COMMUNICATION POWER IN ISRAELI DIGITAL DIPLOMACY:

TOWARDS A NETWORKED THEORY OF GEOPOLITICS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study introduces an innovative approach to the study of digital diplomacy

by extending Castells' theory of communication power into a framework that can be

applied to assess digital diplomacy efforts for state actors. Using the core constructs of

communication power, the study develops a testable framework by which digital

diplomacy strategy and networking practices can be assessed using both interviews with

practitioners and network analysis of their practice. These two types of data enable

exploration of mental models of networked logics as well as actual practice in the

networked environment. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was used as a

case study for this project; however the framework can be applied to assess efforts of

other states.

The results indicate that the framework generated to assess power in state digital

diplomacy efforts does provide a means to define and measure influence in state-driven

Web 2.0 activities. The framework was useful for assessing communication behaviors

across a variety of Web 2.0 platforms, but also utilized specific network analysis

measures to assess influence on Twitter. In the case of Israeli digital diplomacy, the

degree to which network logics guide both strategy and practice was dependent on

position within the organizational bureaucracy. Embassies had networked logics guiding

both strategy and practice in the digital environment; however, the majority of

consulates defaulted to mass-mediated uses of Web 2.0 platforms. Network analysis

indicated that despite being connected to a variety of sub-networks and key nodes in the

digital environment, the MFA was not a frequently referenced node in in those sub-

networks, particularly by influential nodes in those sub-communities. These trends

indicate that they are operating from a position of counterpower on Twitter.

DEDICATION

For My One and Only

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expertise at a very crucial time. This project would not be complete and in its current form without your assistance! To the members of the Israeli diplomatic and research community: your generosity in providing me access, support and knowledge are greatly appreciated!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Israel has one of the most technologically advanced infrastructures on the planet.

In 2013, it was ranked first in the world in a number of important metrics of

technological diffusion, including expenditures on research and development, innovative

capacity of firms to generate new products and processes, public and private scientific

research, knowledge transfer, information technology skills and cyber security (IMD,

2013). Those expenditures have translated into technological contributions in a variety

of fields that permeate into a highly connected society. As of 2012, 70% of Israelis were

connected to the Internet, 30% above the average in the Middle East (IWS, 2012).

An exemplar of a network society in many senses of the word, Israel's attempts

to influence global public opinion typically operate from a networked model. From

inception, Israel has been a besieged nation. Many of its neighboring states threaten it

both diplomatically and militarily. This besieged status has necessitated not only those at

the governmental level making a case for Israel's legitimacy, but all levels of Israeli

society and networks of Israelis and pro-Israeli organizations around the globe arguing

for the legitimacy of the Jewish State (Attias, 2012). The Israelis have appropriated

transnational networks to influence messaging about the nation in key centers around the

globe, and with the shifting of discourse in the global public sphere entering onto digital

platforms, the Israelis have appropriated these as new spaces for connection and message

production.

More specifically, Israel has joined other nations like the United States and the U.K. in moving the practice of public diplomacy online. Israeli digital diplomacy has advanced significantly over the past 5-8 years (Eztra, 2011; Sheffer, 2010; Spier, 2010). However, while Israeli public and digital diplomatic practices have been examined in a number of contexts, especially from within a policy framework (Gilboa, 2002, 2006; Gilboa & Shai, 2011), there remains little understanding of the dynamics of these practices in the networked environment.

Partially, at least, this is due to the relative "thin-ness" of theories of public diplomacy generally. Aside from Joseph Nye's (2004) conception of "soft power," public diplomacy is generally examined from an a-theoretical perspective (Archetti, 2010; Pamment, 2013), and little attention is paid, either by diplomats, or scholars of communication or international relations, to the underlying communicative dynamics of public diplomacy. Work remains largely historical (Cull, 2009, 2013), and descriptive (van Ham, 2005). This lack of theoretical grounding, moreover, reflects a general disregard for public diplomacy by scholars. Although it occasionally rises to the attention of political elites (such as campaigns to reach "hearts and minds" of foreign populations), public diplomacy is largely regarded as a relatively unimportant aspect of larger geopolitical forces, especially economic, military, or political trends.

My argument is that especially in an age marked by the impact of "mediated realities", and where communicative networks have become the defining symbol of the era, communication processes, networks, and impact have a defining role in not just elite diplomacy, but in the relations between states and global publics. In other words, the

communicative elements of geopolitical statecraft have never been more important. Modern communication technologies, in essence, make statecraft in the 21st century inherently dynamic in that narratives move more quickly than ever across national borders through digital networks. Once distributed across borders in the digital environment, narratives are also quickly contested, undermined, rejected or revised by communities joined not by geographic affinity, but by other markers. New borders are being drawn in the information space based on political affinity and ideology as opposed to geography; these new borders and spaces further necessitate the study of how state diplomacy operates in this environment (Lotan, 2014).

The communicative aspects of geopolitical influence and diplomacy have not been entirely absent from academic research in communication, media studies, and international relations (Heisey, 1986, 1999; Howard, Agarwal, & Hussain, 2011; Neumann, 2002; Price, 2002). Indeed, one of the most widely utilized frameworks today, that of Nye (2004), draws upon the communicative elements of national identity, power, and attraction. Nye's soft power/smart power framework is, in some ways, an attempt to articulate the role of perceptions of foreign nations in geopolitical influence. Perceptions, are, of course, largely shaped by media, whether newspapers, movies, television news programming, or even art (Bayles, 2014; Berkowitz & Eko, 2011; Muller, Ozcan, & Seizov, 2009). Though not articulated in these terms by Nye, soft power is largely created, sustained, and deployed by media.

This is especially true in the case of Israel. Narratives concerning Israel's political, military and diplomatic decisions are constantly being crafted and contested in

mediated spaces. As a nation, Israel occupies a difficult task in shaping these mediated perceptions of actions with her neighbors and key states around the globe.

However, the platforms on which these media wars are now deployed operate using a different organizing structure, that of digital networks. The way in which messages are created and spread both by state and non-state actors is quite different, yet the means we use to analyze these movements and campaigns, I argue, is inadequate. While soft power has a great capacity to model the way in which influence operates for states in juxtaposition to hard power, I argue that we have reached certain limitations when seeking to apply the construct for at least two reasons.

First, soft power, as an analytical concept, is largely unusable due to the juxtaposition of media with policy and elite experience. The confounding of these disparate domains results in *any* type of non-hard power activity being described as a form of soft power. Second, Nye fails to account for the fact that the environment in which communication efforts by states occur is a predominantly networked environment. Even in mass mediated contexts, the manner in which information flows through journalists and outlets is networked. To not account for this widespread societal structure when theorizing how power and influence operates is a major limitation of Nye's construct of soft power. Finally his model relies heavily on communicative elements, but his models provide little understanding of media influence generally.

Facilitated by shifts in the communication environment towards a networked structure, we have seen corresponding shifts in the organization and conduct of a variety of governmental practices, including diplomacy. As will be discussed in the literature

review, this shift has borne the creation of a new type of diplomatic engagement that this study will refer to as digital diplomacy, although scholars have yet to reach consensus on the name for this new practice. Digital diplomacy is characterized by the usage of Web 2.0 technologies by the state (both individual state officials as well as foreign ministries) for engagement with foreign publics. What differentiates *digital diplomacy* from *public diplomacy* is that it operates in an environment whose fundamental organizing structure is quite different from previous media environments. I argue that a theoretical approach accounting for this shift should be applied to the study of diplomacy, as opposed to using assumptions from the mass media environment as both practitioners, and to a certain extent, scholars, are currently doing.

For example, presence and connectivity have been the two primary goals of digital diplomacy practitioners: create presence on the multiple platforms where citizens in target nations are located, and connect with them through what has been termed engagement. Engagement, however, has often been measured by sheer number of followers; having a large following on a particular platform is considered to be a successful digital diplomacy campaign. One of the problems with the push to indiscriminately build large audiences is that connection does not necessarily equal influence. Just because a state is present on a platform and has passive connections with millions does not mean that the messages produced on the platform are influencing those millions to think differently about that nation.

In other cases, those responsible for digital diplomacy have attempted to engage with thought brokers, digitally savvy entrepreneurs and bloggers with insight into online

trends (sometimes called "the digerati"). However, this engagement has rarely been from

the perspective of attempting to facilitate and guide narratives on a particular platform

(Chinn, 2011). In fact, individuals in the US State Department have expressed

trepidation in conveying even the slightest sense of improper use of citizen engagement

within foreign publics, which would include having digital content perceived in any way

to be propaganda (Chinn, 2011). Although the underlying goal of any form of public

diplomacy is to create feelings of goodwill and to shift the prevailing narratives about

the nation in a positive direction, practitioners have been careful to manage how these

activities have been perceived.

In any case, to study the realities of the networked nature of Israeli digital

diplomacy and its associated implications for geopolitics, I argue that a different

theoretical lens should be applied to its study. Manuel Castells' (2009) theory of

communication power provides a model for how influence operates in the networked

environment, but also provides a sense for the resulting implications for geopolitical

operations. This study expands on the basic components of communication power and

develops a theoretical model and associated measures to assess influence in state digital

diplomacy initiatives. Next, I provide background on the nature of Israeli digital

diplomacy in its specific geopolitical environment, and then introduce the proposed

analytical framework for this study.

The Conundrum of Being a "Small" State

Academic literature on small-state diplomacy describes a particular approach to

public diplomacy that is quite driven by public relations concepts. The goal of producing

content, whether digital or otherwise, is to gain visibility on the international stage (Leonard & Small, 2003), create a particular brand for the state, and enhance cultural exchange, investment and travel to the state. As Batora (2005) describes, "[f]oreign perceptions of small and medium-sized states are usually characterized by lack of information and, at best, by long-established stereotypes." However, there is a burgeoning literature attempting to conceptualize "middle states", those states in which neither the properties of large states nor small states applies.

Small states that hold significant geopolitical weight represent a conundrum in international relations theory as they defy commonly accepted realist theories of state behavior in the international system. Great powers with significant hard power resources have traditionally set the tone for relations; small powers have been theorized to ally themselves with larger powers in order to secure military, economic, and even internal security (Kamrava, 2013).

However, there are a variety of small states that possess significant geopolitical influence for reasons that fall outside the theoretical propositions associated with hard or soft power. These states have brokered significant influence in the international system through an entry into and appropriation of global financial, diplomatic and media networks. Qatar, Singapore and Israel are three such states that are small, yet exercise large influence in a number of realms.

Qatar has acquired significant geopolitical weight both within the Persian Gulf, but in the larger region and globe using a set of resources that do not fit neatly within the categories of hard or soft power. Kamrava (2013) writes that, in general,

Traditional conceptions of power no longer adequately describe emerging trends shaping the international system. Realist and neorealist thinkers have viewed power in terms of access to and control over tangible resources, especially manpower and military strength. More recently, notions of soft power and then smart power have sought to rectify seemingly narrow and increasingly unfeasible focus of realists on force and military hardware. None of these conceptions adequately describe the underlying dynamics that account for the position that Qatar- an otherwise small state on the margins of global power politics- has been able to carve out for itself. (p. 47)

Qatar has strong alliances with a variety of disparate great powers (e.g. Iran, the United States, and Saudi Arabia) that, within traditional realist thinking, would hinder its geopolitical position. Conversely, the alliances have provided the sheikhdom with significant geopolitical leverage. They have also brokered significant regional influence through the use of the government-financed broadcasting network Al Jazeera, which has become integrated into various global networks of influence. In addition, they have become integrated into the World Trade Organization through the creation of the Doha Round, which serves as one example of crucial integration into global financial networks in a number of domains. Kamrava describes the "critical role played by globalization" in that Qatar has been able to "profit from interaction with and integration within the new global political economy." (p. 23-24) This integration within global financial and media networks is one that, I argue, can better be explained from a networked perspective.

Similarly, Singapore's influence can be better explained using a networked perspective. The country lacks native natural resources that would lend itself to hard power in the form of economic influence. Instead, Singapore has brokered significant geopolitical weight by establishing itself as a central node for global financial trade networks. While culturally, the nation has next to no resources to facilitate coercion or

attraction from other states in the international system, they have established themselves as a major power through integration into key international networks. Singapore's financial influence can be felt around the globe, yet culturally, their reach is extremely limited.

The degree and level of visibility that Israel occupies on the international stage also differentiates it from other states of similar size. While its population is comparable to nations like Azerbaijan and Honduras, its visibility, in a geopolitical context, is comparable to the largest of states (such as China, Russia, or the U.K). Israel is mentioned as an example of a middle power in the literature (Patience, 2003), and the diplomatic strategies typical in small state nations (jockeying for prominence and recognition) are not typical of Israel (Thorhallsson, 2012),

Despite being described as a middle power in some circles, the place where Israel's geographic size and small population mattered most was in the domain of human and monetary resources. The Israeli diplomatic community is extremely small, by virtue of the population of the state of Israel. Also, like most states, the division between defense expenditures and diplomatic expenditures is extremely pronounced. In the United States, the approved FY15 base spending for the Department of Defense was $585 billion (Department of Defense, 2014), while the budget for the diplomatic corps and USAID was $46.2 billion (Department of State, 2014), equating to 7.9% of the DoD budget. For Israel, the divisions are even more pronounced. The approved defense budget for FY14 was US $13.1 billion (Israel Ministry of Finance, 2013). For the entire

diplomatic corps of the state of Israel, expenditures rested at US $423 million, or just 3.2% of the defense budget (Israeli Ministry of Finance, 2013).

The combination of limited population and resources meant that the team of individuals dedicated to creating and responding to online content in the MFA was extremely small. While the estimated population of individuals to be interviewed for this study was 20-25 individuals, recruitment efforts revealed that the MFA does not have a large number of individuals dedicated to digital diplomacy. Key informant interviews confirmed that the population of employees working with digital content in the organization was small.

Despite the limited resource environment, Israel has made some investment in digital diplomacy initiatives and still presented an appropriate case study for the networked approach to the study of digital diplomacy for a at least two reasons. First, Israel is a nation that, from inception, has engaged in public diplomacy using a networked model. At the governmental level and at the level of the individual citizen, Israel has consistently relied on a network of actors, even before the advent of Web 2.0 technologies, to engage in *hasbara*. *Hasbara* is a project granted to individual citizens and to the various branches of government to disseminate positive information about Israel to the world (Toledano & McKie, 2013). Various groups have been enlisted to engage with the world digitally concerning Israel's foreign policy decisions, what life in Israel is like, and to engage in the global public sphere on various policy and economic issues concerning the nation. Ranging from young groups (e.g. Eye2Israel), to groups of

trained diplomats, overall, Israel is engaging aggressively online via a number of state and non-state (private, civic, etc.) organizations.

Second, the state of Israel has moved much of its governmental message production into a different space, with increasing investment in Web 2.0 platforms in addition to traditional mass media outlets; they have purchased the rights to Israel's YouTube and Twitter accounts from private actors to package and produce diplomatic and militaristic content for the online environment (Spier, 2010). Also, in recent years, Israeli practitioners have called for an overhaul in approach to the practice of public and digital diplomacy (Gilboa & Shai, 2011; Shinar, 2009; Toledano & McKie, 2013), and many of the aforementioned state and non-state organizations have taken on the charge.

An Innovative Approach to the Study of Digital Diplomacy

This project will introduce an innovative approach to the study of digital diplomacy by extending Castells' (2009) theory of communication power into a framework that can be applied to assess digital diplomacy efforts for any state actor. Israel will be used as a case study for this project, but this framework can be applied to any other state. Using the core constructs of communication power, I will develop a testable framework by which digital diplomacy strategy and networking practices can be assessed to ascertain power and influence in the networked environment.

Castells enumerates a variety of different types of networks that organize our society, including political networks, financial networks, and ideological networks. He has argued that the foremost form of power one can exercise in a networked environment is to determine the predominant content in a network (what he calls

programming), and to connect strategic actors from disparate spheres into that network (what he calls switching). One who programs a network is one who determines, overall, what key visions, frames and discourses are acceptable or unacceptable in any given network. One who is able to switch key actors into any given network successfully is one who can bring together key entities with agency to implement the goals of the network. Programming and switching can operate in two different forms. If an actor is successful in determining the predominant content in a network and is successful in connecting disparate actors into the network, then Castells would argue that they operate from a position of power. Conversely, if an actor is instead attempting to introduce a different variety of content into a network, and does not have existing connections with disparate actors in the network, then Castells would argue that they are attempting to exercise counterpower in the network society.

Using the previously described approach, the field of digital diplomacy can become a social science with associated theory, analytical tools and measures. This study will propose an applicable framework whereby digital diplomacy can be understood in terms of its possibilities for influence in the digital environment. With theoretical propositions that can be both demonstrated and measured, this study expands our understanding of digital diplomacy and introduces the ability to characterize a state's network identity in addition to its geopolitical identity. This will provide researchers with structural insights into state activity on networked platforms and enable an understanding of the practice of digital diplomacy and its impact in more concrete terms.

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diplomacy is one of the most important aspects of statecraft, as it governs the official (and unofficial) relations between states. For centuries, diplomacy was an elite activity that solely involved heads of state and members of the diplomatic corps. However, at least since the 1950s, public diplomacy has become an important element of diplomatic outreach, where states began to see the value in reaching foreign publics directly to encourage friendly and productive relations (Malone, 1988). The capacity to accomplish this was accelerated by the rise of mass media, and as a result, public diplomacy took on more mass media characteristics, with the US State Department working in close conjunction with programs like the Voice of America (Siefert, 2003). After 9/11, the United States in particular became very interested in public diplomacy and conducted somewhat of an overhaul in approach and message (Nakamura & Weed, 2009). Shortly afterward, the State Department began funneling positions and resources toward facilitating presence in the networked environment, or what they termed 21st century statecraft (U.S. State Department, 2011). Foreign ministries around the globe followed suit.

From an academic perspective, we are in a limited place of understanding the theory and practice of public diplomacy (PD). Theory-building has not kept pace with the quick development of PD over the past 60 years, particularly in the realm of understanding how influence operates in the networked environment. My purpose in this

chapter is to summarize the insights of current theoretical approaches to public

diplomacy, drawing upon a diverse body of literature.

I begin by describing how scholars and practitioners have conceptualized digital

diplomacy, noting that frequently, it is positioned within the larger conceptual

framework of public diplomacy. I elaborate on the problems this raises in the study of

digital diplomacy. Next, I describe Nye's (2004) soft power construct and it's associated

gaps when applied to the study of digital diplomacy. Then, I introduce the

characteristics of what Castells (2010) has identified as "the network society" and apply

those components to the study of digital diplomacy. After providing an overview of the

Israeli digital diplomacy environment, I describe how Castells' framework will be

applied to examine their efforts for influence in the networked environment. I conclude

the chapter with research questions for this study.

Positioning Digital Diplomacy as a Type of Public Diplomacy

Governments have engaged in public diplomacy projects for quite some time,

which seeks to bypass elite, government-to-government engagement and connect

directly with the citizenry of various target nations (Gregory, 2008). However, with

increasing numbers of the global citizenry plugged into Web 2.0 networks, a number of

governments have argued that public diplomacy should appropriate social networking

technologies. The US, UK, Canada, and Israel (to name a few) have adopted a rhetoric

of globalization and attempted to deploy a statecraft adapted for the 21st century

(Deibert, 2002; Gilboa, 2002; Lichtenstein, 2010; Posner & Ross, 2010). As such,

scholars and practitioners conceptualize digital diplomacy as an outgrowth of public

14

diplomacy, with an aim to form and engage with key virtual communities (Kluver &

Chinn, 2014).

Digital diplomacy is typically defined as the means to both connect with and

influence global publics on digital platforms by both state actors (typically ministries of

foreign affairs) and non-state actors (such as cultural icons and news organizations)

(Samuel-Azran, 2009; Seib, 2010). Over the past decade, a number of governments (and

their respective ministries of foreign affairs) invested significantly in digital diplomacy

initiatives, largely driven by a belief that such investments are necessary in order to be a

relevant actor in globalized discourse. Some entities led this push, particularly ministries

of foreign affairs in the United States and Great Britain. A number of practitioners

distinguish digital diplomacy from the term e-diplomacy, which is a term used by

diplomats to refer to the use of web applications to facilitate traditional functions of

diplomacy, such as consular services, or collaboration within a ministry of foreign

affairs ("Office of eDiplomacy," n.d.).

The conflation of public diplomacy with digital diplomacy has occurred both

with practitioners, but also in the academic study of both concepts. The disciplines of

communication and international relations (IR) have struggled both in the naming of

digital diplomacy studies and in setting the theoretical boundaries of the field. Digital

diplomacy has been called "new public diplomacy" (Gilboa, 2006; Melissen, 2005),

"real-time diplomacy" (Gilboa, 2002), "mediated public diplomacy" (Entman, 2008;

Hayden, 2013), "21st century statecraft" (Morozov, 2010; A. Ross, 2009), "public

diplomacy 2.0" (Cull, 2013) among other labels. Scholars examining both public and

digital diplomacy as a whole are also struggling to define the field's status as either an area for practical inquiry, or as a fully recognized academic field of study (Gregory, 2008).

The problem with the conflation of digital diplomacy practice with public diplomacy for practitioners is that states are approaching content creation on networked platforms in much the same way as they have done for mass media outlets such as television and newspapers. Web 2.0 platforms operate using a logic that is inherently different from mass media platforms, that of the network. The ways in which information flows and influence operates is quite different, as agency has largely shifted from elites to individuals. Using digital networks, individuals who previously had little capacity to influence global discourse now have the means to dynamically influence national narratives using digital networks. Take for example, the #JeSuisCharlie or #Occupy movements, citizen-generated movements that gained global traction. Additionally, the ways in which content is processed on these platforms is fundamentally different; shorter messages are more likely to be read and disseminated broadly by publics. Also, though users have access to a wider variety of content more quickly, digital media enables them to draw from a limited set of sources that confirm their existing ideologies (Kluver, 2002). These particular dynamics of the networked environment beg for a theoretical construct that accounts for their reality when studying the impact of new media on international politics generally.

