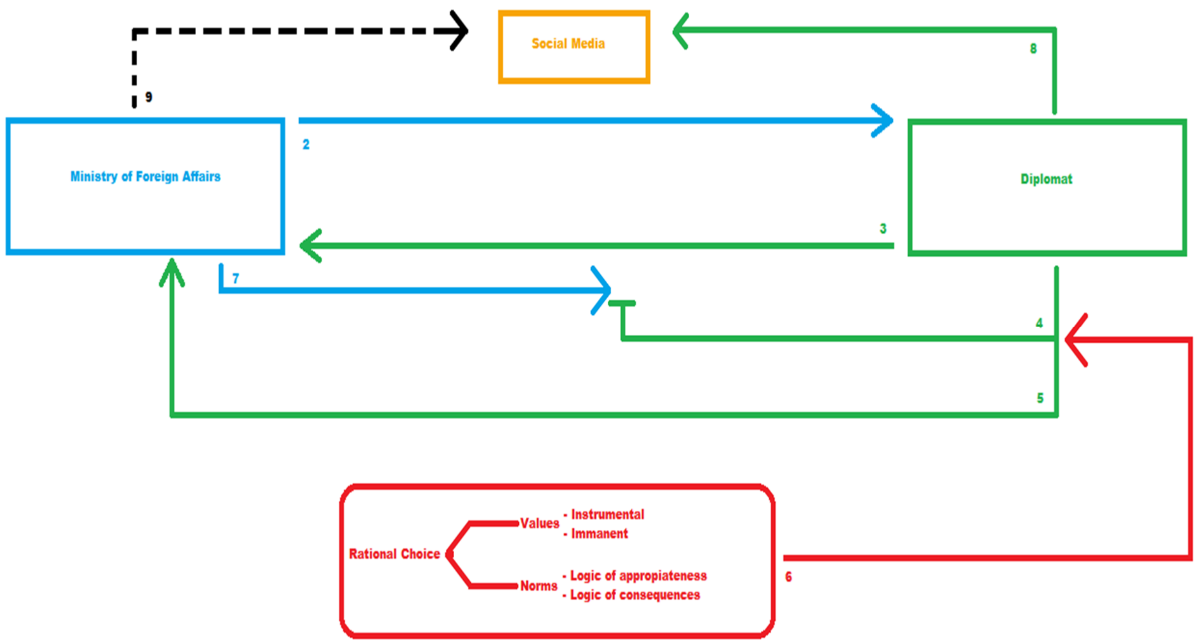


Lastly, figure 6 depicts the current situation after the release of the modern diplomacy policy document in 2013. There are a few differences compared to figure 5: line 4 no longer reaches line 3 due to it being blocked off by line 7. In reality, this means that the mandate and code of conduct from the Ministry affects the possibility of pursuing a path of self-interests by the diplomat. Neither does line 1 exist anymore as the Ministry has no benefits from trying to cheat its employees out of resources. However a new line has been added, line 8 expresses the diplomat trying to circumvent the mandate and push through his or her own self-interests by using social media.

#	Description
1	~~Self-interests of the principal.~~
2	Hires and disposes resources.
3	Carries out task.
4	Pursues self-interest in carrying out task.
5	Tries to persuade principal for more resources etc.
6	The decision-making process behind a choice of pursuing a path of self-interests.
7	Expresses the mandate of the Ministry to the diplomat that constrain the diplomat in attaining personal benefits over the regular foreign policy.
8	Pursues self-interest by the use of social media circumventing the mandate.

These two theories are then tied in with the public diplomacy approach as depicted below:

Figure 7: Public diplomacy added to other models



Public diplomacy is no longer restricted to newspapers or official events, nowadays a large audience of citizens can be reached within seconds by using social media. This explains why vast amounts of governments have started to flock towards using it as a tool for diplomacy. However as figure 7 shows the diplomat is then once again put into positions wherein he/she can circumvent the mandate or where he/she can try to pursue his/her own interests. Fully restricting the use of social media by waiting for approval by the Ministry is not a practical option as it would defeat the purpose of it in the first place (quick messages). Nevertheless, if one would incorporate the seven key components previously mentioned by Dasgupta (2011) guidelines or trainings could be made for effective public diplomacy. They will therefore fulfill an evaluative role in this research, if it appears that messages do not follow most of these criteria than one could argue that it might not be beneficial for the Dutch government.

3. Methodology

This chapter specifies the research methods that are used to gather the data necessary to verify the hypotheses. Furthermore a part of this chapter is dedicated to the concepts of reliability and validity. Finally, there is a subchapter about the selection process of the data sources.

3.1 Research methods

Four research methods were selected to answer the central research question. First and foremost, a content analysis was carried out based on the policy documents related to the subject from the Dutch government. The search for these sources and analyzing them was time consuming but was however necessary as they can be used as a fundament for the rest of the research. Without properly exploring the policy plans, one is unable to understand the problem at hand or derive the right questions to answer the central research question. Content will be taken from the website of the Dutch foreign affairs Ministry and if possible supplied by interviewees.

Secondly, as seen in the problem definition and theoretical framework a review of literature was carried out. Delving into academic articles is a necessity, as their conclusions and theory can be utilized as new perspectives to look at the empiric evidence.

Thirdly, 175 messages (25 per user *7) on Twitter and Facebook were analyzed, both of these platforms were chosen because of their popularity. Only seven accounts were picked as some respondents were either from the same embassy or posted in the language of the host country. For respondents that did not have a Twitter account Facebook messages were used as substitutes.

Finally, semi-constructed interviews were used to find most empirical evidence and to validate the first analysis. These interviews allow one to remove his own interpretation and use the experiences of those in the field instead, working in such a manner curbs the subjectivity. Furthermore, the analysis of the interviews functions as an evaluation for the current policy. By having direct communication with those who wrote the policy and those using the policy bottlenecks can be found. Lastly, semi-constructed interviews allow the interviewer to go more in depth which is vital for the evaluation of a policy and to search for potential solutions.

3.2 Reliability and validity

The collected material evidence about the policy implementation was gathered from the interviewees as most of the documents were meant for internal use only. Other sources that have been used were public documents listed on various government websites.

These documents were discussed with the interviewees to test their reliability, as it is vital to check whether the policy was implemented in the manner as described in the documents. This will serve as an extra form of evaluation.

Secondly, through semi-constructed interviews one is able to dive further into the answers given and thus one is ensured to find answers useful for the research. Furthermore, to ensure that not only social desirable answers were given, anonymity was granted to every interviewee. Lastly, arguments are explained in great detail to make sure that a similar research could end up with the same results.

To protect the internal validity method triangulation was carried out. The interviews will serve as verification for the assumptions derived from the policy documents and literature. The external validity of the case is encompassed in the ever increasing more important role of technology within the public administration. Conclusions of the case can be either used for other government projects involving social media or other states trying to include social media for their foreign service.

3.3 Source selection

The sources used were either received from personal interaction or found by using search engines. The following two search engines were used: Google Scholar and SEURCH, when deciding on which literature to use the amount of citations and whether the content was specifically applicable to the research were also taken into consideration. Furthermore, sources were used from similar researches. A research about the German approach to social media might also use sources applicable to the Dutch case. Other sources have been the evaluative documents of other governments to see whether they ran into any specific issues that the Dutch government could also have faced during the implementation and use of social media by diplomats.

4. Empirical findings

Chapter four is the main body of the research. In this chapter the data is analyzed. The first analyzed data source is the policy document. This policy document, already mentioned in the problem definition, will be summarized and then reflected upon with the four indicators in mind. However, the document is rather short and the implementation thereof is left to the diplomats. As a result chapter two goes deeper into how the implementation varied between embassies. Data is gathered through interviews with diplomats from various posts. Furthermore, in the next chapter the behavior of these diplomats online will be evaluated by codifying their posts on social media. In addition, the last chapter will try to summarize all the limiting factors to public diplomacy through social media. The sub conclusions of each subchapter will together answer the central research question.

