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As a matter of fact, like many other fields, diplomacy has its own old, yet rich history. Since the earliest times, ambassadors have carried the ruler's messages to the rulers of other states, signing and analyzing peace treaties and getting many other important nationwide tasks done. However, diplomacy formed as a professional work and profession only by 15-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (the Renaissance): many embassies emerged, and also private information and reports started being recorded confidentially. Some peace treaties, such as The Peace of Westphalia in 1648, laid the foundations for modern international system. The concepts of state sovereignty and the principles of non-interference to international affairs of other countries emerged, and these newfound concepts formed the basis for current international relations. For next centuries, diplomacy has taken its institutional basis. Very first Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been established in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The First and Second World Wars changed the way diplomacy functions dramatically: The League of Nations (1919) and the United Nations (1945) were created, and diplomacy became multilateral, transparent and legal.



In 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is undeniable that internet changed everyone's life significantly, and it is everywhere. Digital technology, which has influenced every sphere, has also made an impact on diplomacy. Consequently, concepts, like diplomacy in digital world and influencer diplomacy, have emerged in the contemporary world international relations.

So, throughout history, diplomacy evolved from information delivery to discussion and negotiation, then to institutionalization, and lastly into global network.

So, what is Influencer Diplomacy? Influencer Diplomacy is a method by which countries promote their policies, culture, image, and opinions by leveraging famous media stars and bloggers with millions of followers. Simply, it is a modern version of internet-adapted form of diplomacy.

Why do you think influencer diplomacy is growing? In the past, diplomacy was mainly done by ambassadors, official meetings between parties, and official documents, like contracts. Today, however, people trust social media platforms like Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, Twitter or even TikTok more. In digital era, information spreads supersonically, and people trust sources which speak to them in a simple and understandable way: in “human language”. Influencer diplomacy has emerged from this need. It helps to deliver complex ideas, policies or habits in an easy-to-comprehend and accessible manner. This lets diplomacy expand beyond official organizations and connect with wider public. Indeed, the importance of influencer diplomacy lies, in fact, in its closeness to everyday life. It brings diplomacy closer to the public. Before, diplomacy used to be seen as very intricate field understood only by politicians and noble social figures. Now, the ordinary can also interfere in new legislation and news in this field because of the fact that influencers are explaining complex themes in simple language, inspiring people’s interest in the field. For this reason, almost all countries collaborate with popular influencers to create a bridge between the government and the public. Since influencers are closer to public in many ways, their words are well-respected and accepted positively and treated with sincerity. Today’s youngsters understand the world around them through the internet. Their ideas and perspectives are mainly formed and constantly shaped by social media and influencers. This is happening in both direct and indirect ways. Influencer diplomacy is giving governments a chance to make their voices heard. It is also strengthening the connections between different cultures. In social media, different countries’ lifestyles and everyday lives are showcased. This increases understanding and curiosity among people and allows them to form shared values among nations. So, many things that cannot be expressed in official language are getting conveyed by those influencers.

Regarding different types of Influencer Diplomacy:

## 1. Cultural Diplomacy

In which, countries promote their cultural stances, values and traditions, language through media influence. Common example can be creating contents about national celebrations, traditional clothing, festivals and dishes.

## 2. Tourism Diplomacy

In which, famous bloggers visit a specific country, and their contents in this hosting country contribute to tourism development in this country. There are many bloggers out there travelling to many different countries during different seasons.

## 3. Public Opinion Formation

In which, Influencers contribute to a positive image of a country in the minds of people in another country.

## 4. Diplomacy during Crisis

In which, Influencers help spread rapid and emotional appeals during wars and natural disasters like earthquakes or fire.

We can see many pragmatic examples of how they are influencing our lives.

South Korea: Korean government officially uses K-pop actors as soft power diplomacy ambassadors. K-pop and K-drama stars play a significant role in spreading Korean culture across the globe. For example, BTS is not only a musical group but also a diplomatic figure: they spoke at the UN in 2018, 2020 and 2021 and worked with several UNICEF campaigns. It is also surprising that Blackpink group serves as UN ambassadors for climate change. Some actors, Lee Min-Ho and Song Hye-Kyo, promote tourism and national culture.