Consequences of an A-theoretical Approach

A lack of robust theory building for public and digital diplomacy has left the study of these phenomena stagnant, and particularly for digital diplomacy, in a space where scholars are envisioning the implications for its practice in generalities (Hocking, 2005; Snow, 2009). Studies published from international relations scholars and public diplomacy practitioners tend to remain repetitive in form and in argument. The same can be said for communication scholarship, though emerging work is beginning to engage the study of PD differently.

In the field of international relations, much of the work on public diplomacy has marched to the beat of the same drum. Scholars have consistently argued that public diplomacy (both old and new) is a means to exercise soft power in the realms of interest for the state (Cross & Melissen, 2013; Melissen, 2005). If used at all, models give sole agency to the state, not accounting for the agency of other actors in the international system, namely individuals who now have the potential to reach global audiences in much the same way as mass media organizations or the state. To be fair, some IR and political science scholars are beginning to advance discussion beyond the centrality of the state, arguing instead for a reconfiguring of the central power players in a networked environment (Gstohl, 2012; Hoffman, 2003). With the exception of a few novel approaches to the conception of power, such as Arquilla and Ronfeldt's (1999) discussion on "noopolitik" (juxtaposed with the classic "realpolitik" construct in international relations), very few studies of public diplomacy in IR have strayed from the "party line", as it were. Studies remain largely descriptive, in prescribing proper

strategies for practitioners to engage in the new political and communication environment of the 21st century (Proedrou & Frangonikolopoulos, 2012).

In the field of public diplomacy proper, practitioners have focused (understandably) on praxis. Work published from practitioners has focused on detailed descriptions of what a successful public diplomacy project is and what it would entail (Dasgupta, 2011; C. Ross, 2002). When studies do engage theoretical constructs, virtually to a number, all draw upon Nye's (2011) conception of power and influence, with little critical reflection. While discussion on the role of networks has begun (Ross, 2009; Slaughter, 2009) much of the discussion rests in the realm of praxis or the studies simply provide too much agency to the technologies themselves (Heine & Turcotte, 2012)..

Work in communication studies has contributed the most in the area of advancing the study of public diplomacy from generalities to more nuanced and theoretically rigorous work (Archetti, 2010; Sheafer & Shenhav, 2009), however, this discussion is in need of further development. Scholars have acknowledged the agency of non-state actors in the international system (Seib, 2010; Zaharna, 2005), and have offered a number of frameworks to understand this shift. For example, Olsson's (2013) work on public diplomacy as a crisis communication tool provides a three-fold framework (sense-making, networking and messaging) by which public diplomacy can be conceived of as a crisis mitigation tool when used transnationally.

Theorizing in communication studies that accounts for the trajectory of development of the use of online space has been done in the realm of domestic political

campaigns. Through examination of U.S. domestic political campaigns, Foot and

Schneider (2006) have modeled four practices that campaigns in the United States have

increasingly used over time. Initially, web sites were used primarily for *informing*

constituents on a variety of issues, including candidates' positions. Over time,

campaigns began to use websites for more activities, including *connecting* constituents

with other sites through linking, *involving* constituents, and finally, by *mobilizing* them.

In the context of foreign policy, similar work describing and theorizing state

communication behavior should be conducted. States have acknowledged that to be

relevant in 21st century public diplomacy is to be present on networked platforms (A.

Ross, 2009), and while some work has begun to account for various types of networking

activities beyond mere presence on social media platforms, further work modeling the

specific dynamics of interactions and their impact should be performed.

A number of studies have specifically engaged with the centrality of networked

logics in the practice of digital diplomacy (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hayden, 2013). Fitzpatrick

(2012) has called for the need for networked logics to guide our theorizing of strategic

publics in the networked environment. She argues that the relative lack of thinking on

who the "publics" are in "public diplomacy" is problematic and a theoretical gap that

should be filled in the literature. Hayden (2013) describes the ways in which narratives

and networks have formed the bedrock of claims from policymakers justifying public

diplomacy as a form of state power and influence. These studies provide important

rationales for further investigation of how influence operates in the practice of digital

diplomacy.

However, few scholars in communication (or otherwise) are accounting for the geopolitical implications of digital diplomacy. The transnational dimension of digital diplomacy, that messages can be created for specific segments of a global audience (e.g. young Persians vs. older American evangelicals) and spread immediately via digital platforms is an area that is beginning to be explored (Fitzpatrick, 2012). That those same audiences can concurrently reshape targeted messages and redistribute them to global audiences is a dimension that has not been accounted for in our modeling of digital diplomacy or our exploration of how states now conceive of power and influence. At its core, power is deployed through communication; we need models accounting for that in the digital environment.

Before introducing an alternative means to conceive of power and influence, I introduce Nye's (2011) concept of soft power, and describe its role in public diplomacy studies to this point. Afterward, I will outline an approach applying Castells' theoretical insights that will help explain the impact of digital diplomacy in a network society.

A Paradigm Shift: Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

One of the most commonly used frameworks utilized in any discussion of public diplomacy is the conception of "soft power," articulated in a series of works by Joseph Nye (2009, 2011). Indeed, Snow (2009) has cited the construct as "the most referenced term in the public diplomacy lexicon" (p. 2). The term has not only been used extensively in the academic literature on public diplomacy (Hocking, 2005; van Ham, 2005), but has also been used by a number of governments in their formulation of media strategy (Farah & Mosher, 2010; Greenfield, 2012).

While many have used the term to mean anything apart from military power, Nye (2011) argues that soft power has specific parameters, and can be appropriated by both state actors and other actors that audiences affiliate with a given state, such as prominent businesses (e.g. McDonalds) and cultural leaders (e.g. Hollywood). In essence, it is the ability to exert influence on a particular target to produce desired outcomes, aside from hard incentives (such as the threat of military action, or economic repercussions). A nation's soft power can reside in cultural appeal as well as policy appeal and acceptance to publics around the globe.

Nye (2004) argues that soft power is dependent on "three basic resources [with the following conditions]: culture (in places where it is attractive to others), political values (when the state lives up to them at home and abroad) and foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority)" (p. 84). However, Nye later states that economic and military factors can also be components of a nation's soft power. Using these varied resources, soft power can operate either directly or indirectly, where national leaders are either influenced directly by other leaders, or their publics are influenced, and in turn create what Nye would call an "enabling environment" for favorable decisions to be made by said leaders (p. 94).

The vehicle through which influence operates is always communicative, and often mediated. Culture of a particular nation is often conveyed through the media products the nation produces (films, music, etc.). Political values are conveyed a number of ways, through both direct policy statements, and by using narratives and metaphors invoked by a particular nation (i.e. the notion of democracy being embedded in causes

such as "Internet Freedom" in the United States). Political values are also transmitted through formal coalitions built by actors representing a nation or by key figureheads that transmit foreign policy decisions verbally, most often using mediated platforms such as television and social media. Finally, some scholars in international relations have also acknowledged the communicative or "sociolinguistic" dimensions of soft power; that ultimately, attracting someone to support a particular foreign policy decision or develop goodwill towards a nation is a communicative act (Mattern, 2005).

However, Nye (2004) himself notes that both direct and indirect implementations of soft power are extremely difficult to measure. Judging direct and indirect causation of soft power "requires careful process-tracing because multiple causal factors are involved", though he holds that "public opinion polls and careful content analysis can help provide a first estimate of the existence of an enabling or a disabling environment" (pgs. 94-95). Given these methodological weaknesses and the following theoretical weaknesses, a different means of conceiving of influence should be introduced into discussions on digital diplomacy.

Theoretical Weakness of "Soft Power"

Though used extensively, soft power has often been criticized as lacking depth in providing a framework to model how influence operates in a 21st century context (Hayden, 2013). Critiques of soft power emphasize its lack of falsifiability, that indeed all forms of cultural influence constitute soft power (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012). Studies even question the conceptual connection between soft power and public diplomacy made extensively by scholars and practitioners (Hocking, 2005). Mattern

(2005) also discusses the failure of Nye's description to ascribe the proper agency to the communicative aspects of soft power efforts.

A problem with utilizing Nye in the study of digital diplomacy is that actors are conceived of much more broadly than they have been in elite or public diplomacy, which is not accounted for in his theories on power. In elite diplomacy efforts, power and influence figure primarily in face-to-face negotiations amongst diplomats and other officials. In public diplomacy, though diplomats and governments are still the primary actors that produce and shape content, the public enters as an instrumental player. In the context of digital diplomacy, however, content production is not just limited to traditional power brokers, but is instead expanded to a broader range of actors in the digital environment. Friedman (2012) has argued that while states continue to play a large role in shaping national narratives, they are by no means the only, or even the most influential actors. Individuals have the potential to exercise as much power and influence as do states.

In addition to the limitation of who the actors are in the networked environment, Nye seems to assume, but fails to propose a method for analyzing the inherently "communicative" practice of geopolitical influence. He does this by failing, for example, to enunciate a clear description of how concepts such as "values" or "policies" are conveyed and provide soft power. He also fails to draw upon established communication methodologies to measure media influence such as agenda-setting, priming or cultivation. Power is communicative and measured bythe ability of both state

and non-state actors to craft and move messages and narratives effectively through networks of influence..

Ultimately, the reason that Nye's description of soft power can only take us so far in modeling how influence operates on digital platforms is that it fails to account for new configurations of power in a networked society. Nye's thesis is much easier to understand within a traditional media framework, but lacks the theoretical components to model how influence operates in a predominantly networked context, with a wider variety of actors.

It should be noted that Nye (2004) does mention the power of the network, discussing how power is shifting from state actors to non-state actors: "government efforts to project soft power will have to accept that power is less hierarchical in an information age and that social networks have become more important" (p. 101). Nye argues that leaders should conceive of themselves "in a circle, rather than atop a mountain. That means that two-way communications are more effective than commands" (p. 101). However, Nye does not fully appropriate the dynamics of a networked society, nor does he account for the means by which influence is appropriated: communication. The exercise of power by any individual or group on the planet is communicative; at some point, one must use practices of communication to influence key networks in the global public sphere to focus on particular ideas, visions and agendas. One must also use practices of communication to connect key parties of influence within the network. Because of the problems identified earlier with using soft power as a means to measure a nation's exercise of influence in a network society, I will

expand upon Castells' theory of communication power as a new means to conceive of influence in the study of digital diplomacy.

Castells' Networked Approach to Geopolitical Power

Castells (2010) argues that in the 21st century, the fundamental mode of production in society is no longer characterized by industry, but instead, by information. As such, this new informationalism lends itself to a different organizing structure for society: the network. With information as the fundamental building block of wealth and policy in the 21st century (Benkler, 2006), it is transported around the globe via digital networks of communication. Networks are varied, and include global financial networks, political networks, and cultural networks. They are comprised of a set of nodes, which Castells defines as key economic, political or cultural centers of influence (Castells, 2005).

Castells conceives of networks as spaces where key products (whether those products be financial or discursive) flow between nodes. Typically conceptualized geographically, in terms of key urban centers that represent the confluence of financial, political and cultural flows (e.g. Tokyo or New York), Castells emphasizes that the nodes are not located in the cities themselves (the space of places), but instead in the networked space in which those financial, political and cultural products flow (the space of flows).

Scholars are beginning to argue that new forms of diplomacy are moving towards a more networked relational approach (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hayden, 2013; Hocking, 2005; Huijgh, 2011), with decreasing agency centered on the apparatus of the state (Hoffman,

2003). Castells argues that our society is primarily organized by networks, and those who exercise power (state actors or not) can shape the primary visions and ideals of key networks, and influence others to adopt them. They also are able to connect prominent? components in any given network. Individuals, organizations *and* states can create networks, define the content of those networks, and connect key nodes in the network. Those who hold predominant positions of influence in any given network (governmental, financial, diplomatic, etc.) exercise *power*; those who lack position but still seek to influence the network exercise what Castells would call *counterpower*. I begin with an explanation of this theoretical framework at its basic level, and then move on to propose how these components can be applied and explored in the context of the project selected for this case study, Israeli digital diplomacy.

Components of Communication Power

Castells argues that networks are comprised of individual *nodes*, not to be conceived of as individual actors/ or organizations per se, but as *key economic, political or cultural centers of influence*. For our purposes, nodes of influence crucial for the practice of digital diplomatic practice are those *centers that create, drive and shape discourse about nations in the online environment*, such as online news outlets, governmental entities, or non-governmental organizations.

Castells' (2009) principal argument is that political power in the network society is located primarily through control of communication and information. He argues that political power "relies on the control of communication, [and] counterpower depends on breaking through such control" (p. 3). He argues, "the most fundamental form of power

26

lies in the ability to shape the human mind" (p. 3). Castells' emphasis on the *control* of communication and information is a concept that can be explored explicitly, and is one of the reasons Castells' model is appropriate as a different organizing concept for the study of digital diplomacy. Operating from a Marxian framework, Castells conceptualizes actors that are key power brokers as those who hold primarily economic influence, but also political and cultural influence in the network society. Counterpower refers to those actors who resist the dominant power brokers by attempting to influence the flow of, in this case, discourse concerning national narratives.

Specifically, he describes a four-fold delineation of how power operates in the network society: *1) networking power, 2) network power, 3) networked power* and *4) network-making power*. First, networking power refers to "the power of the actors and organizations **included** in the networks that constitute the core of the global network society over human collectives or individuals who are **not included** in these global networks" (p. 42, emphasis mine). In other words, "this form of power operates by inclusion/exclusion." (p. 42) He goes on to quantify the value associated with inclusion or exclusion as one operating exponentially on either side. Those who are already included in global networks have exponentially greater degrees of influence than those excluded; in the reverse, those excluded are exponentially less influential.

Second, network power refers to the ability to then formulate the rules of inclusion in a particular network of actors. For example, standards for participation on the NYSE, or even standards for countries to receive monetary assistance from key

financial players such as the World Bank or the European Union are a form of network power wielded by a particular group (Reuters, 2014).

Networked power is focused on *actors* in the global network society. Individuals/entities/ nation-states that hold power in the dominant networks in the globe (military, financial, media, etc.) possess networked power. Castells emphasizes that the limitation with conceiving of power as solely based on an actor's "relational capacity to impose [their] will over another actor's will" (p. 44) within the constraints of societal institutions is that we live in an interdependent global environment. No one institution, whether that be powerful states, financial networks, or media conglomerates holds all of "The Power" (p. 45).

Finally, network-making power is the form of power Castells describes as the most crucial in exercising influence over others. Network-making is comprised of two principal activities: *programming* and *switching*. Programming is the act of "constitut[ing the content of] networks" by programing and reprogramming them. Programming is an act primarily concerned with content (p. 45). One should think of *the specific goals of the network* in question when considering what programming entails. Programs are comprised of *ideas, visions, projects and frames,* all set by influential network actors, or " programmers," but grounded in a specific cultural context. This context is not necessarily one limited to national borders, but depending on the network, one including globalized cultural values. For Castells, the entities who produce this content, "programmers", are not just individuals, though individuals indeed can play a large role in producing content within a network. He relies on the conception put forth

by Latour (2005); both individual actors (including organizations such as the state) can program, but that the network itself can also program, through mechanisms such as collective action or collective agreement upon a particular narrative.

Castells argues that, in some cases, these networks are far more powerful than nation-states and are inherently global. Moreover, the power of some nation-states is significantly enhanced by their role within a network (such as, for example, a member of the UN Security Council). Although concerned with content, programming is also concerned with the technical configuration of a network. In the construction of Web 2.0 spaces for discourse, the nature of how discourse is constructed is itself infused with ideas, visions and frames. For example, governmental pages on Web 2.0 platforms that disallow feedback and postings from community members have an implicit value embedded in their construction.

However, there is a unique configuration for each network. The rules guiding acceptable content in the global financial network differ from those guiding international news conglomerates and differ from those guiding diplomatic networks. Thus, the network of actors engaging in Israeli-oriented discourse has an accepted programmatic context. One of the aims of this project is to investigate what those programmatic parameters are.

When considering programming, a particular limitation should be noted. Castells places a great deal of agency on the part of individuals producing the predominant narratives in a particular network. They do not, however, have the final say. While he acknowledges this in his discussion on counterpower, I argue that agency rests not just in

the hand of individuals producing content, but also in the ability of other actors in the network to influence a particular narrative. For example, Nye has detailed instances in which national soft power decreased due to a lack of popularity of particular policies. Taking a networked approach to this issue would focus on what content is acceptable to be programmed in a particular network over that which is not. Examining digital content through this lens may instead provide greater explanatory power for analysts and theorists seeking to understand the impacts of the digital environment on policy projection.

On the other hand, switching involves "connect[ing] and ensur[ing] the cooperation of different networks by sharing common goals and combining resources, while [also] fending off competition from other networks by setting up *strategic cooperation*" (p. 45, emphasis mine). Castells rearticulates switchers as those who can "control connecting points between various strategic networks". This connective power enables the creation of strategy on the geopolitical level for diplomatic actors with the ability to facilitate "connections between political leadership networks, media networks…technology networks, and military and security networks." (p. 46) This control of connecting points can mean that practitioners of digital diplomacy disrupt a particular narrative concerning their nation emanating from a particular network, by creating a new one, or by switching to another more favorable network. For example, unfavorable discourse about Israel emanating from Damascus could be reoriented by Israeli actors by emphasizing medical treatment of Syrian refugees by Israeli doctors serving in the region (Bryant, 2014).

Conducting analysis of the nature and composition of networks enables researchers to identify and even visualize ideology in the global public sphere. Numerous types of network analysis studies have demonstrated ideological affiliation on the part of politicians (Park & Kluver, 2009), and even larger subsections of particular foreign publics (Kluver & Chinn, 2014). Indeed, Smith et al. (2014) found that even the formation of a particular network can indicate whether or not a particular community has reached consensus or is polarized on a given topic. Thus, examining Israeli presence in particular network structures on Twitter will reveal ideological affiliation with particular actors to whom they are (or are not) connected.

In addition, exploring switching, or connectivity, is particularly appropriate, as one of the primary ways influence has historically been measured on social media platforms is through the spreading of content. If that content is not redistributed widely between communities of interest, then it is ineffective. Exploring how this occurs in the Israeli space will be particularly instructive. One of the items this project will explore is the extent to which Israel is able to form strategic connections amongst particular actors in the global network.

Other important theoretical elements that Castells contributes are the elements of **power and counterpower.** Programming and switching can act as either forces of power or counterpower for actors seeking to influence existing networks of interest for diplomacy. Castells places the terms "power" and "counterpower" in the context of elites vs. non-elites. Those exercising power occupy dominant positions in the network by defining its content and facilitating strategic connections amongst key nodes; those

exercising counterpower are attempting to reprogram the content in existing networks and build connections amongst nodes in the network. These constructs will be central to assessing the ways in which Israelis conceive themselves; for Castells the difference in whether or not one perceives themselves to be operating from a position of existing power, or attempting to exercise counterpower determines, in large part, how they navigate the digital environment.

Castells on Public Diplomacy

It should be noted that Castells has written on public diplomacy from a networked perspective, though his goals and conclusions are quite different than those articulated in this project. The differences begin with his definition of public diplomacy as "the projection in the international arena of the values and ideas of the public." (p. 91). He provides an alternative perspective on the goals of public diplomacy, and argues that:

> the implicit project behind the idea of public diplomacy is not to assert the power of a state or of a social actor in the form of "soft power." [It is instead] to harness the dialogue between different social collectives and their cultures in the hope of sharing meaning and understanding. The aim of the practice of public diplomacy is not to convince but to communicate, not to declare but to listen." (p. 91).

He conceptualizes public diplomacy as a possible means toward shared "consensual global governance", whereby a "sustainable world order" would be created (p. 91). This would occur through the creation of a "global public sphere" facilitated by "global networks of communication" (p. 91). Public diplomacy would be the arena in which these debates and conversations would take place. States would create digital "salons" (to use a Habermasian metaphor) in which global publics could debate and discuss the

merits of governance decisions not from a place of nationally driven self-interest, but from the perspective of what would be good for the global public.

However, the problem with this argument is that state digital diplomacy projects are *not* generally driven by a desire to equalize power amongst states in the international system. State investment in digital diplomacy is rooted in the interests of that particular nation. Russia has declared an interest to invest in information warfare and appropriation of digital spaces for influence and propaganda (Reuters, 2015); China has declared a desire to increase in soft power in particular parts of the globe to increase influence (Farah & Mosher, 2010). The international system is still driven by power relationships in many cases.

The other problem with Castells' argument is that in his explication of how networks operate, there are inherent power dynamics driving their operation. To argue that public diplomacy has the potential to introduce neutrality into the global public conversation ignores the proposition that those conversations are defined and *driven by actors with power* in the network of interest. Topics that are widely discussed in the international sphere for publics to engage with are often introduced by influential nodes in networks of interest. Even reaching a place of shared meaning on global issues would mean that alternative meanings are ignored or not programmed into a discursive network. Castells misses the "means" that would lead to the creation of a sustainable world order. Communication networks would have to be programmed by key actors to support that particular vision of global society, and key nodes would have to switch in disparate actors to this discursive network to adopt and arrive at a place of shared

meaning. This vision of the world would have to be promoted through an appropriation of power by influential actors in the network, and would have to be sustained by a silencing of other voices desiring previous power configurations in the international system.

Castells himself notes the difficulties and contradictions in the development of what he terms the "network state, which is characterized [among other things] by shared sovereignty and responsibility..." (Castells, 2008, pg. 88) The geopolitical issue with shared sovereignty is that:

> nation-states still see the networks of governance as a negotiating table upon which to impose their specific interests…Governments see the global state as an opportunity to *maximize their own interests*, rather than a new context in which political institutions have to govern together. In fact, the more the globalization process proceeds, the more contradictions it generates (e.g. identity crises, economic crises, and security crises), leading to a revival of nationalism and to the primacy of sovereignty…As long as these contradictions persist, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the world's geopolitical actors to shift from the practice of a pragmatic, ad hoc networking form of negotiated decision making to a system of constitutionally accepted networked global governance." (pg. 89, emphasis mine)

It is perhaps because Castells' final trajectory was toward shared governance and de-emphasized state power that he failed to fully explore the dimensions of state power expressed in public diplomacy efforts. His work published the following year on communication power was perhaps work that was not conceptualized in this earlier exploration of networks and public diplomacy. In any case, this study will appropriate and extend the fundamental dimensions of communication power and apply them to the study of state influence on networked platforms.