4.1 What is the new Dutch modern diplomacy plan?

The Dutch people have significant interests in what happens abroad. This is mainly because of the Dutch economy, e.g. one third of the Netherland's total income comes from its export sector. Subsequently, this requires a comprehensive foreign policy. Strained by budget cuts, an ever "shrinking" world and critique on the lack of transparency regarding the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the advisory commission, 'Modernisering Diplomatie', was asked to create a new policy. The commission gathered information from all participants of the Dutch diplomatic network and asked them about what they thought the Dutch diplomatic corps could do better. The way they gathered this information was rather incoherent. A contact person in the advisory commission, that denied an interview request, mentioned that each member had his own field of study. Furthermore, there was, according to him, hardly any interaction between the members. Eventually all of the advisory commission's critique and advice were bundled in the 'Voor Nederland, Wereldwijd' policy document, that was sent to the parliament in June 2013. The goal of this document was to: "improve the professionalism of the diplomacy, be more able to imbed it in the network society and have a stronger interaction with society." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013: p. 1).

The following seven changes needed to be implemented to reach the above mentioned goals:

1. A trading nation such as the Netherlands needs to be prepared for every challenge and opportunity that presents itself. To achieve this, diplomats and other actors that represent the state should be flexible in their employability (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

2. More attention should be given to developing states in the following continents: Asia, South-America and Africa. These new markets could be beneficial for Dutch companies to invest in or to export their knowledge to. At the same time it provides more possible trading partners, which is a boon to the Dutch economy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

3. To get the most benefits out of the markets of the BRICS and the ‘next 11’ the Dutch state should be aware of not forsake formal diplomacy. Formal diplomacy will open up more doors for Dutch companies, the fundamentals for this were laid out by the original developing aid provided to states of interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

4. Diplomats should be trained to do their work properly in the new hybrid world that consists of state actors, other public actors, private actors and the civil society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

5. More utilization of modern media platforms to promote the country. The inauguration of King Willem Alexander could be shown on Google hangouts or diplomats could post a video about water management in the Netherlands. Social media also opens up a new form of diplomacy. By posting on Twitter the Dutch government’s position can be immediately made clear towards new information or issues (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

6. The modernization of the diplomatic corps is in line with the general reformations in the civil service. Regular reforms occurring nationally should be implemented within the embassies as well. Examples of these reforms are increasing the inclusion of civil society within policy-making, investing in employees and removing unnecessary burdens within the decision-making and control process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

7. The introduction of substantial budget cuts that affect the modernization of the Dutch diplomacy, forcing smart use of the still available funds, commodities and employees (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

Muddling through new experiences

The policy plan hardly goes in-depth regarding how these seven changes need to be implemented. In each chapter it is explained why these changes need to be implemented but any indication on how they are supposed to be implemented remains rather general and vague. In the case of trend number six one could argue that the reason for this vagueness is the novelty of social media. Because of this novelty the policy-makers assumingly followed the ‘branch method’ to policy-making. Some of the core phenomena that together led to incrementalism are present in this specific case. First of all, there was no prior policy to speak of and because of the earlier mentioned novelty there are no best practices or theory to using social media either. Therefore hardly any knowledge is present that is required to form a comprehensive rational decision. And to feel safe the policy-makers take small steps, instead of overhauling the entire diplomatic system. Secondly, Lindblom (1959) wrote that incrementalism is often caused by the presence of norms and values. State actors, according to him, hardly ever disregard norms and values. These concepts have become increasingly important to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs according to Hoebink (2006). Furthermore, this working method might have been chosen deliberately to harness the potential of the diplomats as policy-makers. In this way of policy-making field experience is used instead of best practices. Further evidence of this is shown in change number six that asks for the removal of unnecessary burdens within the decision-making and control process. Diplomats become freer to make decisions on their own. With less restraints they are able to use social media more easily as they see fit. New policy can eventually be made based upon how these agents utilize social media. The direct removal of control mechanisms is not always beneficial. As hypothesis two states the diplomats might abuse the system for the pursuit of self-interests.

Transformation of interaction

Even though the policy plan does not explain the means to implement the seven changes, there is one reoccurring theme to be found. This reappearing theme is the emphasis on more two-way interaction with the public (change 4, 5 and 6). The proposed communication models are clear cut examples of the two-way interaction models from Grunig (2002). Two-way asymmetrical interaction models are used when state institutions use information given by the public to maximize their influence. An example of this within Dutch diplomacy is the presence of Dutch civil servants in London, the information hub regarding threats in the Horn of Africa. The information gained here is partly from public sources and is then used to create a more influential policy for embassies in that region. Secondly, two-way symmetrical models are exemplified in the bi-and-multi-lateral dialogues between human rights activists and other states, where the Dutch diplomats try to act as brokers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). The introduction of two-way interaction models led one to believe that public diplomacy plays a substantial role within the document.

However, the opposite appears to be true. Any form of public diplomacy seems to be limited to Dutch citizens as is expressed in the following quote: “To keep on adding value, diplomats must also explicitly show themselves in the Netherlands both to the general public and to other partners who are committed internationally.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013 :p. 3). Even the plan itself could be seen as an attempt of public diplomacy with an inner locus, the document for example is openly accessible on the website of the Ministry of Foreign affairs.

The interactions between the Dutch state and a foreign public seemed to fit indicator three more instead. According to the document the characteristics of the ideal diplomat have changed. In comparison to the past, he is now required to expand his knowledge about local cultures and become more aware of the key players. To facilitate this, the policy document describes the role of locally hired employees as knowledge databases. Involving and hiring local people will help building lasting relationships and building mutual trust as described in the cultural approach. Their task is not to spread the Dutch norms and values as described in indicator three, but rather to strengthen the bilateral bond and make communication easier. Furthermore, social-media is mentioned as a medium to promote Dutch culture and companies (change five). The policy assumes that foreign actors become more inclined to deal with Dutch actors if they are exposed to these promotions on social media (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that classical state-to-state diplomacy did not disappear. Recommendation three mentions the importance of formal diplomacy in dealing with new markets. These new markets have a different culture compared to our European neighbors and require a formal approach to build the necessary mutual respect for effective diplomacy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

Merchant versus Priest

The Dutch foreign policy is known for having a “split personality”, on one hand it aims to boost its economy (Merchant approach) while on the other hand it wants to promote peace, share wealth and install norms and values (Priest approach). As aforementioned the promotion of norms and values has become increasingly more important (Hoebink, 2006). The increased attention to the priest approach did not however entirely overshadow the merchant approach in the new modern diplomacy document. An example of the merchant approach is how it recommends the state to set up development aid programs. Development aid is mostly given to increase the influence of the Netherlands over other countries by “buying” themselves in. This is a form of soft power as the countries become indebted to the Netherlands and it allows the Dutch state to influence policies. Secondly, it is a rational decision to help other states as it opens up other markets for Dutch companies to explore and gives an advantage for Dutch companies over others within those markets (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). It seems that in the end the Dutch state and economy are always placed centrally in development aid programs. This in turn, clashes with the following quote from the front-page of the document: “The poorest people are the main focus of development aid.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013: p. 1).

Conclusion

The new modern diplomacy plan of the Netherlands ‘Voor Nederland, Wereldwijd’ was originally introduced to combat critique, to make the diplomat corps more able to deal with budget cuts and to learn how to work in the ever “shrinking” world. The advisory commission that worked on this document worked incoherently and incrementally. The results of this incremental style potentially created an environment in which the diplomat is able to actively pursue his self-interests. This environment makes it more likely that hypothesis two can be accepted. The main conclusions of the policy document came down to embracing the network society. Two-way communication models similar to those of Grunig (2002) were introduced. Other parts of the policy described Dutch interests, such as development aid. A reason for this was the increase of influence over those states as a form of soft power and the rationality of expanding the global market for a trading nation. Furthermore, indicator one was visibly present as the policy document was partly aimed at increasing the reputation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, indicator two, public diplomacy with an external locus, was absent in this document. The only state and foreign public interactions were based on creating mutual respect for each other’s cultures and to build long-lasting relationships. This is more similar to indicator three than indicator two. For example social media is used as a medium for promoting everything that is Dutch. According to the advisory commission this requires a different attitude of the diplomat towards new technologies: “Intensive use of communication technology is required for modern diplomacy. Diplomats need to conquer the digital domain, notes the advisory commission modernizing diplomacy. Social media have become conventional platforms for policy formulation and public diplomacy abroad.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013 :p. 4). As strong as the quote is, the content regarding social media is not. Information is minimal and the document does not explain how exactly these platforms should be used. In the next chapter, the implementation of the social media policy by the different embassies will be described.