Turkey: Turkish Tv series, actors and actresses, and many bloggers have increased international public interest in Turkish culture and profound history. They also affect tourism and country’s image positively. That’s why government here wants TV actors and actresses to be in their campaigns. Some of the most famous figures: Berkan Güven, CZN Burak, Hande Erçel, Burak O’zcvit – they are leveraged mainly to improve tourism industry and spread Turkish culture.

The United States: Hollywood stars, famous athletes and well-known bloggers promote American lifestyle, policies, and some ideas. They are mainly used in political fields and diplomacy. Emma Chamberlain promotes American fashion and pop culture worldwide. Next figure, MrBeast collaborates with USAID on environmental projects and some campaigns against deforestation. He also helps promote social public opinion on certain topics. Dwayne Johnson (The Rock) often participates in government campaigns.

France: Léna Situations participates in promoting French tourism. President Macron invited TikTok and Instagram influencers to the Elysee Palace to engage with youth and learn their public opinions.

United Arab Emirates (Dubai, Abu Dabhi): UAE is among the top countries for encouraging social media bloggers participate in brand promotion. Negin Mirsalehi, Huda Beauty (Huda Kattan), KSI, and Logan Paul are often invited to major events.

Japan: Naomi Osaka improves country's image through international sports. Most importantly, Anime, cosplay, and YouTube creators act as “digital ambassadors”.

International Organizations like UN, UNICEF, or WHO also use influencers around the world. Priyanka Chopra is for example a UNICEF global ambassador. David Beckham is also a UNICEF ambassador. Millie Bobby Brown is a UNICEF goodwill ambassador. Angelina Jolie is a UNHCR special envoy.

These all represent an influencer diplomacy at an international level.

It is certain that this field also has its drawbacks. For example, if an influencer shares incorrect information, it can definitely reduce trust. That's why this type of diplomacy should be regarded with caution and sincerity. First, seemingly biggest drawback is the lack of professional experience in the field. Influencers are technically not diplomats. They may be unfamiliar with international law policies, or protocols and maybe norms. Official diplomats are always trained in negotiation, word choice, and politics for several years. Conversely, influencers often lack this experience. A single word choice, post or story can harm relations and reduce trust. Lots of influencers work for advertising, reputation or for increasing views which sometimes do not align with national interest. In good, well-thought diplomacy, however, national interests should be in the top and above personal gain in priority list. Additionally, bloggers work independently, unlike official diplomats and ambassadors who strictly adhere to state laws. This makes it difficult to fully control their opinion and increases the risk of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Indeed, complex political issues are usually presented in a short video or post, which can lead to a lack of depth and cause the public to misunderstand without full context and setting.

There is also a high chance of disinformation to go viral, as unchecked information spreads so quickly, and false information in influencer diplomacy can trigger international conflicts. Also, trends and people in influencer popularity change quickly: someone who is popular today may lose their audience tomorrow. That's why influencer diplomacy often has a very short-term impact, whereas classical diplomacy focuses on long-term strategies and stable relations either between countries or between the government and the public.



Considering all potential risks and side-effects, states need to develop very carefully-thought-out strategies if using influencer diplomacy. It is of paramount importance to select those influencers wisely and continually monitor their activities, ensuring reliability. Otherwise, incorrect messages or reputational risks can affect the country's entire image. It is always risky to trust entire country's image to a single person. It is also true that influencer diplomacy is becoming an integral part of international relations in the modern age. Reaching a wide audience so quickly through social media shows that influencer diplomacy will continue to play an important role in diplomatic practice in the long run. It is especially important to strengthen connections with young people and communities active in the digital world.

As a matter of fact, positive results can only be achieved when these two parties work in harmony in this field: the governments and Influencers.

In conclusion, influencer diplomacy can be a great tool for a modern age to connect with the public and collaborate with other countries, but it can never fully replace official and professional diplomacy. The best way is to use it as a complementary instrument which is applied with proper strategy and strict control. Influencer Diplomacy should not be seen as a replacement for traditional diplomacy, but a mechanism that adds to it and complements it.