Framework for Analyzing 21st Century Digital Diplomacy

Based on Castells' approach to power and influence in the network society,

influence and shaping of public opinion tends to operate most powerfully through

influence of nodes. For states to engage these nodes, then, they must go about

programming or reprogramming them. This would represent a completely different focus

from current digital diplomatic efforts, which concentrate primarily on building

audiences, or "followers" among citizens in the target nation. Instead of a focus on

building large followings, Castells' framework would instead encourage a purposeful

identification and engagement with key nodes of influence in the promotion of projects,

visions, ideas and frames. In other words, instead of aiming for hundreds of thousands of

citizen followers on Facebook or Twitter as a primer for success in digital diplomacy,

states should instead seek to engage programmers. These programmers (media

personalities or writers, political thought brokers, key NGOs, or producers of cultural

products) have greater influential capacity for shaping social thought and practice. In

addition to seeking to program key networks central to national narratives, digital

diplomats should seek to place their nations as nodes in the network, becoming the focal

point of strategic connection between nodes of interest. Next, I introduce the particular

context in which Israeli digital diplomacy operates, and afterward, apply the previously

described constructs into a framework for analysis for the Israeli case.

Israel as a Case Study for Networked Digital Diplomacy

Since 2006, the Israeli government has performed a major overhaul in the

approach to public diplomacy. The Israelis refer to the practice of explaining Israeli

positions on a variety of issues as *hasbara* (Yegar, 2010)*,* and until recently, had an entire governmental office dedicated to the effort. The office, unofficially called "The National *Hasbara* Headquarters" (Greenfield, 2012), promoted coordination between the various arms of government conducting public diplomacy efforts, including the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the Ministry of Defense, and others. This office utilized both traditional and new media. These groups coordinated messaging on Israeli policy and also in crisis situations, including specific staff such as "the IDF spokesman, the policy spokesman, the *hasbara* representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a spokesman from both the MFA and the Ministry of Defense, the media advisors of ministers from those offices as well as from the Government Press Office." (Greenfield, 2012, p. 27)

A number of studies have investigated the nature of Israel's public and digital diplomacy. The Neaman Document (Shinar, 2009) was a study commissioned by the Israeli MFA and Neaman Institute to explore Israeli public diplomacy from several perspectives including an exploration of old and new diplomacy and the use of state and non-state actors in the practice of diplomacy. Specific cases in which digital diplomacy has been enacted by the Israelis have also been studied, such as Sheffer's (2010) exploration of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla incident and the polarizing and divisive nature of the dialectics used by the Israeli state (Sheffer, 2010). Often closely associated with public diplomacy is the concept of nation-building, which Toledano and McKie (2013) explore in-depth in the Israeli context. Greenfield (2012) explores myths and facts in the practice of *hasbara* and details a seven-fold approach to assessing Israeli public

diplomacy including: 1) coordination and management of messages, 2) informal

hasbara, 3) engagement and branding, 4) long-term cooperation, 5) multi-dimensional

media strategies, 6) dynamism and management of crises and 7) strategic targeting.

Greenfield describes Israel's employment of multi-dimensional media strategies

as one uniquely attuned to the challenges of the networked environment. Not only does it

include (much like other states) presence and engagement in the new media

environment, but it also includes recognition of the key nodes through which anti-Israel

sentiment originates. Both official employees and volunteers are hired to counter anti-

Israel sentiment on digital platforms. In addition, the office also assigns spokespersons

to major media outlets in the Arabic language world (Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya) and

key nodes in other media spaces (i.e. Russia Today and France 24).

The most recent and extensive examination of Israeli digital media use by the

state is Kuntsman and Stein's (2014) examination of the militarization of digital media

by the IDF. They chronicle and problematize the adoption of social media strategy by

the IDF as an organization, and of various problematic uses of Instragram, Facebook and

Twitter by young IDF soldiers. The volume documents the integration of discursive

practices unique to social media (i.e. selfies, memes, liking and sharing) by the IDF in

the context of militarized scenarios, and explores the subsequent integration of violent

and militarized discourse into social media use by Israeli society at large (Kuntmans and

Stein, 2014). Other commentators have discussed an imbalance of perspective on social

media platforms concerning the conflict (Mualem, 2014), highlighting the inability for

Palestinian citizens and activists to maintain presence on some platforms due to classification as sites of incitement (Zeidan, 2014).

These studies have been helpful to uncover the narrative and dialectic elements of Israeli new media use. This study will approach state use of new media from a different perspective, utilizing the framework developed herein to test Israeli digital diplomacy, and in future work, digital diplomacy initiatives of other states. This work places state use of new media in a larger, structural context, attempting to account for influence on new media platforms in concrete ways. By extending Castells' framework into a specific, testable construct adapted for states, this study will test measuring network-making power for states. Israel will be the first nation to which the framework will be applied, but I argue the framework can be used to assess networked influence for any state. Following are the specific research questions for the study.

Research Questions

Thus far, I have identified the problems with current theoretical approaches to the study of digital diplomacy and have introduced a theoretical framework that has the potential to provide more rigor and explanatory power for the manner in which states, including Israel, are engaging on digital platforms. The constructs presented in Castells description of communication power provide a different lens for scholars attempting to understand the extent to which states possess influence on digital platforms. Specifically, the ability to enter a given network by effective programming practices (that is, conforming to acceptable modes of content) is a means to control predominant frames concerning a nation and her policies. Second, the ability to switch disparate nodes into a

given network of national influence is also an extremely important source of power for states.

While Castells' constructs for influence are robust, do they provide an effective means for scholars to develop theories and analytical approaches to the study of digital diplomacy? This dissertation will explore this question in the context of the previously described national case study: Israel. Specifically, I will explore the utility of Castells' theory of geopolitical influence in the network society to explain influence efforts in the practice of Israeli digital diplomacy. I do so using the below research questions as guide:

RQ 1: What theoretical insight does Castells' construct of communication power provide when examining the practice of digital diplomacy?

Castells provides a framework whereby communication behaviors by a variety of actors can be modeled and examined for influence and impact in the networked environment. A specific type of state communication behavior in which the construct has not been applied is in the realm of digital diplomacy. The two primary dimensions by which Castells' communication power construct operates are programming and switching. This project develops a framework whereby these practices can be applied to the study of influence in digital diplomacy practice.

Using the construct, the study both identifies and measures specific communication behaviors for digital diplomats that both create a common language about their nation of interest (programming), and unites disparate actors into that language (switching). I explore the extent to which these frameworks for influence serve as an accurate mechanism to explain how digital diplomats conceive of the overall

political and media environment, create content for the digital environment, and connect with other states and publics in the digital environment.

RQ2: To what extent does the actual practice of Israeli digital diplomacy embody the theoretical insights of communication power?

The dimensions of communication power were then applied to a specific national case: Israeli digital diplomacy. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs' digital diplomacy initiatives were explored in light of expressed strategy by practitioners and networking activities on digital platforms. Castells has mapped the insights of communication power onto other online movements, but very few of those movements included media campaigns or activities directed by the state. These components were applied in the context of a specific state's digital media initiatives to explore the extent to which the components could be used as an alternate means to measure power in the networked environment.

These two dimensions were explored using interviews with practitioners as well as a network analysis of Twitter activity for consulates and embassies in the US as well as the MFA headquarters in Jerusalem. Castells has argued that in order to exert influence in a given network, whether it is political, financial, media, or otherwise, one must subscribe to the given visions, frames, projects and ideas that guide discourse within that network. For this particular network of national discourse, are there indeed visions, frames, projects and ideas that guide discourse within the network? If so, to what extent is the MFA engaging with those frames to exert power? Conversely, if these frames do exist, is the MFA attempting to exercise counterpower by introducing

different frames, projects, visions and ideas into the network? To explore this question, I will first investigate the extent to which these "guiding principles of discourse" do exist in the Israeli case. Second, I will explore the ways in which the MFA is engaging with (or not engaging with) these frames in their programming practices. The manner in which the MFA formulates their programming practices will determine whether they are operating from a position of power or counterpower. If MFA content producers were tapping into dominant discourses concerning Israel, not altering the projects, ideas, visions or frames used in message creation, then they would be classified as operating from a position of power. Conversely, if they are attempting to introduce new projects, ideas, visions or frames into the network of discourse that are *not* dominant, then they would be classified as operating from a position of counterpower.

This dissertation will propose an analytical framework based upon the components of Castells' theory (see Appendix A and Table 1 in the following chapter). This framework will be used as a means to categorize strategy and practice for Israeli digital diplomacy using the primary components of Castells' theory. If these components are indeed fundamental to modeling how influence actually occurs in the digital environment, then I anticipate a great deal of interview and network data to map well onto the framework. If the framework lacks a great deal of explanatory power, then many of the metrics in the framework will fail to have a large number of corresponding experiences in practice. In the following chapter, I describe how these units of analysis will be operationalized and studied in the dissertation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation utilized a mixed methods approach to explore the degree to which Castells' construct of communication power could assess influence in digital diplomacy efforts, using Israel as a particular national case. Interviews with practitioners in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs were conducted to explore the extent to which stated strategies aligned with network logics articulated by Castells. Network analysis of their Twitter activity was conducted to visualize the pattern of relationships built on the platform and to ascertain the extent to which networked logics guided actual practice on Web 2.0 platforms. Qualitative interview data has been used in the exploration, development and expansion of theory (The use of network analysis to test this study's expansion of Castells' theory is one with established precedent, whereby researchers "think…of relation-based understandings of [a] theory and test…the resulting hypotheses" (Marin & Wellman, 2009, 33).

The two datasets were compared to explore the areas of convergence and divergence in strategy versus practice in the Israeli case. These two types of data provide richer insight into the research questions for the study by revealing both mental models of networked logics and practice in the networked environment. I begin by describing the overall project design and development of the theoretical framework. Then I describe each methodology in detail, beginning with qualitative interviews and concluding with network analysis.

Overall Project Design

The two components of geopolitical power in Castells' theory were developed into two frameworks to evaluate Israeli digital diplomacy practices, one using interviews with practitioners, the other using network analysis of their Twitter activity. Each portion, "programming", "switching", "power" and "counterpower" were operationalized into specific communication behaviors within the realm of digital diplomacy. The specific behavioral metrics listed in each framework provided further operational definitions to these constructs. For interviews, the corresponding framework (see Appendix A) was used to develop an interview protocol (Appendix B) that explored how digital diplomats conceived of each of these different aspects of influence in the network society, by probing specific communication behaviors. For the network analysis portion, specific measures of network analysis were used to operationalize the propositions in the corresponding framework (see Appendix C). The means by which each of the methodologies was used will be articulated in the following sections.

Interviews

Individuals were interviewed from 3 different embassies and consulates in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaging in digital diplomacy efforts for the state of Israel. A key social media strategist for the Prime Minister's Office was also interviewed. Initial interviews were secured using a combination of key informant contacts, cold-calling and emailing. Additional interviews were secured using snowball sampling.

43

Although Israel has a global digital diplomacy strategy, this dissertation focuses on the American branch of the Israeli Foreign Service for three distinct reasons. First, one of the primary narratives emerging in the press environment, and a taken-for-granted assumption globally has been the shifting nature of the U.S.-Israel relationship, and the importance of that relationship for Israel and its survival. Second, diplomatic and personal ties between the two are deep and abiding; it would be expected that the richness of the ties would contribute to a more robust digital diplomacy program and subset of activity. Finally, the US served as a proving ground in which one dimension of MFA strategy was explored and tested; other parts of the organization have likely adopted very different strategies based on geographic context. Future studies will be expanded to include not only more of the MFA, but eventually will be tested in other national contexts.

Sampling was conducted primarily from consulates in the United States to ascertain how the MFA perceived U.S.-Israeli relations and its resulting impacts on diplomacy. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and a half each and explored how participants created and appropriated narratives concerning Israel on Web 2.0 platforms. They also explored how actors conceived of global networks of power and influence, and their attempts to connect with those networks of influence.

Participants

As referenced previously, the community of practitioners engaging in digital diplomacy for the Israeli MFA was small due to financial constraints in the MFA budget and due to limited personnel. As such, the sampling and final number of participants

interviewed in the first portion of analysis corresponds to the small population of practitioners in the MFA at large. 8 total interviews were conducted; 7 interviews were conducted with digital diplomacy practitioners from 3 embassies and consulates in the MFA, and 1 interview was conducted with a key coordinator for the Prime Minister's social media strategy. Interviewees were categorized as follows: those holding strategy positions and those directly involved with content creation on Web 2.0 platforms. The individuals in strategy positions, generally higher-level diplomats, were not focused solely on digital diplomacy, but rather the general formulation and implementation of Israel's public diplomacy efforts at large. Having input concerning how these individuals conceptualized the digital environment at the level of strategy provided important insights in answering the research questions of the study. The practitioners, such as digital diplomacy and social media managers for each organization, were charged with content creation on Web 2.0 platforms. While a general vision for digital diplomacy can be cast at the organizational level, these employees navigated the specific realties of the digital environment, and provided insight into the specifics of content creation and networking practices. The following section describes how the interview protocol was designed and how interviews were conducted.

Interview Design

In interviews with participants, ideas, visions and frames that guided overall digital discourse concerning Israel were explored. Then, those ideas were compared the types of messages the MFA crafted for digital consumption. In other words, during interviews, participants were probed for guiding principles that they perceived to shape

global discourse about Israel. Then, interview questions probed the extent to which participants engaged with the identified "guiding principles". For example, were there generally accepted frames concerning how Israeli military actions are described in the global public sphere? Did actors in the MFA reproduce those same frames in their online content, or did they attempt to exert counterpower by introducing differential framing into the network?

Participants were also asked about their networking practices. Castells (2009) holds that those who hold power in a network are those who cultivate the ability to tap into and connect disparate networks that are strategic in nature. For the MFA, these strategic, disparate networks would include media, political and non-governmental networks that influence global public opinion concerning Israeli culture and policy. Media actors would include prominent press outlets in the United States and globally, including (but not limited to) outlets such as Foreign Affairs, the New York Times, the Washington Post, USA Today, Al Jazeera, Rossiya TV, CCTV and others. Political actors include key political figures in the United States and globally, including diplomats, members of the US Congress and other national legislative bodies, and members of the administrative leadership of other nations. Non-governmental actors include members of the United Nations, European Union, and other non-governmental bodies that influence global public opinion and perform global decision-making. Not only were the *presence* of virtual connections with these individuals assessed during interviews, but the *nature* of digital interaction and information sharing between these actors was also explored using network analysis. If there were key opinion leaders

(organizational or otherwise) that the MFA targeted for digital messaging, then Castells'
argument that nodes are key centers producing discourse within a network would have
been supported. Conversely, if targeting for messaging was indiscriminate, then Castells'
model may not have explained much of Israeli digital diplomacy practice.

Units of Analysis

Transcripts from individual respondents served as the unit of analysis for the first
portion of this study. The transcripts were analyzed thematically to explore the extent to
which communication behaviors aligned with Castells' descriptions of programming and
switching, power and counterpower in the digital environment.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed with permission from participants.
153 transcript pages were analyzed in terms of how content was created and
appropriated on digital networks and in terms of the types of networking practices the
organizations engaged in. Specifically, the interview data was mapped onto the
framework detailed in Appendix A. The interviews were then analyzed for the prevailing
logics guiding the practice of digital diplomacy, with the framework described in
Appendix A providing sensitizing concepts for analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010).
Coding of the transcripts was done concurrently by the author, while data was being
collected (Charmaz, 2006). Coding for each interview transcript was done in comparison
with the framework of communication behaviors developed for analysis in Appendix A.
The framework operated much like a checklist for content in each interview. Within
each of the categories developed in the framework, the author answered the associated
questions based on the data derived in interviews.

All data pertaining to the type and nature of digital content produced was compared with the dimensions of programming operationalized into specific practices of digital diplomacy. For example, if a participant described a particular frame for Israeli diplomatic efforts that was widely used by news organizations that the MFA subsequently adopted, then Castells' proposition concerning "rules" that guide how content is distributed in a particular network was supported. On the other hand, if other forms of influence guided content creation for the MFA, then that material was still described, but Castells' framework on programming was not supported in this environment.

All data pertaining to the type and nature of connections made with key nodes in the public sphere, and with the general public was compared with Castells' description of switching practices. For example, if Israel purposely made connections and targeted content to influential actors in the NGO community for further distribution to their corresponding networks, then Castells' proposition about switching as a mechanism of power was supported with the empirical practices of these organizations. On the other hand, if other practices guided how these organizations made connections in the networked environment, those alternative approaches were described , but Castells' proposition would not be supported in this context.

This analysis not only provides better understanding for how Israel conceptualizes the digital environment and engages with it, but also provides a test case for the conceptual boundaries and limits of Castells' theory. In addition to these existing

categories, the analysis also explores predominant concepts that emerged from the interviews apart from the categories.

Network Analysis

A specific area of inquiry in this study was the ability of Castells' framework for switching to explain activity on networked platforms. In this particular case, switching was defined as 1) the extent to which influential nodes were targeted for inclusion in MFA Twitter followings (and conversely if they followed MFA accounts), 2) the extent to which MFA Twitter accounts served as bridges between disparate communities on the platform and 3) the degree of exchange with those disparate nodes. These three dimensions were explored as means to specify the dimensions of Castells' framework on switching, applied to the Israeli case.

Network analysis is beneficial for visualizing patterns that may define the connection between entities, organizations or individuals in a social system (Hansen et al., 2010) and has been used in a variety of ways, including mapping the relationship between ideological affinity and linking behaviors (Park & Kluver, 2009), and visualizing various sub-communities that make up sub-networks on various platforms (Smith et al., 2014). Using network analysis graphs, this portion of the dissertation visualizes the nature of MFA relationships with influential users that are following various MFA accounts, as well as users each consulate follows. Graphs illustrate where the MFA is positioned within particular sub-communities on Twitter (e.g. journalistic sub-communities and governmental sub-communities). Ultimately, analysis ascertained the extent to which MFA accounts drew disparate communities closer together in

discourse and information exchange on Twitter. Castells argues that those that serve as connecting points within a network and facilitate communication between disparate communities exercise power.

Note on Twitter Architecture in Light of Network Logic

The architecture of Twitter has an inherent networked quality to its structure. When accounts are created, users are encouraged to make connections (or follow) influential nodes in their particular networks of interest (government, technology, entertainment, etc.). Thus, to that extent, Castells' description of the role that nodes play in networks is inherent to the architecture of this particular platform. Instead, what this case study explored was the extent to which influential nodes reciprocated requests from the MFA to establish follower relationships on Twitter and engaged in information exchange with the ministry on Twitter. The case study also examined the extent to which the foreign ministry brought disparate networks into closer conversation with one another on Twitter in order to ascertain switching power.

Measures

In this portion of analysis, 9 MFA Twitter networks were examined as sites for digital diplomacy activity. These included the Israeli Mission to the United Nations (@IsraelinUN), the Israeli Consulate of Chicago (@IsraelinChicago), the Israeli Embassy in Washington DC (@IsraelinUSA), the Israeli consulates in San Francisco (@IsraelinSF), New York (@IsraelinNY), Philadelphia (@IsraelinPhilly), Miami (@IsraelinMiami), and the Israeli MFA headquarters account in Jerusalem (@IsraelMFA). The consulates were selected as strategic both in terms of geographic

location, but also in terms of key centers of influence for the MFA in the United States for relationship building in specific communities (e.g. diplomatic, journalistic, and governmental communities). The Twitter account for MFA headquarters served as the standard bearer for networking strategy and design for the organization at large.

Analysis was conducted using the network analysis software NodeXL. NodeXL has been used to visualize latent follower and conversational networks on social media platforms (Hansen et al., 2010) and as a means to categorize various types of "conversational arechtypes" on Twitter (Smith et al., 2014). These analyses enable a visualization of network structures in a way that moves beyond follower or retweet counts, and visualizes communication behaviors in the context of the larger network.

For this study, two types of relationships were examined for each MFA account sampled. First, analysis was performed to visualize follower networks: those following the embassy and those that the embassy follows (their ego network). 1.5 degrees of the described community were collected, accounting for the static relationships between those two groups (the connections between those followed by the embassy and those the embassy follows). Second, analysis was conducted on the degree of active exchange on Twitter for each of the accounts by ascertaining the degree to which their handles are referenced in mentions or retweets on Twitter over a bounded time period. Cluster analysis was conducted on the results, indicating the grouping of Twitter users that referenced the embassy/consulate as defined by discourse. In other words, clusters were defined not by group membership (e.g. UN-affiliated organizations) but by discourse in tweets (e.g. tweets discussed @IsraelinUN's position on Iran nuclear agreement) Once

NodeXL created and visualized the networks, 3 specific measures of impact were applied to each consulate under examination (see Appendix C for a graphical representation.

Sub-communities

Analysis was first conducted to examine the number and types of sub-communities in the network for each consulate. Sub-communities were identified in two ways depending on the type of graph being used for analysis (static follower graph, or active mention graph). In the case of static follower graphs, clusters were generated using an algorithm that clusters based on maximized modularity, a "quantitative measure of quality of graph partitioning" (Wakita & Tsurumi, 2007, p. 1). Modularity searches for sub-communities within each network that have the densest connections. In practical terms, clustering tends to occur by group membership and affiliation (e.g. member of Chicago journalistic community, member of NGO community, etc.), though those characteristics are not factored in prior to the cluster analysis. As mentioned earlier, the modularity clustering algorithm uses follower/following connections in the case of static graphs. In the case of active network graphs, clusters were generated by the discourse uniting them (e.g. all users in Group 1 tweeted about Israel's humanitarian efforts in Nepal). In either scenario, cluster analysis was important to map the range of communities Israeli consulates made connections with depending on geographic location and location within the diplomatic community. The range of communities was also important to ascertain the degree to which MFA accounts did (or did not) switch in key nodes from disparate communities.