4.2 How is the new modern diplomacy plan implemented?

Chapter 4.1 introduced the modern diplomacy plan of the Netherlands. The implementation of this plan will be discussed in this chapter. Primarily interviews were used to gather the data necessary for this chapter, however through these interviews new information was gathered regarding the original intention and creation of the policy. This information will be analyzed first. The rest of the chapter will focus on the differences of implementation between embassies.

Unexplored arguments

The advisory commission mentioned three reasons for the creation of the new policy. First and foremost, the budget deficit of the Dutch government required the introduction of budget cuts to the civil service. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was no exception to this. As a result the document is filled with plans on how to reduce the spending of the Ministry. An example of this is co-location, by sharing an embassy with another state housing costs are reduced. Secondly, it describes how the world has changed and that this requires a different approach. Classic diplomacy is no longer sufficient in the network society. Lastly, it mentioned that there was a great deal of critique on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This critique originated from ignorance regarding the usefulness of the Ministry (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). Citizens according to respondent one and three only recognized embassies as a place to pick up their passport abroad. Their role as a mediator facilitating economic growth and as a hub to transpose Dutch values abroad was far less known. Respondent one said the policy document was one of the many ways the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to appease the Dutch citizens. This appeasement-strategy is a form of public diplomacy with an inner locus, transparency is given regarding the activities of the ministry and at the same time it functions as a PR offensive.

However respondent one also mentioned that this appeasement-strategy was not limited to the Dutch public. The other Ministries and government institutions were also ignorant regarding the value and activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The vagueness of what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs actually contributed to society was used as an argument for reducing its budget. This “war” over budget is similar to the concept of bureau politics.

Institutionalization of social media

As aforementioned the policy document does not explain how social media is supposed to be used. Furthermore, it mentions that other states already use social media but that it is brand new for the Dutch diplomatic corps. However, according to respondent three the use of social media was not a new phenomenon. He mentioned that multiple embassies and consulates already used social media to spread their message. The modern diplomacy plan was just a way to institutionalize the practice. During this institutionalization process one would assume common themes and guidelines would have been set up. Nevertheless, this was not the case according to several respondents. A social media expert of a large embassy however, mentioned there were in fact clear guidelines for using social media. But the diplomats mentioned that they were almost entirely free regarding their behavior on social media. This is further proof for the assumption that the advisory commission decided to use the branch method to policymaking, all experiences of the diplomats together could later serve as a basis for a new more comprehensive social media policy.

The Ministry did however provide several tips and trainings on how to use social media. These tips and trainings were primarily focused on how to separate diplomat's private and professional life on social media. This issue was exemplified by the case of the Dutch ambassador in South-Africa, in 2012, who "liked" a Facebook page stating that government at that time should not condone the discriminatory views of the PVV (Elsevier, 2012). His Facebook page mentioned his job description making him a public figure acting on behalf of the Dutch state. This is a prime example of a Dutch diplomat pursuing self-interests: in his case criticizing a political party from a normative perspective. Expressing his own norms and values were more important to him than displaying the behavior that was expected of him. This is an example of a thick rationality model that fits with indicator four.

Programs on how to use Twitter effectively for electronic diplomacy were given by the Ministry on an optional basis. There were two types of trainings: one that dealt with the basic introductions to social media platforms and a more intermediate training on how to make a powerful tweet (respondent seven). Interestingly enough it seemed that a number of interviewees were not aware of the opportunity to learn more about electronic diplomacy. For example respondent number three mentioned he disliked the idea of Twitter and he also felt that he was unprepared to use it as a platform for public diplomacy. He explicitly mentioned that specific trainings on how to use Twitter were perhaps a good idea to make him and several colleagues enthusiastic for the idea of using Twitter.

The ignorance of some of the diplomats regarding the existence of guidelines and trainings is interesting for two reasons. First of all, it further creates an environment wherein the diplomat is able to more easily pursue his own interests. If a diplomat does not know that there are certain rules or trainings he will more easily follow his own instincts. This could lead to an increase of cases similar to that of the Dutch ambassador in South-Africa. Subsequently, this means that indicator four becomes more prevalent. The above mentioned assumption is based on the fact that a diplomat would follow the logic of consequences and that he weighs off potential punishment to any kind of gain. However, most interviewees mentioned that when they post a message on social media they use a framework of reference based on their life experience, common sense and their diplomatic training. Respondent six had a striking answer to the question whether it requires a different way of thinking: “Social Media is a different platform but the message you post as a public official is still the same. Specific behavior is expected of you on the streets as well as on Social Media.”. This is an interesting quote as it in stark contrast with the logic of consequences. The diplomat is apparently aware of the behavior expected of him. This awareness changes his behavior by unconsciously making him weigh his actions on what is appropriate instead of what is a potential punishment. Furthermore, the norms and values he gained from his diplomatic training might constitute his view on what is appropriate. As such these previously instilled norms and values might actually serve as a rulebook themselves.

Different embassies, different policies

As aforementioned the implementation of the social media policy was up to the embassies to decide. According to respondent eight, homogenization was not enforced due to the Ministry trying to play into the “couleur locale”. He said that playing into the local context was necessary for successful public diplomacy, in this case with an external locus. Nevertheless, of all the embassies interviewed only three had chosen to write in the native language of the country they were working in. When asked for the reason why they chose to do so, respondent four mentioned that her goal was to reach the average citizen. To do so effectively she had to post in their language on Facebook. She was afraid the public would otherwise misunderstand the messages or feel less attached. Interestingly enough, the country is listed as High Proficiency in the EF English proficiency index. This means that the citizens could easily understand a message in English. But on the other hand four other embassies that posted in English had worse scores (Education First, 2013). The EF English proficiency index can be easily criticized but it does show a discrepancy between thought and reality. However, interviewee seven worked in a country with a very low proficiency rating and did not post in the local language. She mentioned that for her it made no sense to post in the native language of the state she worked in due to the high amount of languages spoken within its demographic. Stimulating embassies to use the local language does therefore not always make sense. Furthermore, there is an additional downside to stimulating the use of the native language of the host country. Indicator one and two can then no longer coincide. Dutch followers are pushed away by posting in another language than Dutch or the most often used language: English. This in turn weakens the strength of the public diplomacy approach with an internal locus.

There were more interesting results regarding public diplomacy. According to respondent seven the tone of the diplomats was significantly different between regions. Diplomats in African countries were way harsher regarding human rights violations. Respondent seven said: “I see a lot of my colleagues, primarily in Africa, posting very critical tweets about internal affairs such as human rights. I should not try that here.” She said that she did not expect them to act the same on a different post. This behavior is more in line with the logic of consequences, wherein the rational actor weighs the potential punishment versus gains. As there is no punishment, the post is deemed less important, the diplomat can pursue self-interests more easily.

Furthermore, embassies differ in how much staff is allocated to e-diplomacy. Of the eight interviewed embassies one had a specific employee working on creating a more efficient and effective social media strategy. These specific employees are part of a continuous cycle to improve the use of social media. This cycle starts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs own communication team. Its tasks consist but are not limited to tracking the effect of tweets, host the earlier mentioned social media trainings and design the logos used on the various social media platforms. The public diplomacy employee abroad then implements this in the local context. These employees are however only present in the large embassies or embassies in countries where the Netherlands has strong economic ties with. Two ambassadors from small posts mentioned they would have liked to have their own public diplomacy agent. They felt it would have improved their outreach and effectiveness on social media platforms. Respondent twelve managed to circumvent this problem by hiring a special private social media bureau to do this work for them.

The lucrative side to culture

Earlier on in the chapter respondent seven mentioned that she did expect most of the embassies to engage in open political debates. Instead, she mentioned that the Dutch government had a different approach to public diplomacy. The so-called ‘Holland Branding’, this policy is all about making the Netherlands look like an innovative, digital and culturally interesting country and expects that people therefore become more likely to invest in, to work with or to come and visit the Netherlands. Subsequently it assumes that this goodwill will eventually turn into economic benefits.