Connections with key nodes

Analysis was conducted to ascertain the extent to which MFA users had static relationships with key nodes on Twitter (which influential users were following the MFA on Twitter and vice versa). Key nodes were defined as government organizations, corporations, non-profit organizations, NGOs, governmental leaders, and prominent leaders in other realms such as entertainment and journalism. Where appropriate, graphs for some consulates were filtered to only demonstrate connections with users with the highest indegrees (largest Twitter followings) in the network. Proximity to those nodes was noted, as the shorter the distance between two nodes, the more quickly information is passed between them in a network.

Structural holes analysis was also conducted to ascertain the extent to which consulates served as bridges between disparate communities of influential users (switching power). According to Burt (2001) "structural holes are an opportunity to broker the flow of <u>information</u> between people, and <u>control</u> the projects that bring together people from opposite sides of the hole." (p. 208) Structural holes analysis determines the extent to which one node serves as a connecting point between key nodes which otherwise would not be connected. When a node fills a structural hole, they are considered powerful (Bonacich, 1987). Conversely, if key nodes are already connected apart from connection to the MFA, then MFA power is not significant on the platform. In this study, betweenness centrality is the centrality measure used to measure the degree to which a node serves as a bridge between other nodes in the graph.

Relations with key nodes

Finally, analysis was conducted to visualize the degree of exchange (number of replies and mentions on Twitter) MFA accounts had within their ego networks at large, and with influential nodes within the network. Latest tweets for each user in the ego network were retrieved, including replies or mentions of the MFA Twitter handle being analyzed. This analysis was conducted to explore the degree of movement of ideas within MFA communities, and the degree of information exchange with influential users.

Appendix C illustrates the previously described analytical framework in referencing how each theoretical proposition was operationalized and measured during network analysis. This framework was referenced during analysis for each consulate/embassy, and the conclusions drawn are derived from the framework. The next two chapters discuss findings in both types of analyses. Chapter 4 reports findings in interview data. Chapter 5 reports findings from the network analysis.

CHAPTER IV

INTERVIEW DATA

Interviews with practitioners revealed that certain communicative practices identified in the extension of Castells' framework were incorporated in Israeli digital diplomacy strategy by the majority of consulates *in concept*, though very few actually implemented those logics in community-building practices on Twitter. Networked logics did guide their mental models of how community formation should function, as the concept of connecting with key nodes resonated for the majority of practitioners interviewed. Participants expressed, at a minimum, a desire to build relationship with influential users offline and in online platforms, whether they were bloggers or political figures. However, as will be demonstrated in the network analysis in the following chapter, engagement with key nodes remained sparse on Twitter for most consulates, with the exception of central nodes of the MFA in Washington DC and Jerusalem.

Participants

7 practitioners of Israeli public and/or digital diplomacy in the United States were interviewed; 1 participant was based in Jerusalem and was the former coordinator of the Prime Minister's social media outreach. Participants ranged from those directing larger strategy initiatives at their respective embassies/consulates to those creating digital content in various capacities. The Israeli embassy in Washington DC is the only Israeli embassy in the US, and serves as the headquarters for all diplomatic activity in the United States. All other consulates throughout the United States are designed primarily to provide consular services for Israeli citizens in those areas, but also have

55

diplomatic outreach activities to their region, including Academic Affairs, Public Affairs, Political Affairs and a Press Office.

The consulates generally split social media responsibilities by platform, with at least one employee that handled Facebook and another that managed Twitter. Consulates often hosted multiple Facebook and Twitter feeds, with a general consulate Facebook and Twitter feed, and additional pages dedicated to specific departments or individuals (the Consul General, Academic Affairs, etc.).

Participant 1 was the Consul General for his consulate (equivalent of Ambassador for an embassy), and had extensive academic and experiential background in public diplomacy. He commented on both the strategy and practice of digital diplomacy for his consulate and for the MFA at large. Participant 2 was the Executive Assistant to the Consul General at the same consulate, but also managed the consulate Facebook outreach activities. Participant 3 was the Communications Officer for her consulate, and had graduate level education in communication and public relations. She managed the Twitter outreach activities for her consulate from a perspective informed by communication and public relations theory. Participant 4 was the Press Officer for her consulate, and was a former journalist. She managed the Twitter outreach activities for her consulate with a focus on the journalistic community in her region. Participant 5 served as the Public Relations officer for her consulate and was charged to provide information about Israel to the states in her regional jurisdiction; she managed the Facebook page for her consulate. Participant 6 coordinated digital diplomacy initiatives for his post and provided direction for other posts in the United States and Canada. His

team managed the Facebook and Twitter feeds for their embassy. Participant 7 served as Director of Public Diplomacy for his post and provided direction to other public diplomacy initiatives throughout the United States; during our interviews, he provided input into both historical and current digital diplomacy efforts within the MFA. Finally, Participant 8 directed new media outreach programs for the Israeli Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for two years. He also directed social media coordination efforts between the PMO, the MFA and some activities within the IDF.

The findings are organized according to the primary theoretical conventions being explored in this study: programming, switching, power and counterpower. The interview data aligned with each of these constructs are included under each of the sections that follow, beginning with programming.

Programming Global Communication Networks

Castells articulates approaches to program the content of a particular network as defining the predominant *ideas, visions, projects and frames* that guide discourse in the network. Participants were first asked to describe the prevailing ideas guiding Israeli-oriented discourse in the public sphere, and then were asked to expound on the extent to which those prevailing concepts guided digital content creation for the MFA.

When conceptualizing the "rules of the game" when crafting material for the information environment concerning Israel, most diplomats acknowledged the importance of monitoring or listening to prevailing trends, though with varying degrees of concern with the material encountered. On the one hand, most, like Participant 6, acknowledged the value of being aware, if not present in conversations:

[I]t's a matter of being there, right? You don't know what's happening online unless you're…there and that's a time-consuming thing …as much as you kind of have to sit in front of Twitter or whatever platform you're using to say, "Okay, these are the conversations that are…happening. So if we're not out there, we don't know

Participant 2 described this information gathering as spanning across networked

platforms into traditional media:

[W]e look at it and see what…somebody is writing in the paper, somebody is writing on social media [about Israel]…[W]e are kind of actively more looking for it because we really, really want to know what's happening out there as far as Israel is concerned.

Participant 7 gave the most detailed description of the online environment, providing a

segmentation of five different sub-networks of Israeli-oriented discourse. 1) Ultra-right

Jewish organizations, 2) liberal Jews "against the policy of the current government in the

state of Israel," 3) Jews on the extreme left against the government of Israel, yet still

committed to the notion of an Israeli state, 4) Jews and evangelicals in favor of Israel

such as Christians United For Israel and 5) anti-Israel movements such as the Boycott

Divestment Sanctions movement. In addition to detailed mapping of the various sub-

networks, he also described the primary ideas and visions for each:

ultra-right Jewish organizations [whose] conversation is always…very negative…[they spend a lot of time] talking about the Moslems and Hamas…You have liberal Jews…that are committed Jews but against the policy of the current government in the State of Israel.

Participant 7 described this group as occupying the most space digitally: "they are very

active…they go out and they have a presence on the web and…most of the Jewish

community…[is] mostly liberal. Eighty percent Democrat. They fund the Democrats…"

Those further to the left, or who Participant 7 called "the extreme left against the government of Israel" were small, yet produced concern despite their small numbers. He described the dilemma as troublesome because they represented "the first time that people in the Jewish community get organized against… [an] elected Israeli government. But still they *sic.* not anti-Israel." For the Jewish and Evangelical network, their digital presence was described as limited, as churches were "losing young people." Participant 7 summed up the mapping by reflecting on the online environment in general, commenting that "the people who are talking about Israel are…talking in a positive way, I think…I'm not very…worried that we are losing the war."

Participant 2, on the other hand, described the environment as hostile: "I think that because people like to side with underdogs…and because of who uses social media, which is young people who are in college who tend to be more liberal." She expressed particular difficulties when navigating the environment during Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014:

> It was just a lot of like really negative articles, a lot of really negative op eds., people posting stuff on Facebook and tweeting…all of the stuff was really negative.

Others had more measured responses, such as Participant 5, in a northern consulate, who noted difficulties in circulation of falsified information about Operation Protective Edge on networked platforms. This information spread exponentially through various Israeli oriented sub-networks of discourse. At the same time, she celebrated the possibilities for "constructive" discourse on Web 2.0 platforms:

59

Israel is an issue that always appears online…it's always good when you discuss things that people are able to really explore different aspects…You're building a discussion, you're actually trying to understand the complicated issue.

There were varying degrees of description of ideas guiding the network of Israeli-oriented discourse in the online public sphere. Some described particular sub-communities, and others described general sentiment about Israel in both conflict and non-conflict scenarios. Few articulated a strategy oriented around conforming to prevailing ideas in the network, per se. Participant 6 did describe particular instances of monitoring where an intervention was designed as a result of the discourse leaning in a particular direction:

If we see a conversation happening… that's maybe tilting towards one way and we feel our voice needs to be there, we'll quickly react and… find what it is that we can say, if anything…

Other networks may have particular constraints operating in the circulation of ideas about Israel (e.g. Friedman's 2014 discussion of mainstream media networks). However, while the Israeli diplomatic corps is aware of prevailing ideas, they do not conform to these prevailing ideas or framing in the content they create for digital diplomacy efforts. Instead, some of the digital content was created to counter prevailing ideas about Israel in the networked environment.

Exploring Programming: Visions

Each diplomat unanimously expressed a belief that the majority of Israeli-oriented discourse online was centered on the conflict. While it was important for the MFA to engage with that content and provide alternative perspectives on issues within the conflict, there was a vision within the MFA to expand the discourse about Israel to

issues outside of the conflict. This took a number of forms, and included a number of topics, including presenting Israel as a tech nation, as the only democratic nation in the Middle East and a nation rich in culture and history. To the extent that these themes were replicated in the larger media space, embassies redistributed that content readily. For example, Participant 4 described an editorial published by a prominent newspaper that featured the sights and sounds of Israel before the most recent Gaza conflict in 2014:

> So when there's negative messages out there, the question of whether we counter or not…sometimes I do. But not directly, I think that's the answer. I do want to point out a [Newspaper Name] front page story…"

Participant 8, involved in the Prime Minister's Office efforts to reconceive digital strategy, described the initiatives there to shift the conversation away from conflict:

> And the strategy said, okay we're not going to stay 99% in this context of the conflict. We are going to extend the conversations through conversational media into a new context, the wider context of Israel…Let's talk about startup nation. Let's talk about peace in Israel, let's talk about ballet, let's talk about skating, food, wine, and let's have citizens of Israel, you know, just engage with the citizens of the world about those conversations without even mentioning the word Israel.

From Nye's perspective, emphasizing aspects of Israeli society that enhance cultural appeal for global citizens is a form of soft power. From a Castellian perspective, this is a networked strategy. In his discussion on "global networks", Castells (2010) emphasizes that elites, regardless of national or cultural background, have adopted a particular culture that is universal. This culture has its own associated cuisine, dress and past-times. The Israeli emphasis on various dimensions of this global culture for elites, it could be argued, is an attempt to tap into this larger global network. This strategy could be interpreted as either an example of soft power or of network power.

In any case, for most participants, 21st century *hasbara* was very much focused

on expanding the conversation on social media platforms. Participant 6 was instrumental

in the creation of the MFA digital strategy in the United States, and conveyed a similar

strategy to the Prime Minister's Office:

> [I]t's our job to kind of open the door… to things that are beyond political.
> Certainly addressing the political world [as] that's how a lot of people kind of
> recognize or know us. But beyond that…what else can we introduce them to,
> what can we show them about Israel…culturally, commercially or
> politically…that they may not be aware of, and they may not be reading within
> the papers or within their Smithsonian magazines…?

Consulates implemented this approach primarily within the context of their regions of

interest, as Participant 4 described her approach to managing her consulate's Twitter

feed:

> For me it's more of an awareness campaign especially on Twitter, especially on
> social media, and that for me it's: let's get out our positive news and our identity
> as a democratic, vibrant country that exists in the Middle East that's… in a tough
> neighborhood. But we're a…good country and we've got great food, great
> culture, great business opportunities, we're not just about the situation that
> happened on Tuesday in the Jerusalem synagogue...And that's more my message
> over all. Of course, we deal with news…I'm not naïve, not stupid I know that's
> where we're going to pick up the headlines because that's what we do [but] it's
> not the only thing here. It's not the only thing that we are.

Participant 5 runs the Facebook page at her consulate, and expressed similar sentiment:

> When you talk about Israel most of the things you will hear in the news will be
> something in relation to the conflict and not necessarily the other things that the
> country has to offer. Even though, in the last few years [y]ou will hear more
> about the culture, you will hear more about the high tech nation, you will hear
> more about things beyond.

The expansion of conversation was often in the context of cultural touch-points

to communities of interest. Entering into the conversation and having direct

engagements with Arabic language audiences was imperative for those in the Prime

Minister's office, as contact with Israel for many Arab audiences is solely mediated. A great deal of digital outreach was targeted to societies that had momentary openings in digital liberties, such as Cairo in 2010. According to Participant 8, who coordinated the Prime Minister's social media strategy, with the opening came "a lot of cursing, a lot of nasty words…they felt we were Nazis, you know, and it's obvious they will act like this. But we replied politely and we started sending them all kinds of materials."

Part of the material sent over were instances of celebration of Arab culture, including the honoring of famed Arab singer Umm Kulthum. When the mayor of Jerusalem inaugurated and named a street after Umm Kulthum, the Prime Minister's social media office capitalized on the opportunity:

> So, I told the media spokesperson…"Listen, let's bring the cameras, let's bring a Jewish singer who can sing in Arabic "Enta Omri" which is the most famous song of Umm Kulthum. And let's respect that woman and her art and let's share it with the Arab world" and that's exactly what we did. So, our Youtube clip and the entire story of what we were doing was immediately streamed through Twitter, and YouTube and Facebook to the Arab world and the response was phenomenal. Instead of just getting curses we got something back and the back said, like this: "You Jews are monkeys, are the sons of Satan, but you know what, if you love and respect Umm Kulthum? Hmm!"

This effort to introduce differential framing of Israeli values and respect for Arabs was one example of the PMO attempting to reprogram the global network. Most attempts of this nature occurred via content creation distributed from the consulate/embassy social media platform. The only exception was an initiative Participant 8's office engaged in to purchase hashtags on Twitter in an attempt to shift conversation:

> [L]ater on in Twitter we got the opportunity to purchase hash tags and you know, sort of control the conversation of whoever searches, I don't know, Jerusalem or something like that, for couple hours, gets our messages first.

By introducing differential material on the discussion of #Jerusalem, the PMO engaged in a degree of programming that was commercial; otherwise, programming activities were primarily achieved through promotion of MFA ideas and strategy into existing networks on social media.

Exploring Programming: Projects

Regarding the larger information space of Israeli-oriented content, participants rarely spent time describing specific projects from a variety of other actors in any level of detail. Specific anti-Israel projects, such as misinformation campaigns during the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza, the BDS movement, and negative press coverage, were mentioned during most of the interviews in a cursory fashion, while more time was spent describing the specific MFA or PMO projects that were developed and deployed on new media platforms.

In multiple contexts, policy was described as the forefront of focus for digital diplomacy projects, though consulates on the East Coast were oriented more so towards discussions on policy than those in the Midwest and the West Coast. With political projects, the goal for many consulates when distributing political content digitally was for key nodes to redistribute and support Israeli policy. For Participant 1, embracing of Israeli culture paled in comparison to embracing of Israeli policy. He described this in the context of celebrity diplomacy in the case of Ashton Kutcher, who was mentioned by nearly every participant as an example of a digital diplomat for Israel. While most diplomats described him as an individual with widespread cultural appeal, his influence can be more so tied to his role in global networks as a node around which people

gravitate. Kutcher's influence mattered more for the MFA in the context of policy

discussions:

> If he says "Cool, Israel just invented this or that", sure that would be great…It's
> one thing if he says "Sure, Israel has invented this cool video, DVD" and it's
> another thing if he says "Wow, I really like what Prime Minister Netanyahu
> said." That's two different things, you know? Even if it's Ashton Kutcher [who
> in either case has] the same followers, but one rates ten for me, the other rates, I
> don't know, six.

When designing policy-oriented material, because of the broad range of political

issues Israel is engaged in, one consulate chose one political issue per day to focus on, in

addition to the other range of material (cultural, news, etc.) posted to their Twitter feed.

When I spoke with Participant 3, a Communications Officer at her consulate, she

described a project designed to bring awareness to the history of Hamas that also

revealed the rationale behind political content selection:

> Participant 3: [I]n this next couple of days, Hamas is celebrating its 27th
> anniversary… When I'm on Twitter I've tried to, as much as possible…to stick with
> the theme in my tweets. So for today I wanna talk about Hamas and then talk about
> Iran and then talk about Syria and then talk...that's too much. It's too much. So,
> today…I have a series of posts around exposing Hamas for what they are… and
> that's being driven by the fact that they're celebrating their 27th anniversary as
> a terrorist organization this weekend.

> Interviewer: So [news] does drive [your content]?

> Participant 3: Yeah, you can put your head in the sand…You have to acknowledge
> what's happening because, then you lose credibility. I can't just talk about this
> wonderful piano concert that was here on Sunday. That's lovely but I have to
> acknowledge other things.

Participant 6 described a specific project designed by his office to shift public

discourse about newly elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in the time leading to

his September 24, 2013 speech at the United Nations. The prevailing sentiment within global news and diplomatic networks was that Rouhani was a moderate with whom the West could begin to engage more freely. Many in the Israeli diplomatic and larger governmental establishment regarded the notion of Rouhani as a moderate as both false and dangerous. Participant 7 expressed that the Iranian nuclear program was the catalyst for Israel's venture into the Web 2.0 environment. Thus, Iran's potential move from adversary to cooperative partner to the United States was viewed as highly unfavorable for Israeli security and relations with the United States. This move was particularly distressing, given Rouhani's public statements on "duping the West" (Sherwell, 2006).

Participant 6 was involved in the design of a parody LinkedIn resume for Hassan Rouhani that was shared on the new media platforms for a number of Israeli consulates. The resume featured Rouhani's time as chief nuclear negotiator, and participation in suppressing human rights in Iran. Specifically, the description listed his positions as "President of Iran, Expert Salesman, PR Professional and Nuclear Proliferation Advocate." Among the president's skills listed on the page were "Weapons of Mass Destruction," "Ballistics," and "Military Justice." (Lake, 2013) The goal in the creation of the resume was to "change the discussion, or at least acknowledge the fact of [Rouhani's] past and that what…he says isn't necessarily reflective of what he's done." (Participant 6) The effort spread through key journalistic nodes such as Gawker, Buzzfeed, the New York Times Lede blog and others, which was deemed by those in Participants 6's office as successful. Absent from Rouhnani's parody profile were the networked dimensions of LinkedIn, arguably the core component of the platform. Power

and identity on LinkedIn is largely determined by those an individual is linked to. One could argue that a more useful appropriation of the platform would have been a linking of Rouhani to other individuals in the global network that are largely rejected by the United States. The lack of appropriation of networked logics in this project is noteworthy and indicative of overall MFA use of networked logics.

Participant 6 went on to share that various MFA new media projects had "different target audiences, different goals, and different measurements of success." These measurements often depended on both the consulate in question, but also the type of content being shared. Success for a political project was not the same as success for a cultural or tech-related project. He expressed a ranking of types of redistribution, whereby, depending on the issue, redistribution from Reuters to millions concerning Israeli culture was not as valuable as redistribution from a key cultural node in the network:

> We want to reach the people that matter in whatever respective field that is, whether it's the cultural stuff. We want to ensure that if we have a cultural related tweet, and someone that is retweeting it is, most of their followers tend to care about dance, music and film…They may not be the most popular person, but the people who do follow them are really passionate about that specific topic, that's phenomenal.

This reflection represented the most nuanced perspective on audience segmentation and connection with key nodes as any encountered during interviews. The goal for this participant was not broad redistribution from users with the highest impact in all cases, but instead a recognition that sub-networks (journalistic, artistic, governmental) have different key nodes, and the goal for the MFA was to connect with key nodes in those respective sub-networks. This perspective on success in the digital environment differed

67

for participants in other consulates. For most consulates, the focus and metrics for success were bounded within the region. Participant 2 described her perspective on success in the digital realm:

> It's more about engaging people than…just…a numbers game. So that's…why it's like mixing up…regional news, because that's what we are. We're a regional thing. So people "like" [and] care about us because we're regional.

The standard across the board, whether in foreign ministries, or other organizations has always been numbers and metrics as a measure of reach and influence. Within the diplomatic community, numbers still remain the standard, as Participant 1 "bet that most ministries are still…looking for the numbers of likes and followers."

> I don't think that that's an important criteria, how many likes you have. It's kind of nice, it's kind of cool, but that's about it. It's about who are those 6,000? Unfortunately, foreign ministries love the numbers, like everybody else. They find it very easy to understand. So a lot of times you will find foreign ministries pushing their mission to get numbers. Again, I find it silly, but when you are being pushed to do something, at the end of the day you may very well end up doing that.

What participants sometimes expressed was a nuanced understanding of the role numbers played in measuring success. Participants often valued smaller, more meaningful instances of redistribution or liking of content over big numbers. While they were a place for the embassy or consulate to express concrete metrics for their efforts (an underlying challenge and tension in public diplomacy generally), meaningful engagement was often conceived of another way. Participant 6 expressed the bottom line: "Our goal is to ensure that that information is out there, and available to as many folks as possible." Providing MFA or PMO voice and presence in the global information space was the primary goal for any specific digital diplomacy project.