Originally the NBTC (Nederlands Bureau voor Toerisme & Congressen, an independent institution) was the main creator of Holland branding (NBTC. 2014). In their eyes, the Netherlands is characterized by five defining traits that make the country an attractive location for holidays, business meetings and congresses. These five traits are: welcoming, colorful, enterprising, inventive and open-minded. Welcoming, as the Netherlands is portrayed as a country where "everyone can feel at home here, regardless of their religion, background or sexual orientation. Holland invites you to be who you are – and makes it easy for you to do so." (NBTC, 2013: p. 3). The Dutch are inventive as their country's small size and creative spirit forces them to look for alternative solutions and it constantly forces them to be on the lookout for opportunities. Thirdly, enterprising as the Dutch are constantly looking across their borders, learning from others and have been undertaking business with overseas countries since the 17th century. Additionally, the NBTC writes that color is embedded in the large amount of nationalities that live in the country, because of the landscape and the famous Dutch direct personality. All of these traits together make the Netherlands an open-minded country (NBTC, 2013).

The NBTC receives public money from the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Subsequently, the NBTC is a link between the public sector and the private sector on this specific topic. Furthermore, the NBTC carries out independent market research to find the right angle for market strategies, explore opportunities to work together with other countries on specific target demographics and they constantly evaluates their own marketing programs (NBTC, 2014).

This promotion of the Netherlands and the Dutch culture is more similar to indicator three, the cultural approach, than what is defined as public diplomacy in this research. But the goal behind it is different. The original goal of the cultural approach is to build long lasting relationships for more effective diplomacy. Holland branding, however has a different goal: making profit. Furthermore, this type of branding does not care about the other actor's culture. As a result this one-way exchange of cultures does not lead to mutual understanding.

Conclusion

The three official reasons for the introduction of the modern diplomacy plan were: the implementation of budget cuts, the network society and critique on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This critique originated from a lack of knowledge regarding the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In an effort to change this, a PR offensive was launched aimed at Dutch citizens (indicator one) and other governmental institution (bureau politics). The means to this end was the introduction of social media. However, there were no strict guidelines or trainings. As a result, rational behavior by diplomats was indirectly stimulated. Nevertheless, reality showed that although there are plenty of opportunities diplomats act on a logic of appropriateness instead. The norms and values of diplomats stop them from acting rationally on social media. Based on this chapter hypothesis two could be rejected. Furthermore, homogenization of implementation was avoided. The reason for this was that diplomats could then more easily play into the local context. For example, some embassies attempted to create a stronger bond with the citizens of their host country by posting in their language. This worked against indicator one, the average Dutch citizen is unable to understand all languages in the world. Indicator two showed itself in the answer of respondent number seven. She mentioned that embassies in less important regions were more prone to make political statements and to attempt public diplomacy with an external locus than others. There was also a large discrepancy between embassies and the amount of knowledge of social media present. Some posts even had their own social media agents. Lastly, the official Dutch approach to public diplomacy was more similar to indicator three than to indicator two. In fact, it turned out to be only loosely related to the cultural approach. It had a significantly different goal compared to the theory described in the theoretical framework. Instead of trying to build strong diplomatic relations, it sought to improve the Dutch economy. Furthermore, Holland Branding is a one-way exchange of cultures. It promotes the Dutch culture, norms and values but does not go into dialogues with other cultures. Although, some indicators were present in this chapter no final conclusions can be drawn yet. The diplomats said they followed the logic of appropriateness, thus rejecting hypothesis two, but the question remains whether this is true. They could have given a socially desirable answer. To prevent drawing any conclusions on this bias, the findings in the next chapter will be based on coded Facebook message and tweets. In addition, this data will also either reject or confirm the assumption that most diplomats hardly participate in public diplomacy with an external locus.

4.3. In what way do the users post on social media?

To test the preliminary conclusion of chapter one and two, it is necessary to delve deeper into the posting habits of the Dutch diplomats. This is necessary, as the current conclusions are based on either assumptions or potentially socially desirable answers given by the respondents. As mentioned in the methodology chapter 175 messages on social media platforms will be coded. Twitter and Facebook were chosen because of their popularity the chosen platforms are Twitter and Facebook.

All the analyzed Twitter accounts were from the ambassadors while on the other hand the Facebook accounts in the test are those from the embassies. The reason for this is that the ambassadors themselves mostly mentioned that they used their Facebook for private matters. Furthermore, these profiles were often set on private. As a result it was impossible to see any messages in the first place. Only using Twitter was not an option because as most ambassadors did not have a Twitter account (table 3).

This hurts the validity in two ways. First of all, less information is given by Facebook about Facebook messages than there is by Twitter about tweets. For example, Facebook does not mention the total amount of messages. Secondly, an embassy's Facebook account is often administered by multiple people. As a result there could be a difference of style between those posting on the account. The other option would be to restrict the research purely to Twitter but the sample would be too small to use it as evidence.

Indicators in practice

The messages will be put in six categories, four of them are based on the indicators used throughout the paper. Messages can have an indirect reason for posting them as well, which will also be taken into consideration. Additionally, retweets (or shared messages on Facebook) will also be analyzed as they are another example of a user's activity. Furthermore, 92% of the respondents mentioned they actively used social media to gather information.

<u>Category one</u> is based on indicator one, it will primarily consist of messages showing what the embassy and the diplomat are doing. This style was popularized by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, who frequently posts his daily activities to 40 000 on his Facebook. An example of this is a picture of him and several figures working in the Dutch travelling branch on a television set discussing how to inform Dutch travellers in order to prepare them better for going on a holiday. This message was posted on the 18th of June 2014 and is just an example of several messages a day he sends out to showcase his daily work.

His fan page says people can "Follow, read and talk about the foreign policy" showing that it is mostly meant as a way to create more transparency for the Dutch citizens active on Facebook, a clear sign of indicator one (NRC, 2012). This was further argued by several respondents and mentioned during the "Meet the ambassador" event in The Hague on the 17th of January 2014. In short messages are put in this category when they are showing the activities the user undertakes, mention his or her weekly agenda or an event that they organized.

Category 2 is similar to indicator 2: public diplomacy with an external locus. These messages will be politically charged and show what values, norms and policies the Dutch government stands for. If the assumption is true that this frame is hardly used within the Dutch e-diplomacy then this frame should be the least present.

Respondent three mentioned that although he did not necessarily post politically charged messages, he did however post articles or statements for others to react on. These statements could be seen as part of public diplomacy due to the exchange of views on a specific subject. This especially holds true when the ambassador himself participates in the debate.

Category 3 is the cultural approach category (indicator three). Discussions and exchanges of culture are put in this culture. Messages with the intent of Holland branding will also be put into this category.

If a message is about events, if it shows pictures of the Netherlands or if it mentions statistics and figures regarding e.g. economics then it will be put into this category. Events involving Dutch people that are promoted by the embassy will also be placed in this category.

An example of Holland Branding is the following message from respondent ten: "Dutch companies are among the most innovative in the world! They made a record 7,606 patent applications last year. For more information check: http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2014/03/dutch_firms_made_a_record_7606.php."

Category 4 encompasses all tweets of a rational nature (indicator four). If a message is interpretable to benefit the diplomat himself instead of the Dutch state then it will be put in this category. An example would be posting tweets that are not in line with his mandate.

Category 5 is an additional category. It contains all messages of an informative nature. These messages are for example facts about the host country or the Netherlands. The danger is that it will still result in a politically charged debate or end up as branding. Therefore the argumentation for categorizing each message is placed next to the message in the data file.

Category 6 is the final category. All fluff messages, superficial entertainment, such as viral internet pictures and videos or other content that does not necessarily fit in any of the other aforementioned categories is put in this category. The same goes for messages containing personal information. The difference between this category and category four is that these messages do not normally lead to a different view point from the reader. They are purely there for entertainment purposes.

To start off with coding the tweets it is necessary to assess which of the seven chosen respondents used which social media platforms. By doing this there is an additional benefit that shows the popularity of the two researched social media platforms. An X sign in the table means they have an account on that social media platform while the – means the opposite.

Table 3: Assessment social media accounts respondents

Respondent	**Facebook**	**Twitter**
1	**X**	**-**
3	**X**	**X**
5	**X**	**X**
6	**X**	**X**
7	**X**	**X**
9	**X**	**-**
10	**X**	**-**
Total scores	**7/7 (100%)**	**4/7 (57%)**

* Respondent 2, 4, 11, were left out due to posting the messages in the native language only (only active on Facebook)

** Respondent 8 was left out due to working at the same embassy as number 6

Facebook domination

Table 3 shows the dominance of Facebook over Twitter within the small sample. The reason for this could be that Facebook generally is more popular than Twitter. In fact, it is widely recognized as the most popular social networking site with 982,168,040 users total in 2013 (Quintly, 2013). In the Netherlands, Facebook is still the largest platform in 2014 (Newcom, 2014). As a result diplomats might be more comfortable using Facebook as they have used it for private purposes before. Facebook was originally purely a social networking site however it can be used as a discussion platform as well. Once again the Facebook page of Frans Timmermans, who does not have a Twitter account, can serve as an example. Regularly other users comment on his post and then try to start a discussion. These discussions are often not on topic and extremely volatile, as a result Minister Timmermans has on occasion asked for his fans to behave. The latest example of this was on the 16th of May where he posted the following: “A page such as this can only exist if people who want to share their opinion respect each other’s opinion intact and do not spam off topic comments. This week sadly a lot of off topic comments were posted and rather commonly did I see rude responses as well. A small group of visitors do not adhere to the house rules and threaten to ruin it for the others. People feel threatened by this behavior. That is why I kindly request you to adhere to the house rules. For the sake of the majority of the users I will start to enforce the rules more strongly for those who are not able to keep in line.”

This behavior was however also noticed by the ambassadors on their social media platforms, for example respondent nine mentioned he occasionally had negative reactions to posts on his Facebook page due to statements made by Geert Wilders. If Geert Wilders made an anti-Islamic statement then the embassy’s Facebook page was spammed with posts stating the Netherlands was a country filled with racists.

Test results

These unpleasant comments did not stop the diplomats and embassies from using social media. The four Twitter users alone averaged out on 1907 messages. Overall the results were evenly divided between the categories, the only surprisingly result is that the conclusions of chapter one and chapter two were also present in this data. Public diplomacy with an external locus was the least common category.

Secondly, it is interesting to note that Facebook appears to be even less popular as a tool for indicator two than expected, only 5% of coded messages were placed within this category. Something to note which might have infl uenced the result was the occurrence of the Olympic Games in February 2014, this has probably led to the diplomats posting more fluff messages than on a regular basis. The discrepancies between how many times the Olympic Games and the achievements of the Dutch team were mentioned were rather large. One respondent never even mentioned them while respondent ten ended up posting six times about the Olympic Games.

Furthermore, there seemed to be no exchange of cultures. All coded messages in category three only tried to promote everything Dutch. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are significant differences between indicator three and Holland Branding. One could therefore argue that the Dutch diplomats did in fact not build towards a mutual understanding of cultures.

Fourthly, there was more evidence for the rejection of hypothesis two. Only one message fits this category. A diplomat retweeted an article about the current president of his host country. The article heavily critiqued the president, the message that accompanied the link was “Harsh - too harsh”. The tweet would arguably hardly cause any damage but the question remains whether this is something that a diplomat should say. He is still a civil servant and not a politician.

Lastly, the general posting style of the diplomats seemed extremely similar to that of Minister Frans Timmermans. He was mentioned in every single interview and his activity on social media was held in high regard. As a result, it seems that his diplomats copied his style. Assuming they follow his style, they cannot do anything wrong. His behavior on social media sets the boundaries for his civil servants. These boundaries then function as logic of appropriateness for the diplomat. If he sees his Minister post in a certain way, then this style becomes available to as well him. If the Minister makes a strong political statement then the diplomat might follow suit. However, his style is mostly about public diplomacy towards the Dutch public instead of the public abroad, resulting in the high turnout of indicator one. In his case, this is a logical consequence of posting in Dutch. His diplomats post in English or in another language and as a result one could wonder if this does not clash with his style. What is the use of posting a message in Swahili if the targeted audience is Dutch? Respondent nine said he counteracted this problem by posting in a bilingual fashion. Every message he sent to his followers was in English and Arabic. The lack of posts about political diplomacy with an external locus, dialogues between cultures and rational behavior might be because of the same copycat behavior.

All absolute and relative results are summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Coding scheme social media messages

Category	Twitter	Facebook	Total
1	17 (17%)	15 (20%)	32 (18%)
2	15 (15%)	4 (5%)	19 (10.8%)
3	15 (15%)	13 (17%)	28 (16%)
4	1 (1%)	0	1 (0.5%)
5	23 (23%)	22 (29%)	45 (25.7%)
6	29 (29%)	21 (28%)	50 (29%)
Total:	100 (100%)	75 (100%)	175 (100%)

The excluded

Respondents two, four and eleven posted in their host countries' language and were therefore not taken into the test. Their social media accounts were however, still quickly scanned. Using Google Translate a couple of tweets were translated to get a taste of how they used their Facebook accounts. The accounts of respondent four and eleven seemed relatively similar to the others in the test but respondent two's account was irregular. This account already had a very different name and already mentioned the main focus of the account in that name: promoting Dutch cultural activities. As such one could almost argue that this account was entirely built around Holland Branding. He mentioned in the interview that the local political climate made him avoid Twitter. This harsh political climate is also the reason for having such a specific Facebook account. It is easier to discuss Dutch tulips than it is to debate the need for LGBT rights.

Conclusion

A few conclusions can be drawn from this chapter. First of all, Facebook is the preferred social media platforms of the Dutch diplomats. Furthermore, there was hardly any data about public diplomacy with an external locus. Neither was indicator three in the majority. In fact the messages that were put in this category were more similar to Holland Branding than the cultural approach. There were no actual examples of discussions between the diplomats and other actors about each other's culture. The diplomats purely posted in a one-way fashion. In addition, there was more evidence for the rejection of hypothesis two. Only one post was found that could potentially be seen as an example of indicator four. Diplomats copied the style of posting of their Minister, instead of finding their own. Indicator one was therefore very common compared to indicator two and three. However, one could argue whether this is of any use. If you try to reach a Dutch audience then you also need to post in either Dutch or English. Some of the embassies in the test did however not do so but still used the same style of posting. This copycat behavior also enabled the Minister to decide on what is seen as appropriate behavior on social media. As a result he (unconsciously) prevents rational behavior of his diplomats. Based on the findings in chapter one, two and three both hypotheses are rejected. Diplomats do use social media for public diplomacy but primarily focus on their own public and do not meddle in political affairs of their host country. They do not try and change the policies of their host country through its public. Neither do diplomats pursue their own interests on social media. The next chapter will focus on what, in addition to the aforementioned copycat behavior, the reasons are for the lack of public diplomacy with an external locus.

4.4 What is currently limiting the use of public diplomacy through social media?

The two hypotheses were rejected in the previous chapter. One of the reasons behind the avoidance of externally focused public diplomacy and the pursuit of self-interests by diplomats was the considerable role of the current Minister of Foreign Affairs. Diplomats copied his style of posting. Furthermore, his messages set out the boundaries of what was considered appropriate behavior. His diplomats adhered to these boundaries and as a result followed a logic of appropriateness. The assumption is that there are however more reasons behind the lack of public diplomacy, these assumptions are described in chapter 4.4. The first factors deal with the characteristics of the internet itself and are based on cyber-lobbying theory. In addition there are three other types of causes: external factors, internal factors and personal factors.

Pseudo effectiveness

Some of the characteristics of social media also reduce its effectiveness and subsequently weakens it as a tool for public diplomacy. The internet has two innate advantages over other media: its speed and its reach. However, online petitions and messages on social media face one problem. They all end up anonymously and leave the impression to be weak. A written article in a national newspaper, a signed letter to the government or the attendance at a protest on the other hand all show more commitment to a certain cause. The question therefore remains whether social media is actually a suitable medium for showing engagement (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2009).