Exploring Programming: Frames

Within the general framework of Israeli-oriented discourse in the public sphere, participants described framing of particular issues on digital platforms as occurring, for the most part, in similar fashion. According to participants, key issue frames originating from prominent governmental and journalistic nodes included "Iran as a newly moderate state with whom the United States could engage", "Hamas as a non-terrorist organization", and "Israel as a nation unwilling to compromise for peace and embroiled in self-inflicted conflict". Within each of the framing of issues, nodes within the MFA set the tone of many of the framing approaches. Headquarters in Jerusalem, the large post in New York and DC were actors that set the pace and standard for those in the periphery.

> So when I get into work in the morning I browse all the news, I liked it all in Facebook and I see what people are talking about and I check [the] New York [consulate Twitter feed], the [DC] Embassy [Twitter feed], the MFA that goes out through everything to see what's happening. – Participant 2

The embassies and consulates often operated fairly autonomously, while taking cues from DC and from Jerusalem, two primary nodes within the Israeli diplomatic network. However, during crisis situations, content creation and framing became much tighter, very streamlined, and centrally directed. As Participant 4 stated when describing her involvement in Operation Pillar of Defense: "My key focus is just trying to stay on top of it. Try to stay responsive. It's all what we get in from the ministry in Jerusalem and what we put out…" When I followed up and asked about the level of coordination during crisis, she responded: "It is coordinated. We may handle our regions differently but we're still all employed by the ministry." Participant 2 expressed a similar approach

during Operation Protective Edge: "Because it was just so important that everyone is saying the same things and you know, like making sure that everything we post is…perfect…there's no room for error".

In addition to framing of general issues, specific programs were also created and driven by conflict. Participant 6 describes a Twitter Q&A session with Ambassador Dermer hosted in the summer of 2014 during the height of Operation Protective Edge:

> I think it was July 17th was I think when we did the Ask Dermer… [W]e were … nine days… into… Operation Protective Edge. And there was a… need for information, there's always a need for information when there's a conflict going on.

Much like the particular ideas, projects and visions promoted by the MFA, framing was an activity that was promoted within existing communities of discourse for the MFA. Next is discussion on the dynamics of switching activities by participants in the MFA.

Switching Into Global Communication Networks

Castells articulates power as not only the ability to define discourse within a network, but to connect key actors (or nodes) within that network to adopt the same discourse. The range of actors producing content about Israel on social media platforms is vast; content producers and audiences are extremely segmented, and those that are vehemently opposed to Israeli policy and even existence are not the ones the MFA seeks to connect with. In building audiences and creating content, Participant 6's expectation is never "to totally like sway people one way or another but it's…to have at least our voice…heard. Participant 2 described her job this way:

> Because like at the end of the day, our job here is to talk about Israel and to try and change people's perceptions of Israel and try and identify culture and music and religion…Those people that are talking badly about us, their minds aren't

changeable. Those aren't the people that we are targeting because…they have already made up their minds.

She went on to articulate a conceptual "middle ground" audience-type, that, when I spoke with individuals across the US and in Jerusalem, all targeted in some form or fashion. This was a subset of individuals who were neutral towards Israel, and possibly open to dialogue on the host of topics the MFA engaged with online. Participant 8 described this delineation of audiences:

> Sometimes we fight too much with our opponents and the people who hate us, and you know what, maybe there isn't a chance that we can convince an anti-Semitic Jew hater to love us, and…we can't do it in social media. But we have to focus on those who…don't know anything about us or those who like us and which can convert their conversation into action.

There was a consistent acknowledgement that there was a warm crowd with which digital diplomats could engage, which ranged from the Jewish Community to the evangelical community. Beyond general demographic descriptors sometimes used to describe the community, however, it was often difficult for workers to identify them in specific terms:

> Participant 2: So it's the people that are in the middle, or the people that support us. Those are the people that we want to talk to and have a dialogue with. You know what I mean? So it doesn't change our MO because those people [opponents]…have already written us off.
> Interviewer: Now, the particular audience that you do target…the people in the middle? How do you think they come to their opinions?
>
> Participant 2: On our social media? I don't know really because it's kind of hard to tell…who is the middle ground online because the people [that] are…liking, commenting and sharing stuff…they could be anybody, they could be awesome supporters…it could have just…popped up on their news feed because somebody they knew liked it and they thought it was interesting, so I'm not sure…But it's harder to run [those] kind of analytics on Facebook.

However, where the resources were present, some did engage in more specific targeting. Participant 8's office in Jerusalem was one of those places with more resources available to engage in specific targeting of various audience types beyond general regional approaches. They engaged in more specific micro-targeting enabled by various platforms:

> Later on we understood that micro-messages to micro-audiences is one of the strengths of social media because you can target an entire campaign to specific locations in the world. And we started playing with Facebook ads, targeting to specific zip codes in the US or…other places.

While this warm audience was where a good deal of targeting occurred, Participant 1 doubted the utility of connections with audiences already supportive of Israel in various capacities:

> [W]e have 6,000 likes in our Facebook. So what? What does that mean? So six thousand people, I'm guessing most of them are anyway from the Jewish community. Not all of them, but probably the big majority of them are people who, like you say, we already got them. We know they're there.

Thus, when it came to content redistribution, the nodes of engagement were not always ones resulting in widespread content redistribution into communities opposed to Israeli policy.

Connecting to Form a Common Language?

After nodes are switched into a network, influence means that the state is able to unite those disparate nodes into a common language. Castells provides examples such as the United Nations' adoption of specific languages and ideas that governments across the globe have in turn adopted in their understandings of human rights. The World Bank is another network in which ideas of wealth and poverty have been adopted by financial,

governmental and non-governmental networks across the globe. Thus, this project next

sought to explore the extent to which participants in the MFA were able to connect

disparate networks to formulate a common language and vision about Israel. This was

operationalized in a number of ways, including exploring the extent to which diplomats

described and articulated connections with key nodes in the network of national

discourse for Israel (press, governmental and non-governmental nodes of influence).

Discussion begins with the ways in which Israeli diplomats articulated the connective

nature of their digital diplomacy work.

The concept of the node emerged powerfully. To distribute key messages

concerning Israeli commerce, culture or conflict, diplomats often targeted key

influencers to maximize impact in redistribution. For the MFA, strategic networks of

influence included media, political and non-governmental networks that influenced

global public opinion about Israel. Of those three networks of influence, connections

within journalistic networks and other media networks occurred the most frequently.

Nodes within journalistic communities were targeted for their status as key local or

regional outlets within the jurisdiction of the embassy or consulate.

In many cases, influencers were also described as elites in the geographic

jurisdiction of the consulate (key individuals or organizations in business, media, or

government). A key node for the New York consulate would not be the same node as for

the Chicago consulate:

> We have missions across the United States who are working on those individual
> things, whether L.A. and they focus [more so] on the entertainment world or San
> Francisco where they are looking at kind of the tech world, Chicago
> agriculture… Miami working kind of with the Spanish audiences…New York

certainly a commercial and cultural hub not only for the U.S. but for the world as a whole. And each consulate…ha[s] these ideas, ha[s] these goals and outreach to achieve…and engage with those respective audiences. – Participant 6

Influencers were also targeted by virtue of the position of who was operating the consulate social media platform, as the majority of employees working digital in the consulates wore multiple hats in the organization. For example, Participant 4's primary role was as Press Officer, and "for [her] as the Press Officer, primarily on Twitter the original goal was influential journalist[s]." Individuals primarily working with the press targeted influencers in media networks for content redistribution or to raise awareness of Israeli issues. But in whatever the domain, influencers were described as multipliers:

> [I]nfluencers are people who are…multipliers. People who are…disseminating information to…the broader public...Those are the people that are largely driving conversations throughout the United States or…within kind of different population groups. [A]nd that's who we're looking…to reach and I think that's the same across the board for anybody, whether its' academics, think tanks, media, political, its people who are kind of paying attention – Participant 6

One diplomat privileged connections with influencers over the masses on social media, primarily the next generation:

> So while it's very nice to say sure, we're looking to the next generation, it's kind of silly if you don't do anything with the generation that is running the place now. Why would you be worried about the next generation? So I don't think the social media is that much relevant for us. I'm probably in a minority opinion, but I'll give you mine. – Participant 1

He articulated the difference as being one between influencers in the network, versus broad-based grassroots support. While influencers were clearly preferred in terms of impact, grassroots were described as a group that was easy to access and generate likes through soft news items. He described an ideal digital diplomacy strategy as one with a

great deal of investment in engagement with influencers over simply generating likes within the grassroots community online:

> Meaningful engagement of public figures is really not easy to do. But it's good, it's good. It's good if A, you are really, really putting your resources there, and not in catching likes and all that – Participant 1

Participant 7 expressed a similar sentiment. He recognized the inherent value in identifying and engaging influential nodes, but reflected on his post's inability to do so efficiently:

> I think that it's possible but it's difficult…If you have Jeffrey Goldberg retweet, your tweet it's also a big achievement because you're reaching out to…his group of followers…in Twitter you can go in and see who are most popular, who has the most followers and who are the followers. So, you can really dissect the important people…And that's one of the things that we don't do that efficient here in the States in general. We don't…manage the engagement … that's one of the things that I want to change. To start analyzing who the important people are and then start to engage them.

The lack of efficiency once again stemmed from a lack of resources and manpower to dedicate to that type of engagement. Thus, engagement with influencers was valued in most consulates, though the form of that engagement varied depending on the available resources. When engagement did occur, those in the Prime Minister's Office practiced a particular form that differed from traditional means of engagement. According to Participant 8, key nodes in networked domains should not be engaged with in the same manner as in traditional spaces. For example, his office invested funds to engage with key users in the blogosphere:

> So, part of it would be to bring bloggers to Israel, none of them are assigned to the Zionist movement… [T]hey're…bloggers, good people, most of them not Jewish but they're willing to listen to what we have to say and to our version.

He went on to describe the interaction his office had with these key nodes of

distribution, and the role listening played in online interaction:

> [T]hey're not journalists…You don't send them a copy of the message to the
> world or to the press. You converse with them…and you talk to them and you
> listen 50% of the time. You know Israelis never listen. They just shoot the
> message and you know they move to the next thing, I think security. Shoot,
> shoot; kill, kill; move, move; that's not the way. You have to listen, you have to
> listen. So when you listen, emotions are coming up. You hear the words "You
> know guys, I'm sick of fighting you. But you know, what happens now in Gaza,
> wow." And then you can reply back and say. "You know how hard it is for us,
> we don't want to kill child, we don't want to kill." The conversation is different.
> By the time I left the office, we had 500 of them online. And the message that I
> gave to the team…is that "You…need to nurture relationship with influencers."
> Now, those influencers are getting to the millions if you know how to work well
> with them.

Participants described a range of outcomes for connections with influencers. Some

articulated hope that the connections would result in redistribution of MFA content,

while others envisioned the creation of a digital community supportive of Israel as a

state, and supportive of Israeli policy. Participant 7 gave an example of a form of

redistribution that was particularly valuable for the MFA:

> Reuters is a traditional media. We chose this combination of…social media and
> the traditional media is also something particular that is very useful. That's what
> you get the best effect is when you get the traditional media to talk about what
> you're doing in the social media.

Participant 8 articulated the primary inspiration for digital strategy in his office

as creating a community of open discourse and exchange of ideas akin to the

technologies being used. He described social media as a conversational media that

should be used in that manner, with native influencers to that environment driving the

conversation. As such, Participant 8 strayed from an approach whereby "the Israeli

government" intervened in conversations: "it's like somebody from the government will

come into your saloon on Friday night and start talking to your friends…. no one wants the government there." Instead, he said they operate "mostly on proxies…with influencers, with others that already have their authentic voice and followers and they can influence if they want." The outcome was a different means of promoting and branding Israel. It's not that you "have to have 500 hands on the keyboards to protect your president or your brand or your state…it's just that you created a community."

Where journalistic networks were concerned, the goals for engagement were quite different; redistribution from key nodes in the network was not the primary goal, especially in crisis situations. In times of crisis, nodes were not targeted, as "during those times [outlets such as the New York Times and others] are doing all of their own stuff." (Participant 2) While embassies and consulates remained aware of content emerging from these key nodes during crisis, it was rarely to compete with narratives emerging from those networks. As Participant 1 phrased it, "you're never going to be quicker and faster than them." Participant 2 echoed this sentiment:

> So…maybe we'll be posting something they like, but our goal is not generally to be retweeted or shared by [them]. Because that's not…what we're for. They are news sites… you know what I mean? We're not the news. So our audience is…the people who support us, and who maybe are in the future going to support us. So for them, they like what we're posting is, because we are the authority…they're seeing.

While connections with key nodes were pursued to facilitate Israeli presence in larger conversations on policy, the goal was rarely to shift discourse about Israel in the larger network.

Geography in the Networked Terrain

When speaking with those managing MFA social media for their respective

embassies/consulates, their perspective on online space was very much rooted in

geographic space. Their areas of concern were primarily tied to the specific region under

their jurisdiction. When describing the content strategy she developed upon taking on

her consulate's Facebook page, Participant 2 said they "started focusing a lot on…

regional stuff, like what was happening within our five states." Where there was

controversial material about Israel within those domains, or discourse to be had about

Israel within those domains, diplomats engaged. Conversely, if there were spaces outside

of those geographic parameters where "information wars" were being waged, it was not

a space of concern. As Participant 6 describes the online environment of Israeli

discourse, he speaks to the areas of concern:

> You see a lot of support for Israel, there is also a very vocal minority…and not all of them, [but] most of them are not based in the U.S., they're based in other parts of the world, Europe in the Middle East or wherever else…you see a large discourse on that topic, but we have ah a very strong base, a very strong support [in the US].

Switching was very much rooted to the geographic spaces in which the

consulates were located. Content was often driven by the supporters of Israel in a

particular region, as Participant 2 described: "So, I think that – I think its how all of the

contents kind of work. It's figuring out who supports us here in this region and…what

do they want to know…what are they interested in?" To the extent that trends in online

discourse fell outside of the geographic jurisdiction of a particular consulate, they were

not primary areas of concern for those handling digital content. Participant 4 expressed

this sentiment when describing her primary domain of concern in the information space:

> [M]y goal, is to be the press officer for [my region], so when I see when someone says, "Well we hit, you know outside..." Honestly, it's not that I don't care, it's not my target. I want to be hitting the journalists in [the major cities in my area].

When considering the potential impact of online activities on varied audiences, the only

audiences that typically were pertinent for participants were those within their

geographic region, which reflected a very traditional media mindset: "I don't really go

out of my way to keep tabs on people that are not in our region. They don't impact what

we do, they impact what other people do." (Participant 2) Discourse was very much tied

to existing geographies. Terrain still matters and borders still guide, to a large extent, the

way in which Israeli diplomats navigated the vast information environment.

Exploring Power & Counterpower

Castells has typically conceptualized movements as either resting in positions of

power or counterpower. For those seeking political change, he characterizes the

movements as carrying out insurgent politics; for those seeking cultural change, he

describes their activities as social movements. What is complicated about the Israeli case

is that their discourse and activities exhibit qualities of both power positions. In

discussions with Israeli diplomats, they did not perceive themselves to be shut out of

international networks, per se, emphasizing strong relations with key actors in various

networks, and, overall, positive public opinion. However, each acknowledged specific

sub-networks in which Israel was perceived unfavorably; it was in these spaces that

diplomats sometimes opted to create different projects to shift discourse and introduce alternative narratives for discussion.

One of the primary dimensions Castells bases his concept of power on is the position in which an entity is located within a network. When individuals, organizations, or nodes are creating and redistributing discourses that are subsequently adopted by key nodes within any given network, Castells conceptualizes those actors as operating from a position of power. Conversely, if they are attempting to reprogram a network by introducing new language and ideas to be adopted by others, these actors are described as operating from a position of counterpower.

Arguably, Israel could be described as an embattled state, continually on the defensive. Even gaining entry to embassies and consulates is an extraordinarily secure affair, for which background checks, clearances, metal detectors and relinquishing of electronics all feature prominently. The adoption of a defensive posture is manifest even in the daily business of consulates and embassies. While it is possible these security measures are standard for other embassies, the degree to which Israel remains on the defensive is noteworthy.

However, despite outward perceptions to this effect, in the realm of digital diplomats, the embattled metaphor hardly applied. There was a resilience and optimism on the part of these diplomats that was consistent across locations in the United States and in Israel. The question this raised when evaluating whether the MFA was operating from a position of power or counterpower was the role perspective played. Practitioners

in the MFA did not view themselves as disadvantaged, and yet their digital impact was quite limited.

While all acknowledged the realities and challenges associated with conflict, a practical optimism undergirded all of our discussions on strategy and perspective in Israeli digital diplomacy practices. Participant 2 described her perspective: [I]t's generally not very pro-Israel, which is why I think it's one of the reasons that I enjoy doing our Facebook so much is because it's like a challenge to me. Participant 7 described the information terrain in which Israel operated with both an acknowledgement of the challenges Israel faces as well as optimism about their role in the global information space:

> In Europe we have an image problem because of the Moslem population etc., etc. But, overall we're okay. Israel has good diplomatic relations and support from most of the world. We have an issue now that this specific government for the past six years (especially in Europe but some here in the American government too), they feel that Netanyahu's government has not done enough on the peace process and that we continue settlements. They say "Come on, I mean, you are our friend, but you are not behaving well." and they criticize that. And its fine but still, you know, all with Obama, when people say how Obama hates Israel. What are you talking? It's not true.

Multiple actors emphasized the strong relationship Israel enjoyed with the United States, and with the Obama Administration in particular, narratives that were often countered in broader Israeli-oriented discourse networks. Participant 6 was involved with a new media project designed to specifically counter the narrative of poor relations between the Obama Administration and the Netanyahu government prior to Obama's first trip to Israel in 2013. The office designed a YouTube vignette depicting the friendship between Obama and Netanyahu set to the Golden Girls theme song "Thank

You for Being a Friend." Participant 6 described the rationale behind the creation of the

vignette:

> You look back to the President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu… bobble head video that we created prior to his visit there, and…what are people discussing? The White House and the Prime Minister's office both said the…visit was about our shared values, the strength of the US-Israel relationship …and what we hold true and the unbreakable bonds…between our two nations. You're reading a lot of what the articles are saying, whether from the Washington Post or New York Times and people were saying it was about repairing the relationship or, um, that there was kind of…rough waters between the two. And it was our…opinion and our knowledge that it wasn't the case, that there was that friendship. That's why we made the video is about thank you for being a friend. It was the… friendship element.

This video represented one of the only examples of specific counter-programming that

arose during interviews. The bobble head video was created for distribution into the

media and governmental networks in which antagonistic narratives were dominant, and

while the video did elicit media coverage from minor outlets, was not widely

redistributed.

There is an idealized discourse in the literature on networks that often fails to

move past the exigencies provided by digital communications technologies and into the

realities of their uses and the realities of human interaction. What has been borne out in

the research in other contexts is that we have become increasingly polarized into micro-

networks. Audiences who the MFA conceived of as "in the middle" and strong

supporters constituted a particular sub-network of Israeli-oriented discourse. However,

those in various counter-movements comprised a completely opposite sub-network of

discourse, in which little engagement from actors in the MFA occurred. Participant 1

compared this with existing communication theory:

Because they all have some limited span of attention and limited resources of time. And even if you spend a lot of time looking at it…you know the theory of selection of information. You select the information you're looking for. So if you're not looking for something that is about to be released for Israel, you're probably not going to get it…I don't look at jihadi sites, for example. And the only time I hear what Jihad says is when I see CNN saying that Jihad says blah, blah. And it's not because it's not there, it's not because I cannot access it. It's just because I couldn't care less to get myself to oh, let's see what's in the Jihad.com. I would say that most people function the same way. If you're interested in shoes, you're going to look for shoes. You're not going to look for elephants in the Sahara.

Participant 1 articulated separate communities of discourse that had very little impact on other disparate communities of discourse. When describing various Muslim communities organizing online, he mentioned the discourse being such that he was not very excited about it, because "it's pretty much confined to circles that are kind of debating between themselves or talking to themselves. I don't think a lot of it gets any traction…"

These results run counter to the notions of a globalized Internet rife with possibilities for connective power. While the possibilities for dialogue abound, the entry of parties on opposite ends of the political or ideological spectrum into any level of meaningful interaction is rare. It is a polarized environment, in which the Israelis have, with the limited resources at their disposal, attempted to engage with various sub-networks of discourse. Even if engagement and redistribution involved nodes "making fun of us… in doing so, the information is being disseminated." (Participant 6) These findings support a categorization for the MFA operating from a position of counterpower on digital networks.

In the following section, I place these findings in a larger discussion about networked power for Israeli digital diplomacy efforts.

Summary of Interview Findings

Interviews with practitioners in the MFA revealed that overall, the MFA was present in discursive Web 2.0 networks, yet often failed to understand and appropriate the logics of those networks. Practitioners understood the relational ties and importance of existing networks of support, and often focused solely on maintaining those ties. Most participants expressed an active awareness of multiple global networks in which they faced severe opposition, yet there is not a great deal of investment of strategy to reprogram those networks. This set of data indicates that the MFA has made preliminary entrées onto global communication networks, yet rarely engaged broader Israeli-oriented discourses on those platforms. These trends indicate that the MFA is operating from a position of counterpower on the platforms in which they are present. However, the second set of data will examine actual presence and content on a specific platform.

Preview of Network Analysis

The following section uses MFA Twitter activity as a case study of networking practices in digital diplomacy activity. Network analysis was conducted for 8 MFA Twitter accounts to assess three specific dimensions of switching activity in actual practice on Twitter: presence in key sub-communities, connections with key nodes, and relations with key nodes. Analysis revealed that the MFA is positioned strategically across a variety of sub-communities on Twitter. The MFA had a variety of influential nodes to which they were connected on Twitter; however, those relationships were quite

static; the degree of interaction and information exchange between the MFA and influential nodes in government, finance or media networks was extremely rare.