Furthermore, the internet has been named a ‘weak-tie instrument’. It easily and rapidly attracts people to a cause but they do not stay for continued dialogues. As a result social movements for policy changes are often on a temporary basis. And as such the necessary trust and strong ties for public diplomacy are hard to establish (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2009).

Social Media abroad

There are several external limiting factors to public diplomacy. First and foremost, there might be an enormous gap in technological capabilities between two states. In a world as interconnected as ours one might easily forget that not every resident of each country has the opportunity to browse the World Wide Web. This holds especially true for the citizens of a country such as the Netherlands, that had an internet penetration of 93% in 2012 (World Bank, 2014). Taking into consideration that is the fourth highest score according to the World Bank, the gap between the Netherlands and any other random country seems incredibly large. To exemplify this point the average internet penetration of the host countries where the ambassadors interviewed or otherwise contacted worked was approximately 65%. This digital divide however is not only limited to countries. Some socially weaker groups in society cannot be reached with e-diplomacy. Not only because of the absence of a computer or internet access, but also because people lack the necessary skills to express themselves on the new media technology (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2009). There is also a digital divide within cyberspace. This concept is called the ‘democratic divide’ and splits up those who use internet for political reasons and those who do not. The former will be reached more easily by diplomats on social media due to them already being interested in politics and policies. One can assume that the latter will perhaps not even follow the embassies’ accounts and will definitely not partake in dialogues (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2009)..

Additionally, one needs to realize that although Facebook and Twitter are by far the most popular social media platforms in Western Europe, the popularity of other websites is constantly changing (Social Media Today, 2013). Social media is very vulnerable to trends. Not responding to these trends is a waste of opportunity, for example according to Forbes (2014) image-centric networks such as Tumblr, Buzzfeed or Instagram will continue to grow. Yet only respondent six explicitly mentioned that he used Buzzfeed. Especially Buzzfeed has suddenly become immensely popular, in November 2013 alone did the website reach more than 130 million unique visitors (Buzzfeed, 2013). It is unreasonable to expect every embassy, to be active on every social media platform. What is a possibility however is to take part in locally trending social media websites. For example in the Caucasus, the

Russian Federation and other Eurasian countries the most popular social media website is V Kontakte. This social website has 40 million unique users in Russia compared to the only 10 million unique users on Facebook (The Telegraph, 2014).

Furthermore, some countries have yet to warm up to the idea of social media. Not all citizens of each country are heavily active on social media. In these cases it might just be a matter of time until social media becomes as dominant as it is in other states.

Thirdly, Dutch ambassadors often work in politically harsh climates. In these climates public criticism is seen as inappropriate, either because of cultural norms or because of heavy scrutiny by the government. In this environment diplomats feel less inclined to send politically charged messages on social media as exemplified by respondent two and seven. The former mentioned one of his colleagues, that was working in a different country, was contacted by the authorities of respondent two's host state because of a critical tweet. He was asked to remove the Tweet and to explain himself. Secondly, respondent seven described throughout the interview that the culture she was working in would not appreciate public criticism. Public criticism would only backfire on her. Taking up politically sensitive topics directly to those in charge "over tea" was according to her a far better way to change local policies.

Lastly, there are cases whereby a state goes even further than scrutinizing social media. For example Turkey recently tried to ban social media after an increase of protests against the government. Other states such as Iran and North Korea launched entirely state controlled networks (The Guardian, 2014)? Nonetheless users in moderate countries also feel frightened to enter debates on social media. Users posting political tweets will have their data and IP addresses logged akin to photos taken during street protests. They have the impression that they are criminalized and therefore avoid posting politically sensitive messages (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2009).

All of these factors make (genuine) two-way symmetrical interaction impossible. In the first three cases the outreach of social media is simply too limited. Not enough citizens are reached either because the diplomats use the wrong medium or the citizens of the host country are not active on social media. However, in the other two cases a third party prevented two-way interactions between the diplomat and the local citizens. Both subsequently rule out the dialogues necessary for either creating mutual understanding (the cultural approach). Furthermore, without being able to reach the public or elite opinion the diplomat is unable to influence other states' policies as was described in the theoretical framework.

Weberian conflicts

The internal factors primarily have a political nature. Social media was originally used as a campaigning tool. Using social media for this was popularized by president Obama during first run. Assumingly inspired by him many Dutch politicians became active on social media. With a quick tweet politicians can now react to their follower's questions. Social media also had this appeal on the diplomats. As was described in chapter 4.1 it was supposed to be used to interact with the Dutch audience. Three of the respondents were also inspired by how Obama's team used social media. Diplomats are however, by definition, still Weberian civil servants. The famous sociologist Max Weber was known for his outspoken opinion regarding the necessity of an apolitical bureaucracy. Several respondents mentioned that by posting politically charged tweets they were stepping into the political arena and suddenly became the object of discussion by Dutch politicians on social media.

At the same time respondent seven mentioned that not only did she experience the aforementioned problem, she was also repeatedly harassed by Dutch citizens for her work in an Islamic country on social media. Even apolitical tweets about her visit to her host country's Ministry of Economic Affairs were bombarded with a political discussion about "whether the Netherlands should closely work together with those kinds of countries".

In short, the use of social media has apparently made the Weberian separation of the political sphere and civil service more fluid. The original assumption was that the diplomat was mentally and physically far away from his government. However, with the introduction of social media this distance was decreased. This had benefits such as the ability to introduce public diplomacy with an internal locus but it also had a negative side to it. Because their work is now more visible they are more openly critiqued by citizens and colleagues alike. Subsequently, they do not feel inclined to post politically sensitive topics on social media. Furthermore, the reasoning for citizens and politicians to pull diplomats into the political arena could be similar to what Putnam mentioned in 1988. By publicity criticizing the foreign policy they hope to cause such an uproar that the policy changes into a more favorable policy for them.

Social media anxiety

Additionally, there are also personal factors in play that limit the amount of public diplomacy done by the diplomats. Other factors playing into social media anxiety are the relative novelty, over time the use of social media should automatically grow. At the time of writing, social media was still something some of the respondents needed to explore. 25% of the respondents mentioned they were not that active on social media before privately. Nor did they use it for their job before. The reasons for this varied, some found it to be too time consuming while others found the idea behind social media inane.

By giving them the opportunity to fail, as mentioned by Minister Frans Timmermans during the Meet the ambassador event, they might feel more inclined to try something out. Interestingly enough, the diplomats did not act differently after having heard that their Minister would take all the blame for their mistakes on social media. Respondent five said that although he knew he could post whatever he wanted, he was still afraid to damage his established reputation in his host country. Therefore one can conclude they were not acting on a logic of consequences. They did not care whether they could not be fired or whether someone would vouch for them in the case that their host country criticized them. Their reputation was more important to them, they felt like they had to keep up the appropriate behavior. As a result, it seems that diplomats act on the logic of appropriateness more than on the logic of consequences.

Conclusion

To conclude it seems that the limitations to public diplomacy are numerous. In the previous chapter, it became clear that the style of the diplomats was not comparable with externally focused public diplomacy. However a look at cyber-lobbying and e-democracy taught us that the internet does not only have advantages. For example, a post on social media gives the readers a feeling of being less committed to a cause and citizens might only be involved for a short while. However, there were three more types of causes: external causes, internal causes and personal causes. Firstly, external causes prevented public diplomacy through social media from happening before it had even started. The reason for this was that no two-way interactions were possible and therefore the public could not be reached. Additionally, the internal factors scared off the diplomats from using public diplomacy. Originally the diplomat was far away from the public and the politicians, this distance saved him from any critique. However, with the introduction of social media as an effort for national public diplomacy, the diplomat can, more easily, become scrutinized. Lastly, there was the personal cause. Diplomats were new to social media and therefore they felt less inclined to experiment with it. Furthermore, they also acted on a logic of appropriateness. If the topic at hand was not appropriate to be discussed, they refrained from doing so. The reason for this was to protect their reputation in their host country. Not even the guarantee that their Minister would take all the blame, both nationally as well as internationally, made them at ease to use public diplomacy with an external locus.

5. Conclusion

This part of the research will consist of three parts: a summary of the research and its conclusions and a part dedicated to recommendations based upon said conclusions. Furthermore, there is a third part that describes all limiting factors to this research and subsequently its conclusions.

5.1 Summary

The foreign policy of the Netherlands was deemed outdated and had to be changed on several aspects. First of all, it had to fit better with today's contemporary network society. Secondly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to implement several budget cuts. And lastly, there was a lot of critique from Dutch citizens about the value of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Dutch state tried to solve these issues with the introduction of the policy plan called 'Voor Nederland, Wereldwijd'. This document explained the need for more two-way interactions with the public. Two-way interactions were supposed to lead to an increase in transparency and this would function as public diplomacy aimed at the Dutch citizens. Public diplomacy with an external locus was left out of the document. The incremental working style of the policy-makers created an environment wherein the diplomat could more easily pursue self-interests. The reason for this was that the document only described its goals. It did not explain the means to this end. This put a lot of freedom and responsibility into the hands of the diplomat working abroad.

According to the respondents of the interviews there was an additional reason for national public diplomacy. Criticism was not limited to the Dutch citizens, other governmental institutions also critiqued the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was interpreted as a battle for resources, similar to the idea of bureau politics. As aforementioned there were no clear defined guidelines, those that did exist were unknown by most diplomats. This further created an environment for them to pursue self-interests in. However, they refrained from doing so. Their norms and values, derived from their substantial general diplomatic trainings, led them to follow a logic of appropriateness. There was a reason behind the lack of strong common guidelines. The Ministry thought that by being flexible its diplomats would more easily be able to respond to local contexts. However, this led to tension between the two types of public diplomacy. If a diplomat posts a message in a language other than Dutch or English, then Dutch citizens are unable to understand the message. As a result, the attempt to practice national public diplomacy is wasted. Furthermore, the view on public diplomacy from the Dutch government was different compared to what was described in the theoretical framework. Their view on public diplomacy with an external locus was called "Holland

Branding”. However, this was more similar to the cultural approach instead. The difference was in the goals that it tried to achieve. The cultural approach tries to build mutual understanding and lasting relationships for diplomacy but Holland Branding is only after economic gain. The diplomats therefore just promote the Netherlands and do not go into dialogues with the other cultures. Public diplomacy with an external locus did take place but only in regions that were deemed as less economically important.

These assumptions were tested by coding a small sample of messages on social media. This sample confirmed that hardly any externally focused public diplomacy took place. Neither did the diplomats enter dialogues to build mutual understanding and respect. The messages coded in this category were more similar to the one-sided Holland Branding approach. There was further evidence for the rejection of hypothesis two, only one message could be seen as an attempt to pursue self-interests. One of the reasons for this was that diplomats duplicated the style of their Minister. This had two effects, firstly it resulted in a prevalence of public diplomacy aimed at Dutch citizens. Secondly, by copying his style they also copied his perception on what was seen as appropriate. This provided further proof for the assumption that diplomats do not act rationally but instead, act on a logic of appropriateness.

There were however, other factors that could explain the lack of public diplomacy with an external locus. Firstly, social media might not be the right medium for public diplomacy. A message on social media felt less committed to a cause and it often only results in weak ties. Secondly, there were several external causes that prevented two-way interaction and therefore made public diplomacy through social media impossible. Thirdly, social media closed the gap between the diplomat and his country of origin. Posting politically sensitive tweets put him in the political arena. This led to an increase of public critique by politicians and citizens alike. Lastly, there were personal reasons for the lack of public diplomacy. Most diplomats were new to social media and felt less inclined to experiment with it. Furthermore, they once again acted on a logic of appropriateness. If a topic was too politically sensitive, they preferred to avoid it. They were afraid that posting politically charged messages would result in a damaged reputation. Even the guarantee that their responsible Minister would take all the blame did not result in more public diplomacy with an external locus.

In short, the answer to the central research question is the following: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and her ambassadors do not utilize social media for what is commonly perceived as public diplomacy. They primarily used social media as a tool to inform Dutch citizens about their work. Furthermore, diplomats do not abuse social media for their own gain. Therefore both hypotheses can be rejected.

5.2 Recommendations

From the empirical findings it became clear that external public diplomacy on social media is still a foreign concept for the Dutch ambassadors. This is far from surprising, social media technologies have made public diplomacy increasingly more complex. Diplomats are left with questions about which audiences they should try to reach and about what a message should consist of? However, even if a government decides not to use social media it will be drawn into it regardless. An example of this is the Arab Spring which highlighted the irrevocable context of network oriented world, instantaneously changing the United States' foreign policy forever (Hayden, 2012). No longer can foreign policy exclude social media for their strategic goals. The original objectives of public diplomacy to inform, educate and engage simultaneously have changed, the focus shifted from relaying information to the building or leveraging of relations (Hayden, 2012). This shift of focus is in line with the occurrence of the network driven society.

Is public diplomacy necessary?

The question then remains whether it is necessary to meddle in other countries' policies. According to McHale (2011:p 1) it is pivotal to do so: "In a world where power and influence truly belongs to the many, we must engage with more people in more places. That is the essential truth of public diplomacy in the internet age… The pyramid of power flipped because people all around the world are clamoring to be heard, and demanding to shape their own futures. They are having more important conversations right now – in chatrooms and classrooms and boardrooms. – and they aren't waiting for us.". McHale says that acknowledging a network society requires the governmental actor to play into the network society too. Social media allows us to create dialogues with non-traditional interlocutors and to include groups in societies that are normally excluded. This of course does not mean the Dutch state should start to aggressively change other state's policies or to reinvent the world. A small gesture or mention can however change the world, Respondent seven's actions showed this. In a predominantly Islamic country she mentioned that she used social media to reach out to groups of women, connect them and make their voices heard. She did not need to post about how society needed to change their views on women or to support the women's charity cases. Instead she visited them, mentioned their case on Twitter and aligned them with others. This indirect form of public diplomacy utilizing the snowball-method can assumingly lead to more than posting a rather bland statement. Another example of this was the videotaped message on the occasion of Nowruz (Persian New Year) from President Obama. This video became a viral hit in Iran and was watched by more than one-third of the citizens of Iran. This resulted in a better reputation for the American government under the average citizen (Ross, 2011).

However, the cultural approach has shown that mutual understanding and respect between two cultures remains vital for effective diplomacy. If a culture is not-accepting towards publicly posting criticism on social media then the diplomat should try to avoid working in such a manner.

Tweets that move mountains

Social media platforms should thus be used as an amplifier, allowing the embassies to reach more stakeholders, opinion leaders and other publics. Techniques to locate the crucial populations for public diplomacy should be avoided. This is important to note as social media networks work in a different manner than protest movements. Leadership is distributed and in nodes over the entirety of the network. No longer can Nelson Mandela or Lech Walesa like figures be identified (Ross, 2011). Furthermore data illustrates that social media helped to make weak ties stronger; online people with little in common found a cause to fight for and were propelled into action together offline (Ross, 2011). This builds a case to avoid locating and targeting crucial populations or to implement market-derived techniques as both will lead to alienation of the general public (Hayden, 2012).

Technology itself is however by definition neutral, it is therefore necessary that the users take control if they want to change something. By having an invitational ethic that encompasses the Dutch ideals while composing messages more will be achieved than by following the previously mentioned “best practices”. This requires a different thought process that not only acknowledges different positions and experiences of interlocutors but actively engages them in discussions (Oglesby, 2009). The embassies should not try to dominant a network but instead search for common ideals to fight for. This will make a lot more achievable for the embassies (Geen, 2011).

As with any form of collaboration it is vital to listen to the general opinion and to get a feel for the trends within a country before making politically charged messages. This is according to Seib (2012) the foundation of public diplomacy. Sites such as Twitaholic (finds the users with the most followers) and RetweetRank (provides a ranking based on retweets and metions) can help searching for the opinion leaders within a country. This differs from the earlier mentioned approach to opinion leaders. It requires the embassies not to try and influence the opinion leader but instead simply follow their posts. When there is a post that becomes trending, similar to the Dutch position or the exact opposite, it is then possible to join into the discussion and make the Dutch position clear. Joining a discussion about a trending topic can also be done by utilizing the hashtag. These posts should not be done on a superficial basis, as quality is more important than quantity according to Henry (2012). Nor should interaction be short lived, to foster long-term interest a continuous dialogue is necessary (Ciolek, 2010).