These findings reveal that MFA accounts are positioned strategically within various sub-communities on Twitter, with a wide variety of influential followers. However, MFA accounts do not serve as key bridges between these disparate communities and are not positioned to facilitate information exchange between key nodes. Finally, there was very little information exchange between any members of MFA networks, let alone with key nodes in their sub-communities of interest.

CHAPTER V

NETWORK ANALYSIS

The second portion of data analysis explored the networks of 8 MFA Twitter

accounts: the Twitter handles for consulates/ embassies in the United States[1] as well as

the handle for MFA headquarters in Jerusalem. Each of the consulates was connected to

various sub-communities revealed through cluster analysis, including artistic,

journalistic, governmental, diplomatic, those within the Israeli government, and others.

Sub-communities are indicated using either different colors, or in different sectors

labeled by group (G1, G2, etc.) in each network graph. Disparate communities were not

in closer proximity to one another despite connection with the MFA, indicating that

information exchange was slower and less likely between them. While each of the MFA

accounts served as bridges between the varied networks, the degree of interaction with

influential nodes within those communities was quite limited. Analysis revealed greater

latent connections than active connections (replies or mentions) for users that followed

the MFA accounts and with those each consulate followed. Network analysis is

described for each of the MFA Twitter accounts sampled below.

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[1] Israel in Los Angeles (@IsraelinLA) was originally sampled, but data was removed as discourse for this consulate included mentions to the Israeli consulate in Latvia (@IsraelinLatvia), skewing the network graphs.

Israel in the United Nations

The Israeli mission to the United Nations serves as the vehicle through which

Israeli interests are presented to the United Nations (Israeli Diplomatic Network, n.d.).

The delegation interfaces a great deal with the diplomatic community and UN-affiliated

organizations to advance Israeli interests in various UN initiatives. The consulate Twitter

account is comprised of 7,924 followers. Cluster analysis of latent follower networks

(Figure 1) revealed two distinct communities within their followership: 1) UN-affiliated

organizations and the American governmental establishment (on the left of the graph in

light blue), and 2) Israeli-affiliated users in government, culture and religion (on the

right of the graph in dark blue). Although @IsraelinUN was a bridge between disparate

communities, connections between them were not greatly increased as a result of

@IsraelinUN's position in the network.

**Figure 1: @IsraelinUN complete follower network with clusters highlighted**

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

88
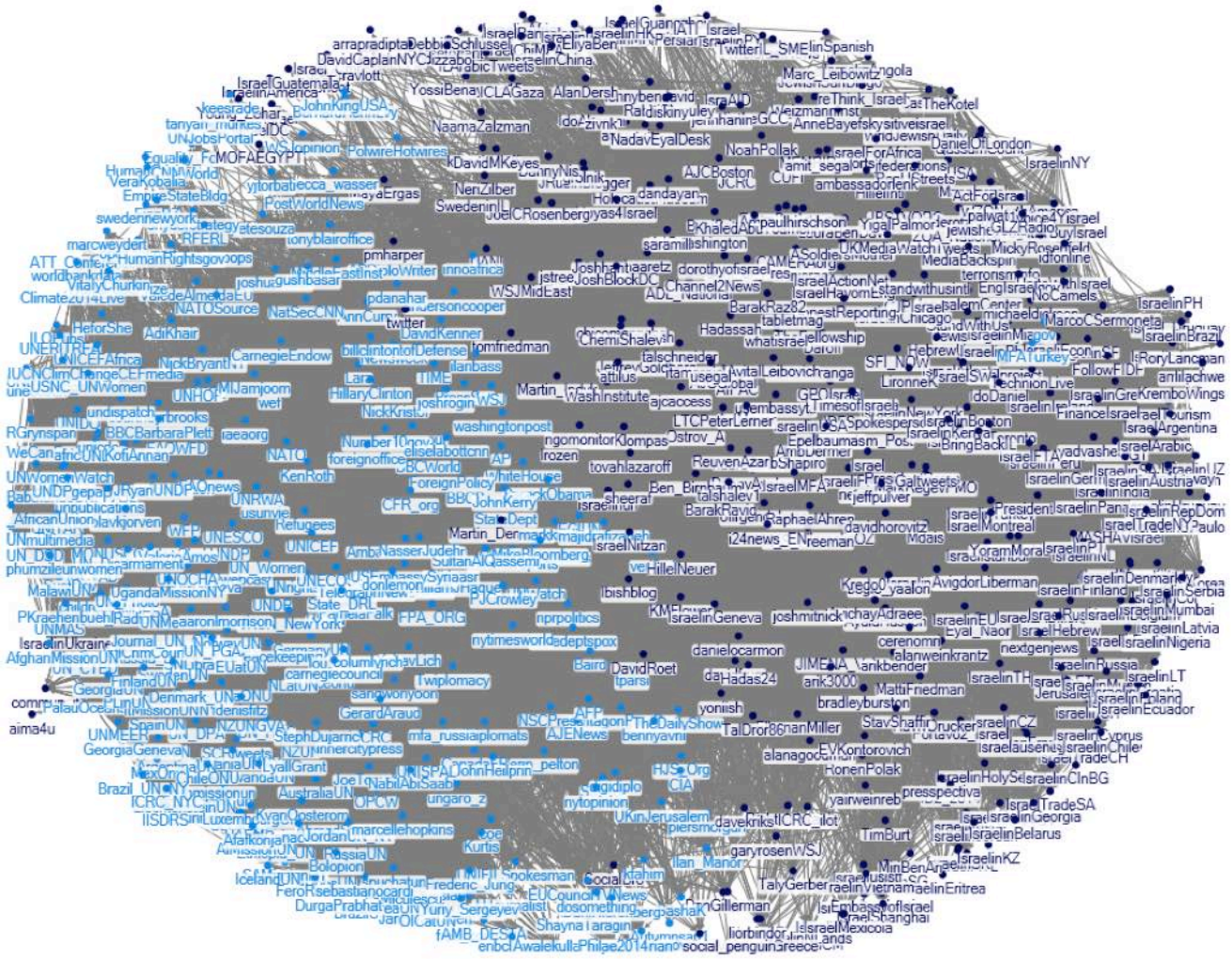
To better visualize and understand the nature of connections with high impact users (nodes), the total network was filtered to demonstrate only users that had the highest indegree in the network. In this particular network, indegree measured the number of followers *within the sampled network* that follow each other. Thus, measurement of influence within that particular sub-network is measured as opposed to a measurement of global followership on Twitter.

The below graph (Figure 2) demonstrates several items. Cluster analysis was conducted within this network of high impact users to examine the particular sub-communities within the @IsraelinUN network of followers. Israeli governmental officials and Israeli outlets clustered near the top of the graph, and those within the American diplomatic and governmental establishment clustered together near the bottom of the graph. These clusters of communities represent disparate geographies as well as disparate areas of focus. United Nations organizations (@UNICEF, @UN_Women, @unpublications, etc.) are located furthest in the graph from Israeli governmental users.

**Figure 2: @IsraelinUN filtered network of influential users**
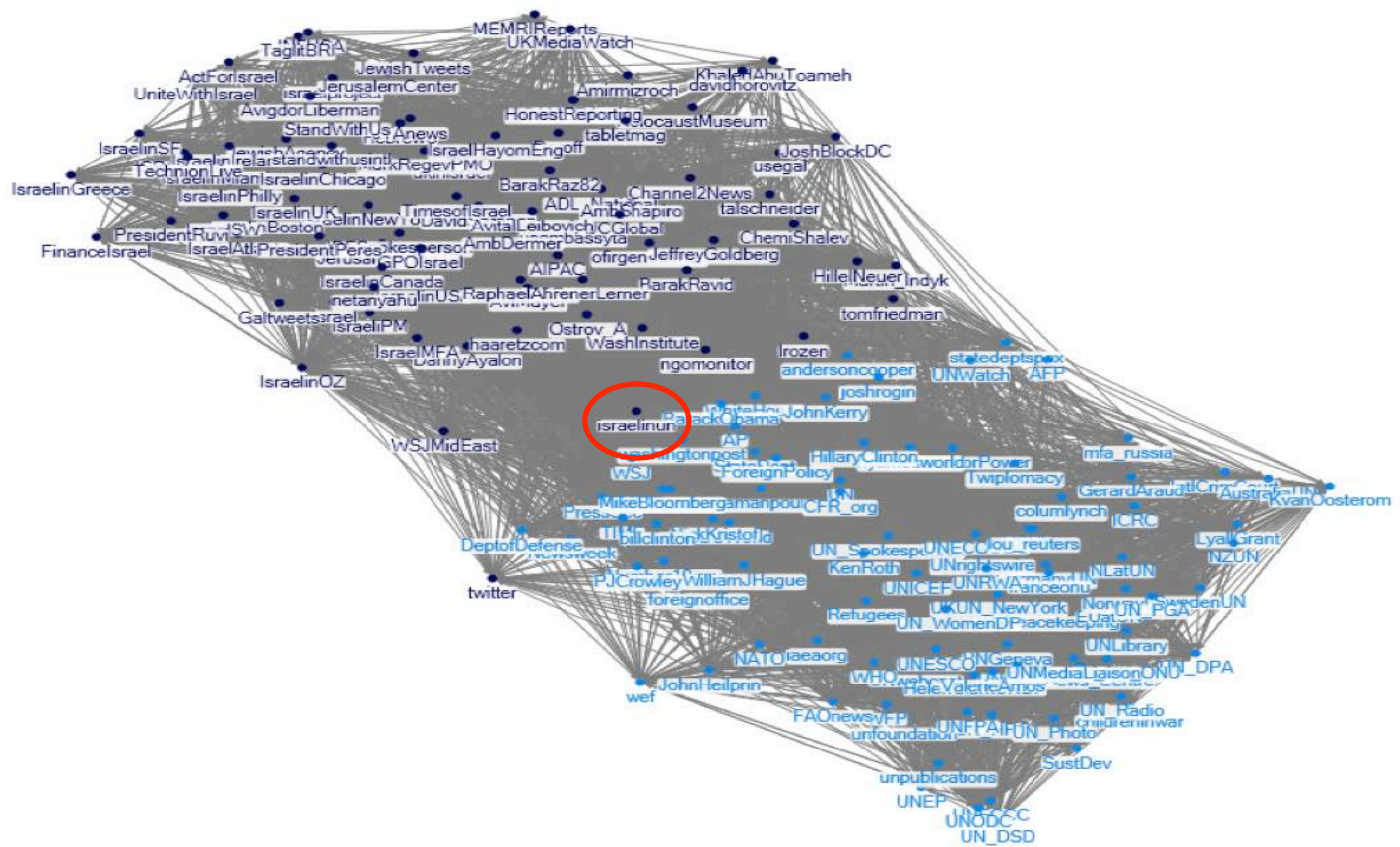
Interaction for @IsraelinUN

Figure 3 shows a graph of the latest tweets for all of @IsraelinUN's followers, in addition to those the consulate follows on Twitter. The time period ranged from 2013-2015, largely driven by activity levels of each of the users[2]. Over this timeframe, very little interaction occurred with those in @IsraelinUN's network of followers or those the mission follows. Very few users in the network engaged in dialogue or information exchange with @IsraelinUN. The independent nodes in the graphs represent latest tweets for those in the network that neither mention nor reply to @IsraelinUN or other users in the network demonstrating static connectivity with the mission. The portion of the graph on the left in red shows vertices that reply to or mention the @IsraelinUN account within this particular network.

Data was collected 24 hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave his March 3, 2015 speech to the Joint Session of the United States Congress. By way of comparison, interaction with @netanyahu was selected in red (Figure 4 below) to demonstrate how little interaction occurred with @IsraelinUN. For continued purposes of comparison, Figure 5 isolates the interaction with @IsraelinUN (in red) and @netanyahu

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[2] Some users within @IsraelinUN's network were not active Twitter users, and so latest tweets for some users dated back to 2013.

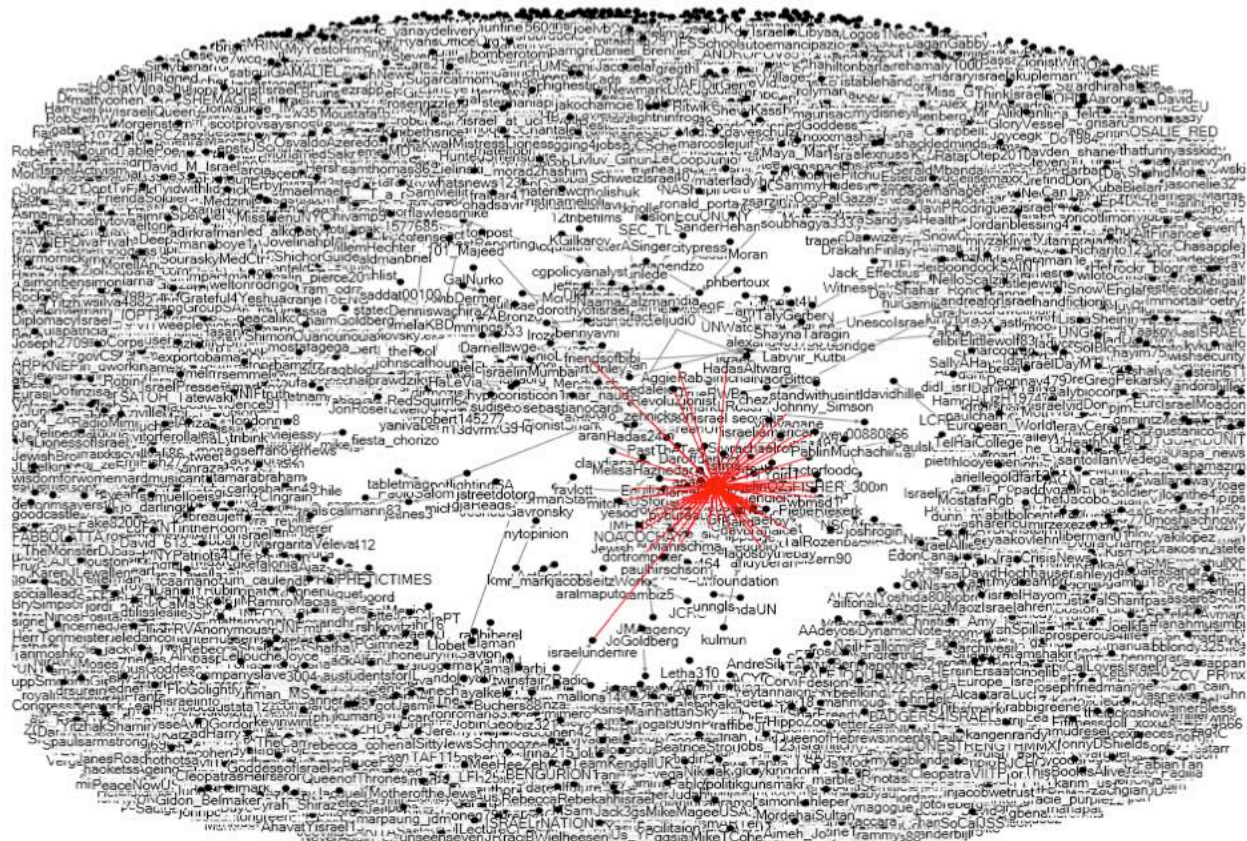**Figure 3: Limited interaction with @IsraelinUN (selected in red)**

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

92
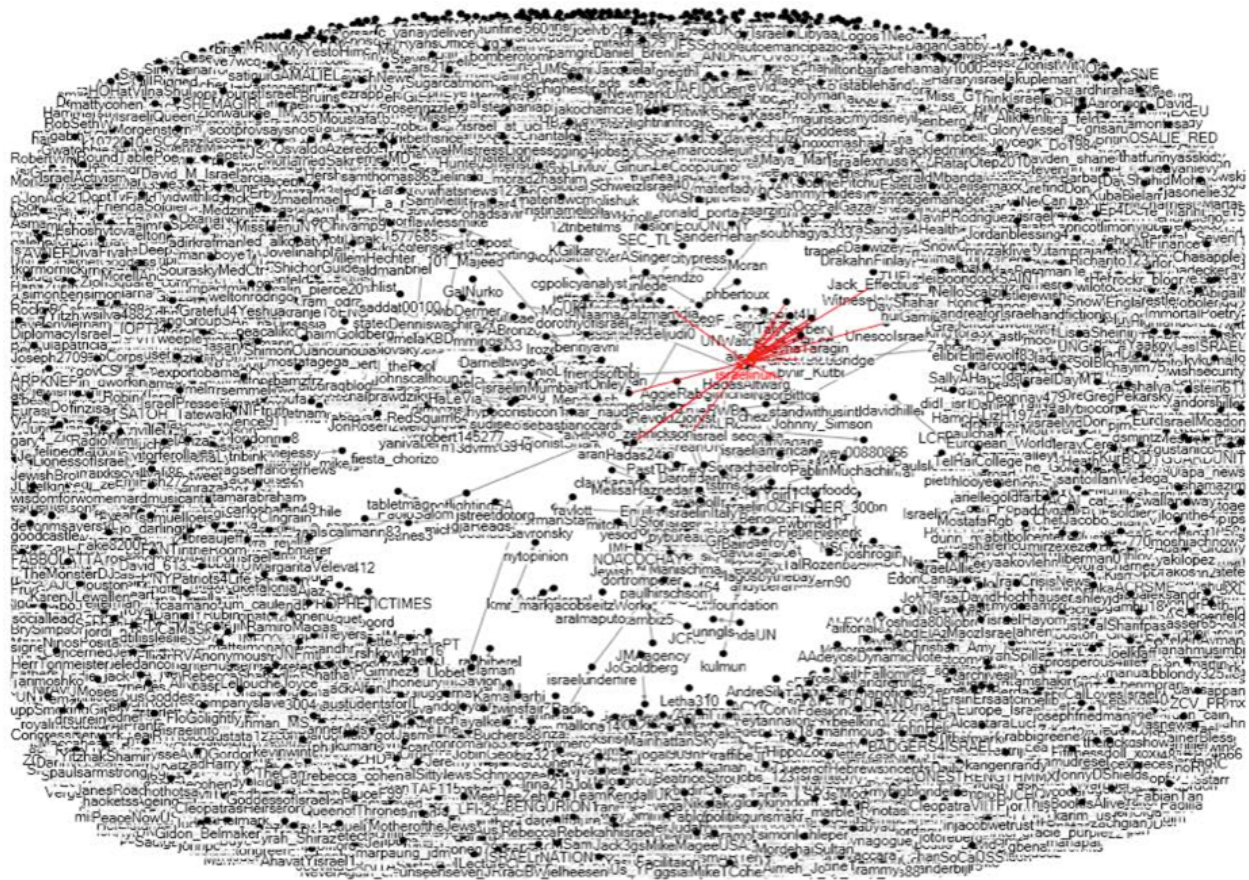
Reference Networks for @IsraelinUN

Next, a graph was created to further explore the nature of active networks around @IsraelinUN. Analysis was conducted to ascertain the degree to which @IsraelinUN is referenced by Twitter users over a bounded time period. The following graph (Figure 6) demonstrates the various sub-communities that referenced @IsraelinUN, indicated by the labels in each sector (G1, G2, G3, etc.). The graph contains a total of 197 nodes (users) and 552 edges, representing points of connection between users (either "replies to" or "mentions"). In this analysis, the communities are defined by discourse, whereby the predominant topics in tweets for each community determine their placement in each cluster. Those topics are indicated in the labels next to the group name (e.g. G1: israelinun, rt, ltcpeterlerner, boy, etc.). As "IsraelinUN" was the search term used to pull content, each community begins with "IsraelinUN" as the predominant word mentioned in each tweet. 3 mid-sized sub-communities emerged with discourse centering on IDF relief efforts in Nepal (G1), a celebration of Israel's independence (G2), and a group of users that widely redistributed birthday salutations to Israel from best-selling author Joel C. Rosenberg (G3). 12 total sub-communities emerged in cluster analysis.