Being aware of the trending social media platforms is also important for strong public diploma. As was shown in this thesis, all embassies stayed on popular platforms in Western Europe and North America. Two respondents dabbled into new upcoming platforms such as Buzzfeed but none of the embassies mentioned they posted on large regionally specific social media websites e.g Orkut (Brazil) or V Kontakte (Russian Federation). Posting on these websites would result in losing a large portion of the Dutch user base and weaken the transparency aspect of the Dutch social media policy, but ,greatly increasing the outreach to the public abroad. To solve this issue a second account on a different platform could be set up. The messages on both platforms could simply be identical, also solving the perceived language barrier issue mentioned earlier in the research.

Profound knowledge of the medium is also required to effectively utilize social media. The Dutch government did set up trainings for its ambassadors but the education level was low. In some cases the ambassadors did not even know there were trainings at all. At the moment some of them even felt uneasy while sharing messages from other embassies or colleagues, they felt as if they were stealing their messages. Experienced users of social media should be intrigued by the trainings. This could be done by going into more intermediate topics instead of explaining them how to submit a tweet. Furthermore, every ambassador or embassy personal with access to the embassy’s account should be able to follow the trainings mentioned. An idea would be to post them on an online interface together with an extensive manual on to carry out effective public diplomacy through social media. This system already exists according to respondent seven but other actors didn’t know of the existence of these trainings, if this online interface does exist than it should be further promoted under the diplomats.

Lastly, several respondents mentioned that they would not mind to have premade messages ready to share to their followers. Sometimes they lacked creativity or time to think of something themselves. A way to solve this would be the addition of a new Twitter account for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the current one is purely informative and solely posts in Dutch. As a result it remains rather useless from a public diplomacy stance point. The account managers could start posting in English and encompass more frames than an informative.

Another option would be to create a second Twitter account that solely posts in English and tries to act similar to the embassies, messages from this account could then be shared by the embassies. This will save them time looking for interesting posts from their colleagues or to compose a message themselves.

In short a way to solve this would be to setup a roadmap or manual that the embassies should follow for increased effectiveness. It should at least include the following steps:

1. Map the important and most popular social media platform in the country. If the country has a low proficiency in English then post in their native language or split the post into two languages.

2. Within that social media platform find the key influential players by using sites such as Twitaholic or RetweetRank. Another option is to follow the trending hashtags. Find out what the general opinion is and jump into the discussion when the subject is interesting for the Dutch state. Do not lie nor try to market it like a product. The policy or statement needs to be credible.

3. Do not shy away from debates but stay respectful. Calmly explaining your viewpoint will in the end lead to more interaction than avoiding confrontations. But when a discussion is lost or becomes plain rude simply state your point once more and leave the discussion. In the end it is not about winning but about giving off a political signal. Constructive dialogues are crucial according to the cultural approach.

4. In the end the quality of your post matters more than the amount of posts you make on average. Therefore take the time to compose these messages instead of jumping the gun.

5. Forego situations that end up in an “us versus them” scenario. Trying to achieve anything through public diplomacy is only possible through collaboration and therefore requires you to keep good ties with those you are trying to reach.

In addition to this roadmap the current trainings need to be expanded as intermediate users could still improve their outreach or effectiveness. Currently they feel left out as the trainings mostly encompass the very basics of posting on social media. Also ensure that all diplomats have received at least basic training regarding social media.

However, these trainings should be a last resort. The interviews showed that the diplomats mirrored the style of the Minister, one could typify his posts as the rules of the game for his diplomats. This type of imitation and emulation could be harnessed as tools for an even more effective e-diplomacy. By changing the styles of the norm-leaders, the Minister and large embassies with their own social media specialists, the behavior of the other diplomats will also change. According to respondent seven a good way to improve the Dutch public diplomacy would be to start with opening a Twitter account for Minister Frans Timmermans: “If the Minister would start tweeting, then Twitter will be used more often by my colleagues. If the Minister would tweet something, then we could retweet that, it then becomes immediately clear what the Dutch position is. And this way it is also a lot stronger.”.

Although the Dutch venture into twiplomacy has so far been a relative success there is still room left for improvement. If the Netherlands wants to stay on top regarding digitalization and keep on priding itself as an innovative country then it is pivotal for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to keep updating their social media policy.

5.3 Limitations

There are several factors that limit the prior-made conclusions. One of them is the limited sample size of the interviews and coded social-media messages. Any generalizations based on these sources might be unreliable due to potential outliers. In a large sample one can more easily pinpoint outliers. One of the reasons for this small sample is that many embassies declined an interview request or in most cases did not even respond to the e-mail. For example: none of the members of the advisory commission or other policy-makers responded to interview requests.

Furthermore, as only one case is studied findings are hard to generalize. The Dutch ambassadors might act entirely different on social media than their foreign colleagues. As aforementioned the American and Canadian embassies did in fact actively pursue public diplomacy with an external locus. Swedish public diplomacy was according to Hoffman (2013) also similar to the North-American countries. Furthermore, the second country she analyzed, Germany, seemed to have comparable trouble with introducing social media for public diplomacy as the Netherlands. Whether it is a coincidence that these two heavily interconnected countries and culturally similar countries have the same issues or not remains unknown. This would be an interesting topic for further research.

In addition, the question remains how effective general diplomacy through social media is. Public diplomacy through social media perhaps makes sense academically but its outcomes have yet to be analyzed. Subsequently, it makes sense that new research should try to discern the actual effectiveness of public diplomacy through social media. The outcomes of this research could then either result in best practices or an entirely new view regarding the use of social media for diplomatic purposes.

6. Appendices

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6.2 Timetable interviews

Interviewee	Date of the interview	Respondent number	Time NL	Time abroad
Embassy of Netherlands in Bulgaria	20-5-2014	1	10:00	11:00
Embassy of Netherlands in Russia	20-5-2014	2	13:00	15:00
Consulate of Netherlands in Brazil	20-5-2014	3	15:00	10:00
Embassy of Netherlands in Portugal	21-5-2014	4	11:00	10:00
Embassy of Netherlands in the UK	*	5	*	*
Embassy of Netherlands in the USA	22-5-2014	6	17:00	11:00
Embassy of Netherlands in Qatar	3-6-2014	7	16:30	15:30
Public Diplomacy agent in the Embassy of the Netherlands in the USA	3-6-2014	8	17:30	11:00
Embassy of the Netherlands in Egypt	2-6-2014	9	10:00	11:00
Embassy of Netherlands in Estonia	**	10	**	**
Embassy of the	**	11	**	**

Netherlands in Argentina				
Embassy of the Netherlands in Suriname	***	12	***	***

* Confirmed their participation however ended up not replying to interview requests.

** Were willing to participate but due to different reasons were only able to fill in the topic list instead of participating in an interview.

*** Mentioned they hardly used social media and felt an interview would therefore not be worthwhile. Instead they answered several questions over e-mail.

6.3 Topic list embassies and consulates

General questions:

1. Who are you?
2. What is your current function?
3. Do you use Social Media privately, if so how often on a scale of 1 to 5?

Modern diplomacy plan:

1. What were your first reactions to the modern diplomacy plan and the role of social media in this plan?
2. Were you given training or guidelines in regards to how to use these media properly?
3. If not, would you have liked to have had said training or guidelines?
4. Would you overall see the plan as successful (scale 1-5) and if so why?

Social media in practice:

1. Is there an employee specifically working there to manage the social media or do you use it yourself?
2. Do you mostly use social media actively or passively (just following or also posting)?
3. How do you promote your social media accounts and how many followers?
4. If you post a message what do you base it on whether it is fitting to do so?
5. Ever had a bad experience after having posted a message?
6. Has it changed the way diplomacy is done and can you give an example of how?
7. Do you so far value it as useful tool for diplomacy, does it allow you to do your job better?

Conclusive:

1. Do you have any tips for me in regards to the research?