93

Figure 4: Greater interaction with @netanyahu as compared to limited interaction with @IsraelinUN

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

Figure 5: Isolated interactions with @IsraelinUn (in red) and @netanyahu

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)
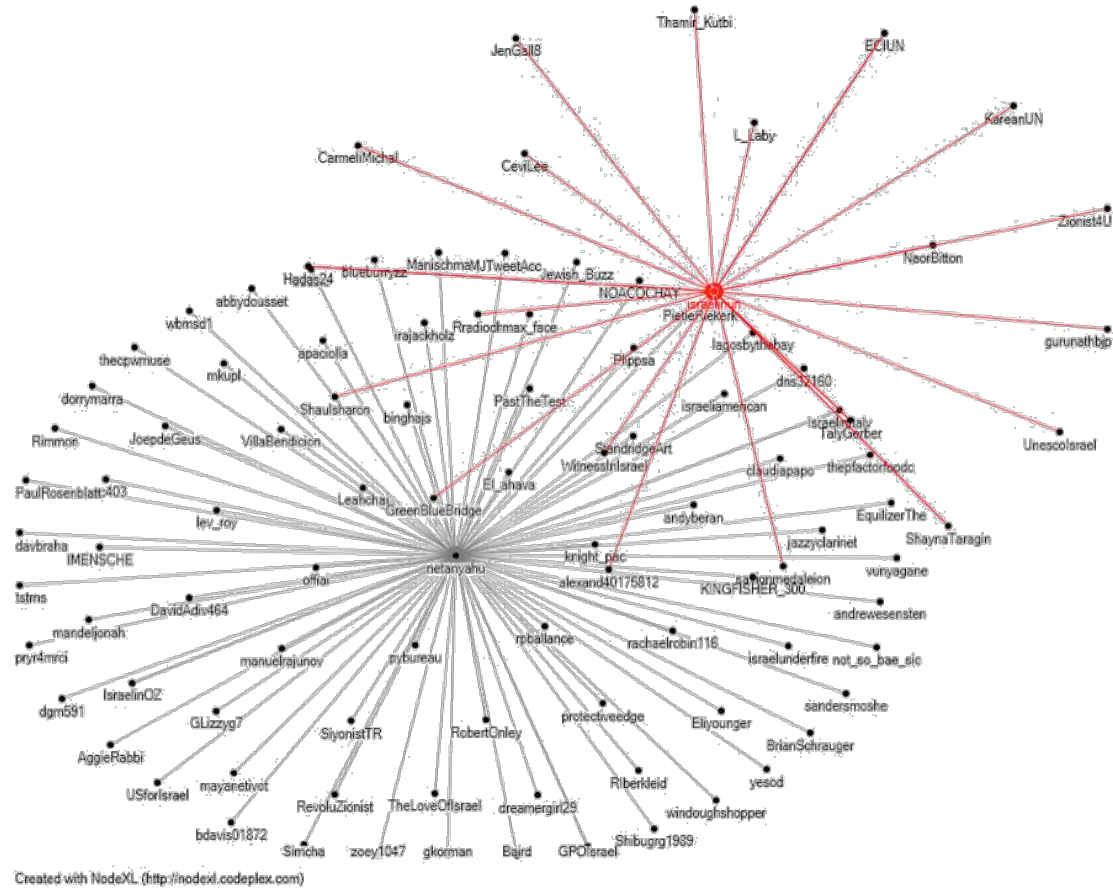
Figure 6: References to @IsraelinUN April 23-April 30, 2015
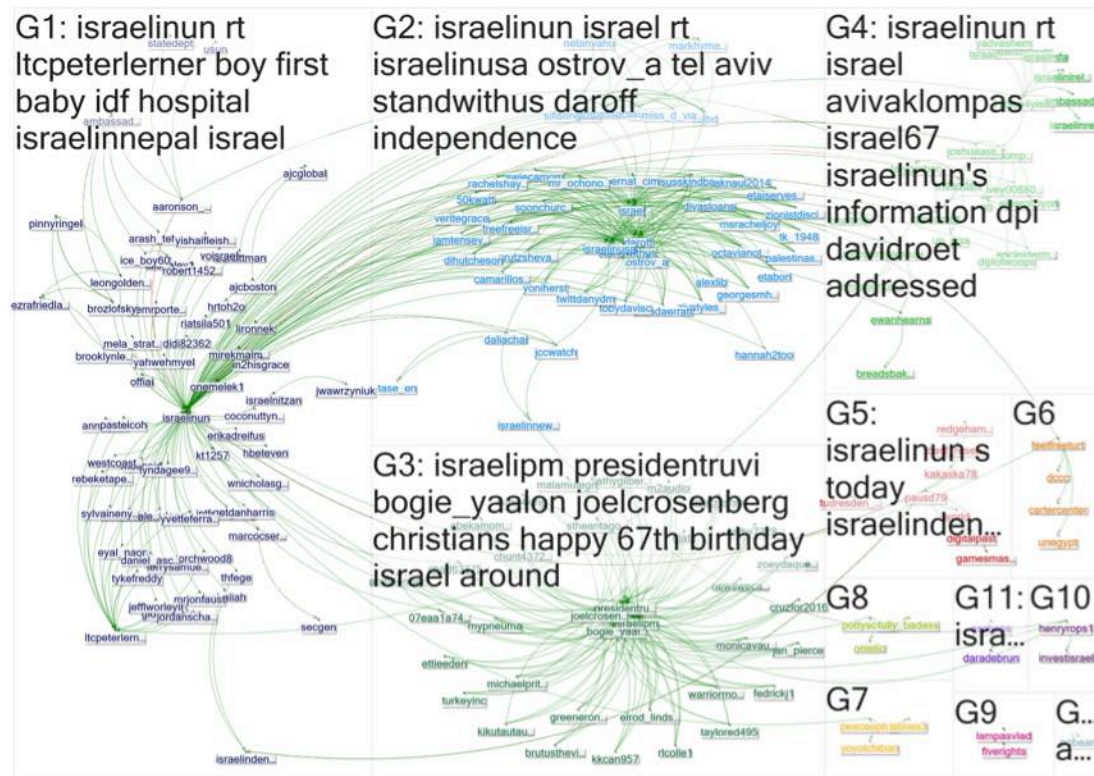
Notably, all prominent nodes that are included in G1 and G2 (The US State Department, the UN Secretary General, The US Delegation to the UN, Prime Minister Netanyahu) are located further away from @IsraelinUN than other nodes in the graph and are also the only nodes that lack direct connection or reference to @IsraelinUN. In most cases, these prominent users were mentioned along with @IsraelinUN in a string of mentions by other Israeli affiliated organizations or users. Thus, while @IsraelinUN has direct reference and relationship with a small community of users, those users are not key nodes in which redistribution has possibilities for reprogramming the network on a large scale.

Israel in Chicago

The Israeli consulate in Chicago serves as the representative of Israeli interests to the Midwest of the United States. Network analysis (Figure 7) revealed 2 primary clusters of community within their latent networks of followers: 1) key nodes within the Chicago and Midwestern journalistic and governmental communities (represented in light blue toward the bottom of the graph) and 2) influential American governmental officials and their followers (represented in dark blue in the upper portion of the graph).

**Figure 7: @IsraelinChicago complete follower network with clusters highlighted**

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)
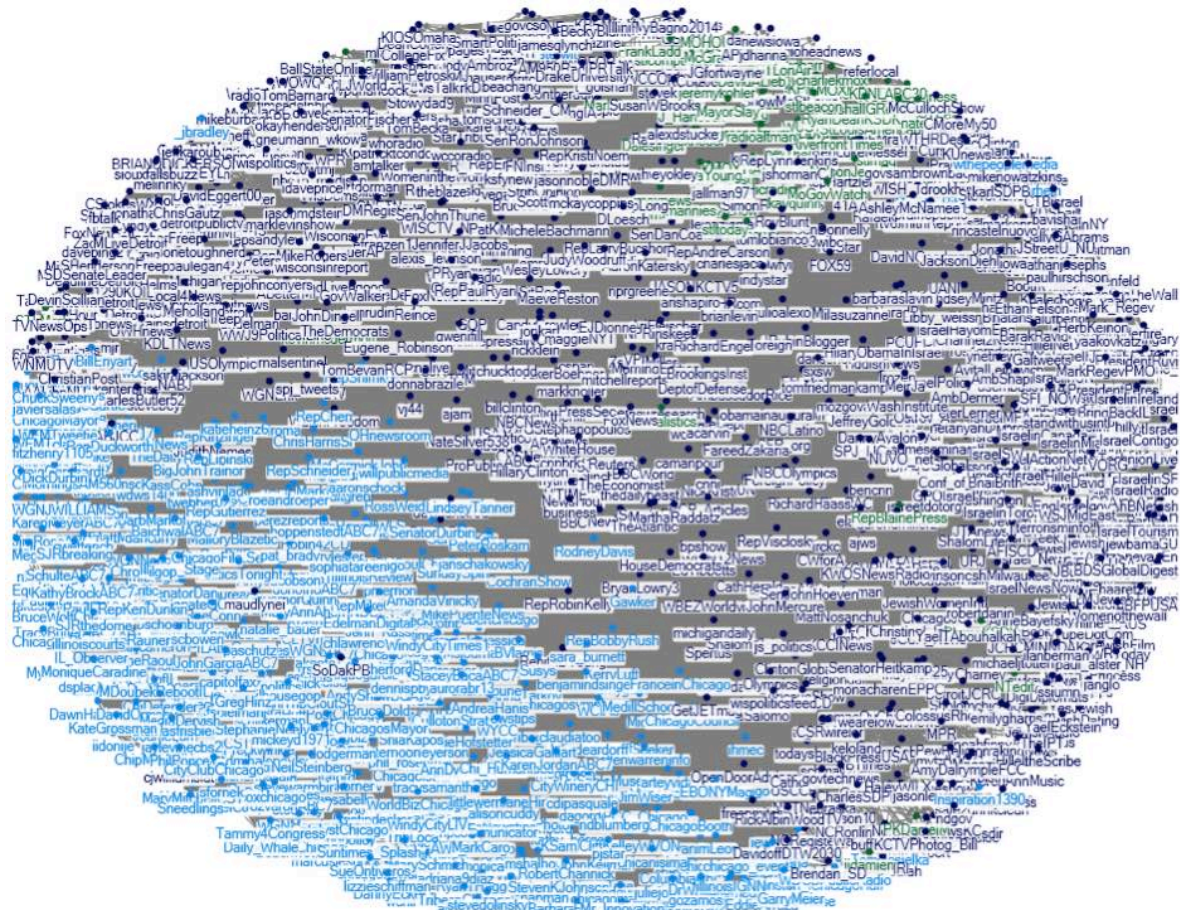
To better visualize and understand the nature of latent connections with key nodes, the total network was filtered to demonstrate only users that had the highest indegree in @IsraelinChicago's network. Figure 8 demonstrates several items. Cluster analysis was conducted within this network of users with large followings to examine the particular sub-communities within the @IsraelinChicago network of influential nodes. A range of prominent users within the American governmental and journalistic communities comprised one cluster, while the bottom cluster is comprised of key news outlets in the Chicago area.

@IsraelinChicago served as a bridge between these disparate communities in this particular network graph. However, the distance between these disparate communities is another indicator that while @IsraelinChicago served as a static connecting point between these communities, they did not serve as a hub through which information flowed between them. In other words, because geodesic distance was not shortened between these disparate communities as a result of connection with @IsraelinChicago, the consulate failed to exhibit an important aspect of influence on Twitter.

Figure 8: @IsraelinChicago filtered network of influential users

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

100
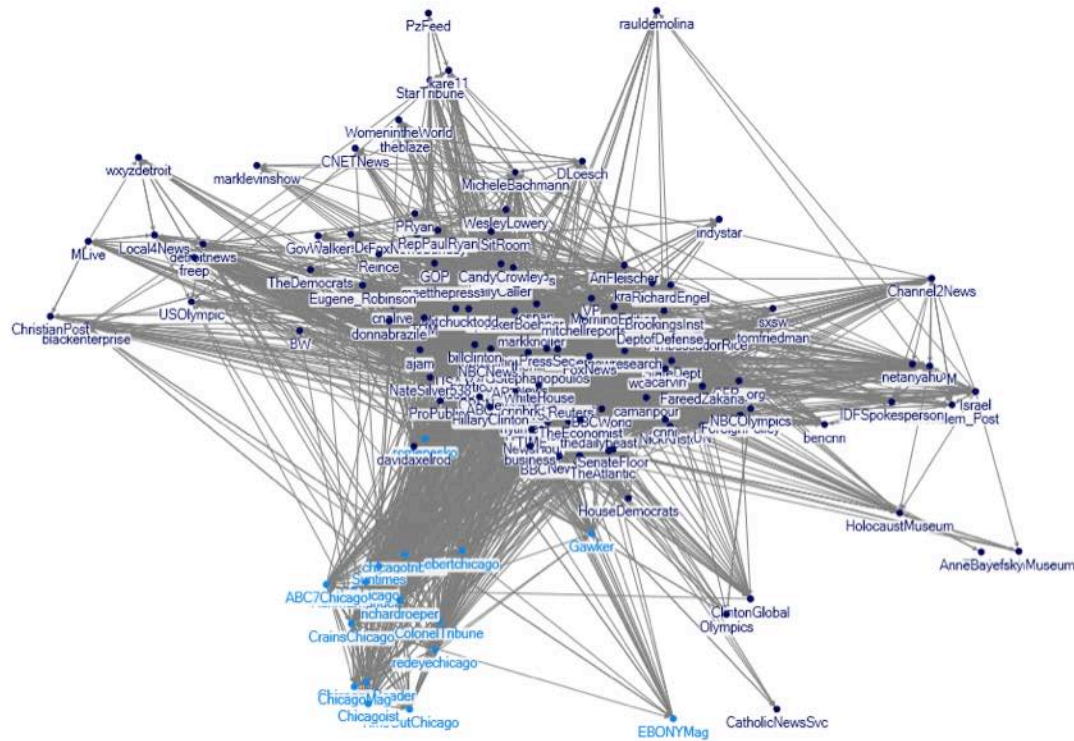
Interaction for @IsraelinChicago

In addition to exploring the nature of static follower relationships, analysis also explored the type and nature of interaction for @IsraelinChicago on Twitter. **Figure 9** represents the latest tweets for all of @IsraelinChicago's followers, in addition to those the consulate follows on Twitter. The time period ranged from 2013-2015, largely driven by activity levels of each of the users. Over this timeframe, very little interaction occurred with those in @IsraelinChicago's network of followers or those the consulate follows. In fact, only one mention occurred for the consulate over the time frame of sampling; close to 0 users engaged in dialogue or information exchange with the consulate.Comparison was conducted with @netanyahu over the timeframe of sampling. The reduced selection of interaction for those two accounts is represented below in **Figure 10**.

Reference Networks for @IsraelinChicago

Next, a graph (Figure 11) was created to further explore the nature of active networks around @IsraelinChicago. Analysis was conducted to ascertain the degree to which @IsraelinChicago is referenced by Twitter users over a bounded time period. The following graph demonstrates that the nature of interaction with this particular consulate is even sparser than that of the UN. The graph contains only 40 nodes, 76 edges (representing the degree of active communication in the network)

Figure 9: Limited interaction with @IsraelinChicago compared to activity in the larger network

Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

102
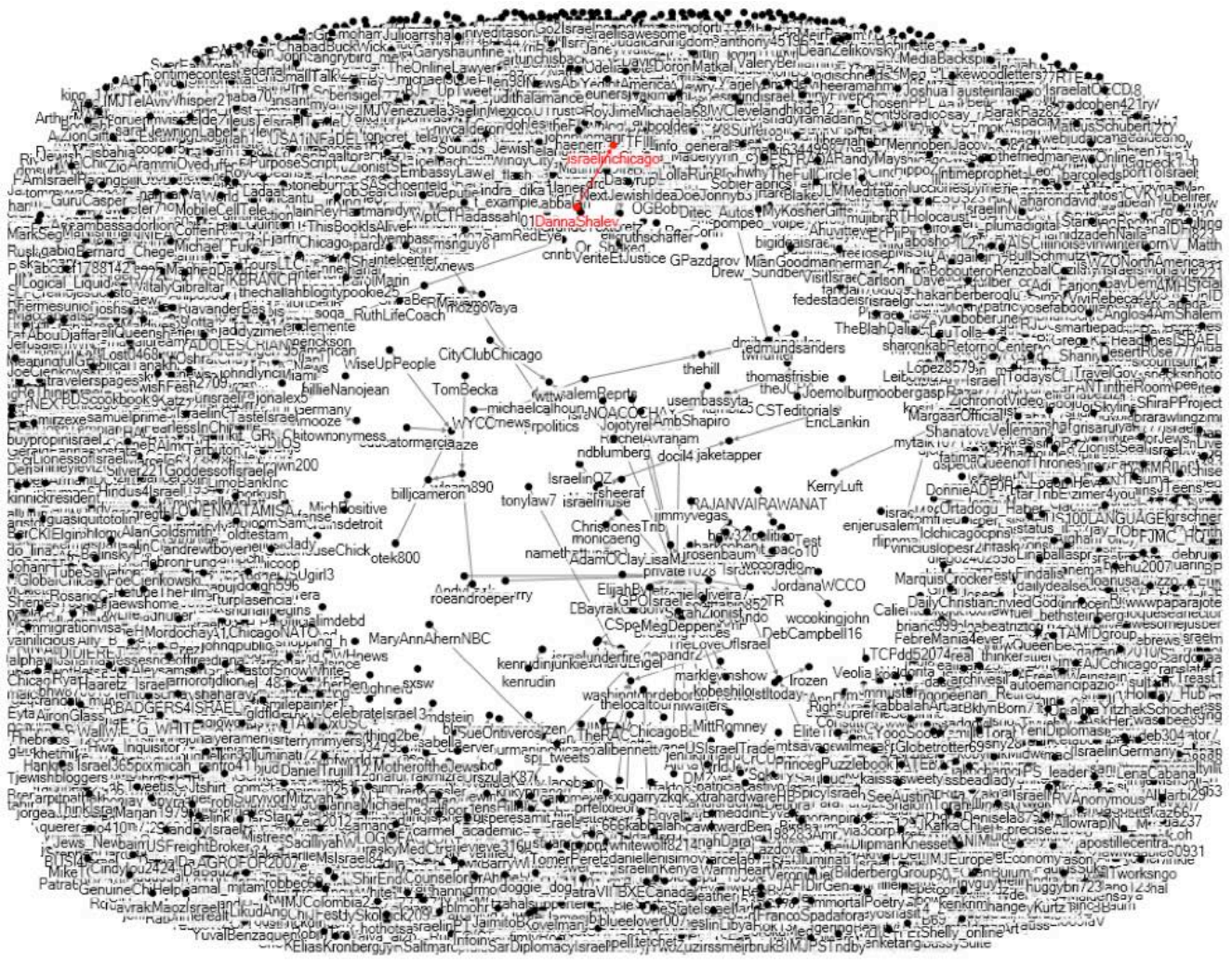
.The various sub-communities that referenced @IsraelinChicago are indicated by the labels in each sector (G1, G2, G3, etc.). 8 sparse sub-communities emerged in cluster analysis. In this analysis, the communities are defined by discourse, whereby the predominant topics in tweets for each community determine their placement in each cluster. Those topics are indicated in the labels next to the group name (e.g. G1: Israel gilad, yomhaatzmaut, etc.). As "IsraelinChicago" was the search term used to pull content, most clusters include "IsraelinChicago" as a predominant word mentioned in each tweet. The predominant areas of discourse include celebration of Israel's 67th anniversary, and individuals from the Students Supporting Israel network referencing the Chicago consulate and the DC embassy.

The majority of nodes in the largest network cluster (G1) do not have large followings, save a few journalistic outlets in Israel and in Chicago. G2 is comprised of key nodes within the Israeli diplomatic community (the DC embassy, MFA headquarters in Jerusalem, an Israeli non-profit, etc.). While sectors G3-G12 have a few influential nodes in their make-up, they do not represent an abundance of active connections with key nodes in disparate networks.

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Figure 10: Isolated interactions with @IsraelinChicago (in red)

Figure 11: References to @IsraelinChicago April 23-April 30, 2015

Israel in Washington DC

The Israeli embassy in Washington DC serves as the primary point of contact for diplomacy between Israel and the United States of America. Positioned at the heart of the American governmental establishment (and at the heart of the diplomatic community across the globe in the United States), the embassy is a strategic outpost for the MFA. The embassy is also the only mission in the United States that has a position for Director of New Media; coordination for all of the MFA's social media activity in the US is conducted from the embassy in DC. Thus, the activity for the embassy likely represents a greater degree of coordination and intentional strategy than any other in the sample.

@IsraelinUSA has nearly 87,000 followers. While this latent network was unable to be retrieved due to computing constraints, the active network (Figure 12) revealed more frequent exchange with this embassy than any other consulate in the United States. @IsraelinUSA returned a total of 637 unique vertices and 1577 edges. Cluster analysis revealed robust sub-communities with which the embassy had exchange on Twitter. The majority of users in each sub-community were not key nodes (users with large followings) in a particular sub-network, but this embassy had notably more connections of this nature than others, with mentions from American governmental officials, and even users in the Middle East. 2 robust sub-communities emerged; 26 total sub-communities were identified in cluster analysis.

This particular dataset was pulled around the 67th anniversary of Israel's founding with the majority of the topics mentioned centered on that event. G1 was comprised of a variety of Israel supporters with smaller followings, retweeting

@IsraelinUSA's commemoration of David Ben Gurion's declaration of the Israeli state in 1967. In addition to other content in the network referencing Israeli independence, the referencing patterns of other consulates and embassies were also represented in the dataset, as other frequently mentioned topics in tweets were mentions of other Israeli consulates, embassies, and governmental officials.

Israel in Jerusalem

Network data was also pulled for the @IsraelMFA account, the primary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Twitter account in Jerusalem. As the primary hub from which all diplomatic (traditional and digital) activity for the organization is driven, the network data from this account was pulled as a point of comparison for all other accounts in the organization. Similar to the @IsraelinUSA Twitter handle, the @IsraelMFA had a robust latent and active network on Twitter. The latent network was not pulled due to computing limitations, but the account had 74,900 followers at the time of data collection. The active network, represented below in Figure 13, was comprised of a total of 3092 unique vertices and 5837 unique edges. 3 robust sub-communities were identified in cluster analysis, with a total of 39 distinct clusters

Figure 12: References to @IsraelinUSA April 23-May 1, 2015

108

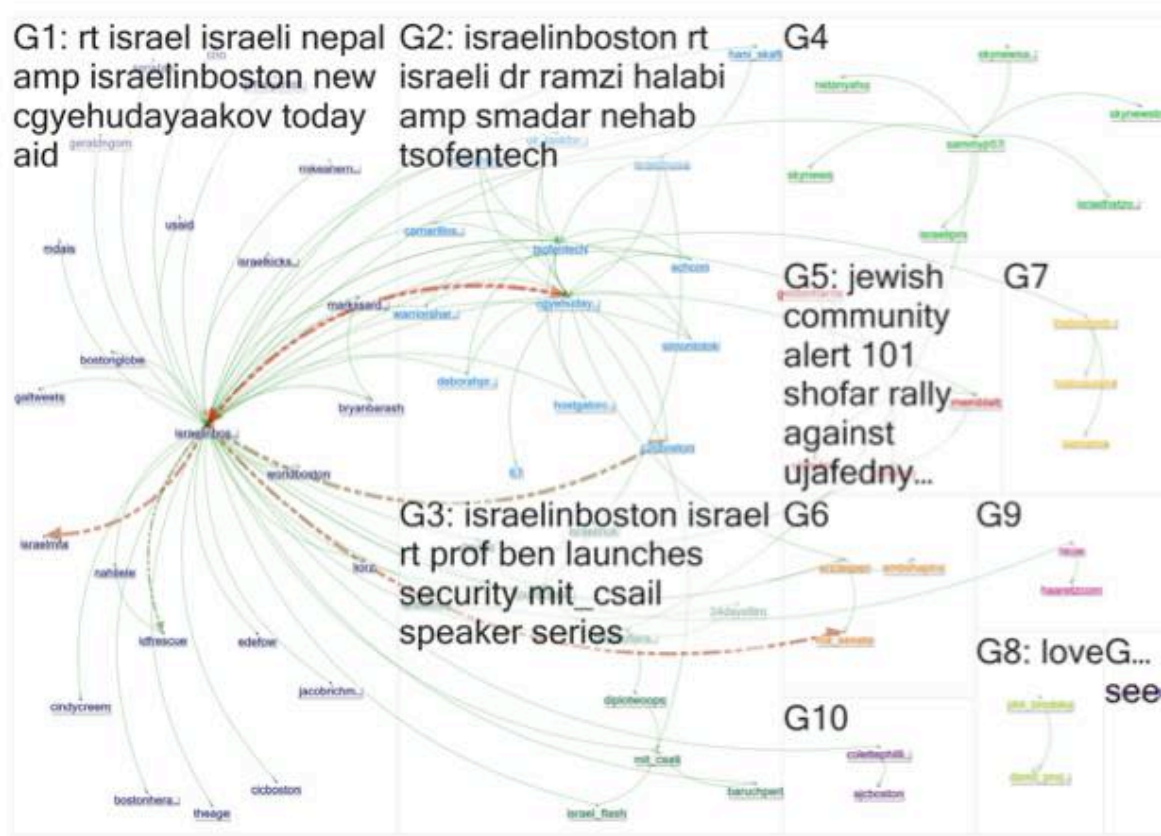**Figure 13: References to @IsraelMFA April 23-May 1, 2015**

109

Clusters primarily discussed Israeli humanitarian efforts, in addition to referencing key diplomatic figures. Data was collected during the peak of Israeli aid to Nepal following the April 25th earthquake. The MFA spent a great deal of time documenting efforts by the IDF and other Israelis to aid in disaster response. The community of users referencing the MFA in this network is decidedly more international, with a large Indian base. G4 is comprised primarily of individuals in India expressing support for Israel, mentioning prominent politicians' support for Israel (including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi) on Israeli Independence Day. Other sectors of the network are also comprised of a large base of Indian users.

Israel in Boston, Israel in Miami, Israel in Philadelphia, Israel in San Francisco

The active exchange networks for the remaining consulates in the United States (Figures 14-17) were also pulled for analysis. These represented the sparsest exchange networks of all networks generated for the MFA in the United States. Individuals referencing the consulates mentioned humanitarian efforts in Nepal, a cross-city demonstration protesting the BDS movement (a shofar rally), and other events occurring in the respective cities of each consulate. Boston demonstrated the greatest degree of interaction with influential nodes, including the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, USAID, CNN, and Prime Minister Netanyahu. The other three consulates had nearly no exchange with influential nodes in the range of communities that other consulates demonstrated. Their graphs are presented in smaller form below for the purposes of comparison

Figure 14: References to @IsraelinBoston April 23-April 30, 2015

Figure 15: References to @IsraelinMiami April 23-April 30, 2015

Social media network connections among Twitter users

G2: jewish community alert 101 shofar rally against ujafed promoting boycott

G1: israelinmiami latin iaflatinamerica israel 2 america israelallies roslehtinen rt consulate
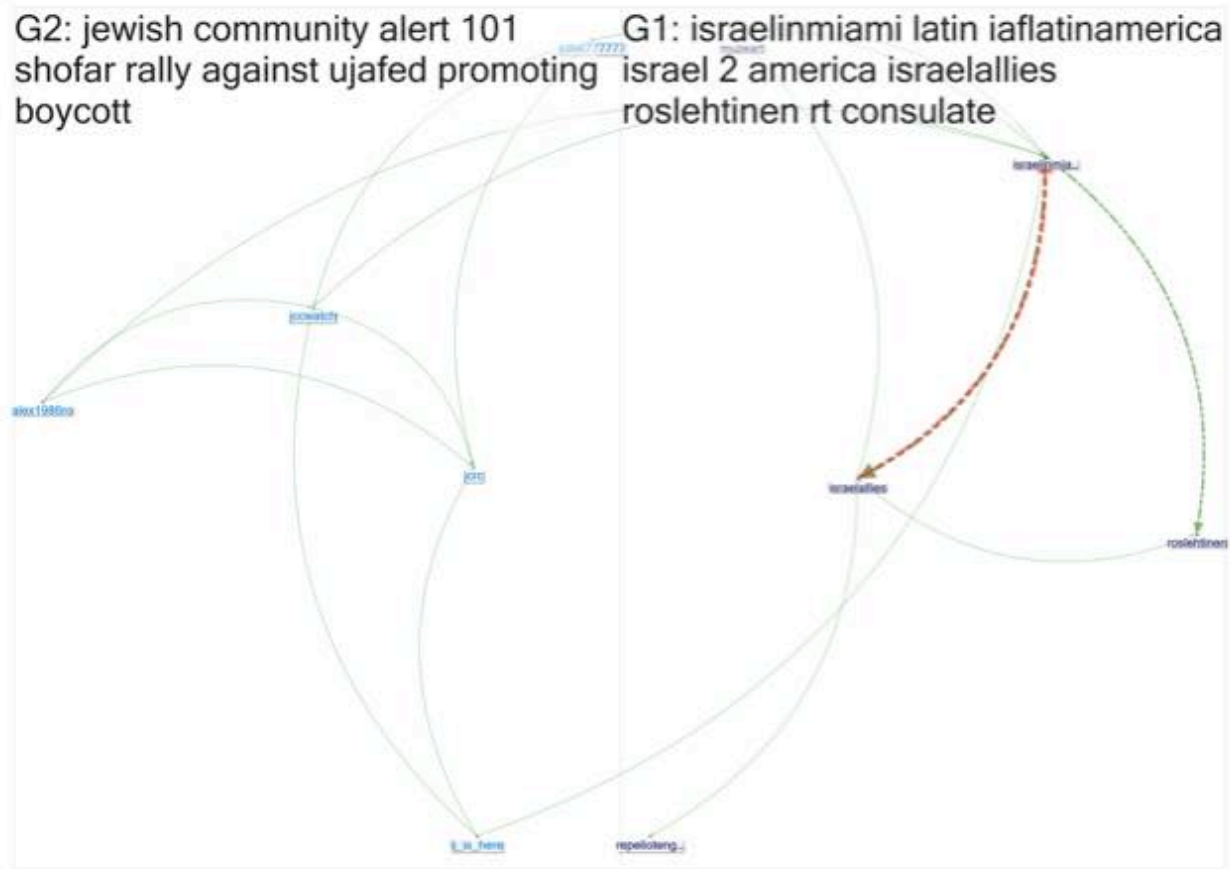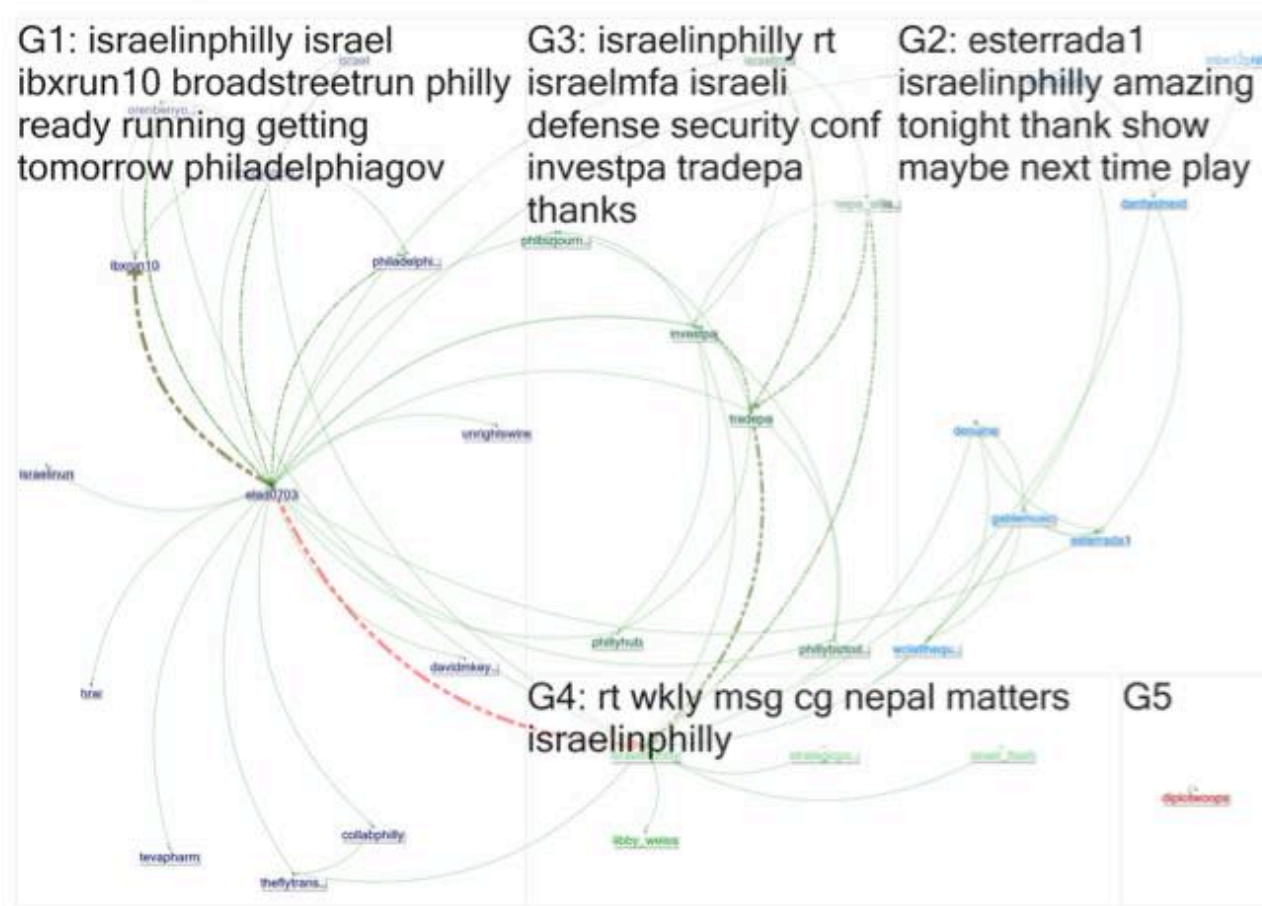
Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com) from the Social Media Research Foundation (http://www.smrfoundation.org)

112

Figure 16: References to @IsraelinPhilly April 23-April 30, 2015

Figure 17: References to @IsraelinSF April 23-April 30, 2015

Assessing Bridging Capacity

Finally, analysis was conducted to ascertain the degree to which, overall, MFA Twitter accounts were referenced in larger discourse about Israel, and the extent to which they served as a bridge between disparate communities in this discourse (or filled a structural hole). In analyzing the most commonly used hashtag across all MFA accounts (#Israel), a network graph (Figure 18) was created for all content referencing #Israel over a 24 hour period on Twitter.

The only two MFA accounts that appeared in this larger discourse were the @IsraelMFA (primary MFA account run from Jerusalem) and @IsraelinUSA (the account associated with the Israeli embassy in Washington DC). @IsraelMFA did not bridge gaps between influential users in the network graph. They were positioned in the periphery of the network (G19, circled in red), lacking bridging capacity or influence and had only 7 references or mentions in the graph. Their betweenness centrality (the primary indicator of the degree to which they filled a structural hole) was 31394.858; this score is 255 times less than the highest in the network, 8023244.104.

@IsraelinUSA was also included in this network graph, but was only mentioned once by another user, and served no bridging capacity or influence; their betweenness centrality score was 0. None of the other MFA consulates in the US were present in the network graph. This is due to the fact that, though #Israel is the most often used hashtag by all consulates, the majority of regularly produced content by the consulates is regionally oriented material, not positioned or created for broad distribution into the

115

larger digital environment. This indicates that though some consulates had significant exchange networks in the sub-networks in which they were located, the MFA's entrée into larger discourses about Israel on Twitter is extremely limited. Programming of the network cannot occur where active redistribution of content does not occur.

Summary of Network Findings

These findings support the interview data by demonstrating that those consulates/embassies that are central to the bureaucracy are more guided by network logics in practice than consulates with narrower scopes and missions. The MFA headquarters in the United States and its headquarters in Jerusalem represented the most active communication exchange on Twitter and had the greatest number of disparate connections in various sub-communities. None of the accounts sampled served significant bridging functions in their communication networks on Twitter. This case study has demonstrated that Israeli embassies/consulates situate themselves strategically in sub-networks of interest, making connections with key nodes in the American governmental establishment, United Nations, journalistic communities, and Israeli communities. Finally, concerning information exchange, it is telling that analyses of latest tweets for users in their follower networks and those they follow include very few mentions or replies from within the sampling period. While one can follow influential nodes on Twitter (or any other platform), having interaction and redistribution of content is a more concrete demonstration of greater influence. Israeli diplomatic accounts are often isolates in the midst of various communities, producing content that is often not

widely redistributed. Using the frameworks demonstrated in Castells' model, the degree

of networked power Israel holds on Twitter is not substantial

Figure 18: Lack of MFA presence in discourse about #Israel
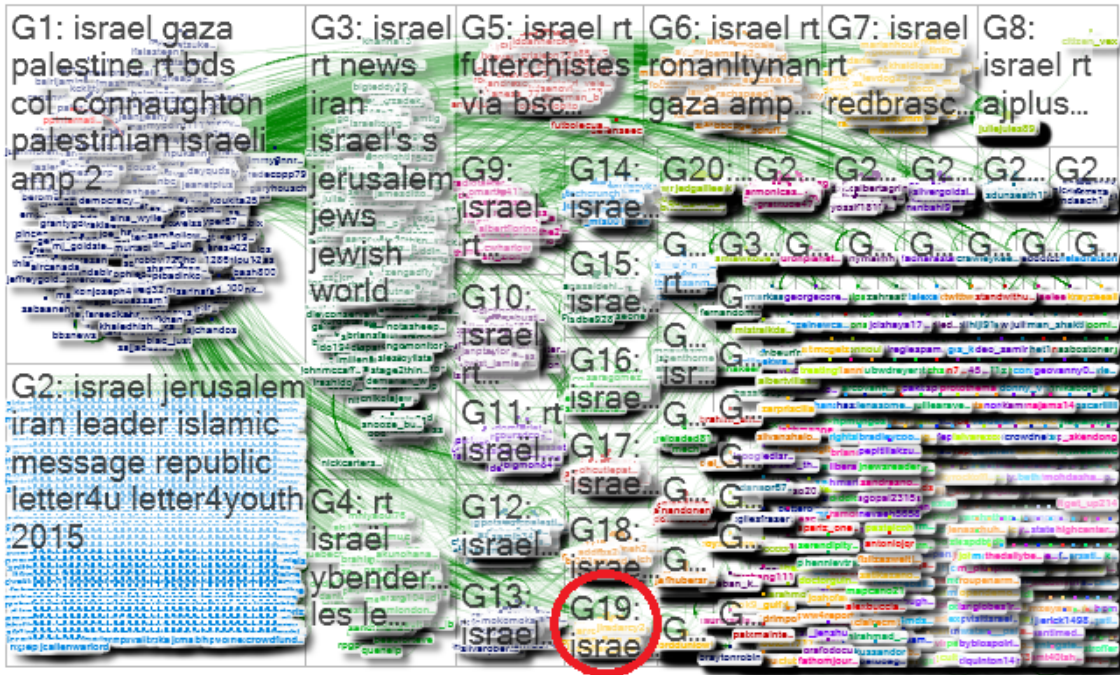
CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the framework generated in this study to assess power in state digital diplomacy efforts can provide a means to define and measure influence in state-driven Web 2.0 activities. Specifically, the results indicate that the nature and degree of networking practices on digital platforms can be translated into an additional measure for state power beyond the hard power/soft power constructs. In the case of Israeli digital diplomacy, the results indicate that the degree to which network logics guide both strategy and practice is dependent upon position within the diplomatic bureaucracy. Central nodes to the organization (primarily Washington DC and Jerusalem) have networked logics guiding their formation of latent connections on Twitter as well as active connection and engagement with those users. However, the majority of consulates (each given narrow and limited diplomatic mandates) were less guided by networked approaches to digital strategy, and instead defaulted to mass-mediated understandings and uses of Web 2.0 platforms. Network analysis revealed that despite being connected (in most cases) to a variety of disparate sub-networks and key nodes in the digital environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was not a frequently referenced node in the networks into which they were connected, particularly by influential nodes in those sub-communities. These trends indicate that they are operating from a position of counterpower on Twitter. The following sections provide

further discussion of the theoretical contributions these findings provide to the study of digital diplomacy at large and for the study of Israeli digital diplomacy in particular.

Theoretical Extension of Communication Power for Digital Diplomacy

This project extended Castells' theory of communication power by providing specific operational definitions for the constructs of the theory in the realm of digital diplomacy. The frameworks developed in this study to assess digital diplomacy activity using interviews and using network analysis were useful analytical tools that can be applied in other state diplomacy studies. Discussion of each of the frameworks and their contributions is found below.

The framework developed for qualitative exploration of networked practices was useful in identifying programming and switching practices. Participants were able to both describe the nature of the content they generated on digital platforms and its place in the larger communication environment. For example, MFA attempts to expand conversation about Israel beyond mainstream discourse centered on the conflict enabled an identification of competing narratives in the digital environment. This method of comparison of self-generated discourse with broader discourse is a useful indicator of the extent to which states are (or are not) participating in dominant discourses. Castells' concepts of ideas, visions, projects and frames that defined the nature of digital content were the least theoretically useful dimensions of the framework. With a lack of clear operationalization of the differences between the terms by Castells, participants' discussion of content often fit more than one of the categories. The ways in which switching practices were operationalized in this framework was also useful, in that

120

participants' discussion of the communities to which they were connected highlighted the extent to which key nodes were included in their digital diplomacy strategy. The MFA focus on warm audiences indicated a lack of engagement with networked logics prioritizing nodal engagement over engagement with mass publics.

The framework developed for network analysis of digital diplomacy practices also provided concrete operationalization of programming and switching activity. Proposition 1 (powerful states possess the possibility for active exchange in the communication environment) and Proposition 3 (powerful states create messages that are redistributed by key nodes) had the most support in the network data. Network graphs demonstrated that the MFA was not positioned in close proximity to influential nodes on Twitter, such that possibility for active exchange was not present. Network graphs also demonstrated a small number of edges for most MFA accounts, indicating a lack of redistribution of messages by key nodes (or most users) on Twitter for the MFA. Proposition 2 demonstrated a need for further operational development, as betweenness centrality measures were not always conclusive in demonstrating true state position between key nodes on Twitter. Overall, though, the framework provided a means to identify the constructs of programming and switching through specific networking behaviors on Twitter.

The Case of Israeli Digital Diplomacy

This case study used the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to explore the dynamics of networked activity in digital diplomacy strategy and practice. In the Israeli case, the findings from this study demonstrated competing narratives within the MFA.

Key nodes in the organization (primarily Washington DC and Jerusalem) had network

logics guiding their content creation and activity on digital platforms. They articulated a

need for connections with key nodes in disparate networks, and valued those connections

often over raw follower counts. They implemented this strategy in practice as evidenced

by dense and active communication networks on Twitter. However, for participants

located in consulates, those logics failed to guide strategy or practice in the majority of

cases. Consulates, which were much more geographically confined in their outreach

efforts, typically focused on building regional communities, and only expressed a

general goal to connect with and engage key nodes of influence during interviews. For

most, these goals were not realized, as evidenced in network analysis of their Twitter

activity. Lack of personnel and resources was one of the primary constraints to the

further development of digital strategy that moved beyond the mass media logic of

building the largest audiences possible.

In this respect, the MFA is likely following the predominant organizing logic for

many other foreign ministries. The goal to build large audiences with a lack of

perspective of larger networked dynamics is one that has been present in the US State

Department's approach to community formation in recent years (Chinn, 2011); as the

standard bearer for other foreign ministries, these metrics have likely been adopted by

others.

In terms of activity and impact in the digital environment, network analysis

revealed that the Israeli MFA operated from a position of counterpower on Twitter,

whereby content created did not conform to prevailing discourses about Israel, nor was it

widely redistributed. The data sampled indicated that broader attempts to program digital networks lacked widespread impact, indicating that the MFA lacks existing power resources in the network, but is instead bringing in counter-perspectives, or operating from a position of counterpower. While the majority of consulates had a significant degree of latent connections on Twitter, active relationships with those followers (or the broader Twitter community) were limited. This was evidenced by the fact that consulates and embassies were not referenced in active reply or mention dialogues on Twitter. One of the rationales for the use of Twitter by governments is the ability to have immediacy in engagement with narratives emerging from key journalistic and governmental nodes. Another is the ability to respond and engage with foreign publics. One of the best metrics for immediacy and engagement is an active mention or reply community (boyd et al., 2010). The majority of Israeli consulates in the United States did not have active mention or reply networks.

Finally, one dimension that became apparent both in conversations about MFA strategy and in observation of their practice on Twitter was the notion of audience. The MFA did not invest a great deal of time attempting to penetrate the networks that typically criticized them, demonstrating instead a focus on either supporters or those in the middle ground that lacked strong feelings about Israel or Israeli policy. Their approach to network building and network maintenance was to reinforce their existing networks, rather than forming new ones or counterprogramming those in opposition. Digital *hasbara* focused largely on shoring up existing foundations, instead of reprogramming networks, save nascent efforts to this effect in the Prime Minister's

Office. As a result, their position in the diplomatic, non-governmental and journalistic communities was largely lacking in influence in the networked environment.

The following section explores the implications for this type of classification and analysis for the field of digital diplomacy at large, including in practice and in pedagogy.

Diplomacy as a Social Science: Towards A New Diplomatic Pedagogy and Practice

Digital diplomacy has the potential to become a social science with accompanying theory, analytical constructs and measurement tools. This study has proposed an applicable framework whereby digital diplomacy can be understood in terms of its possibilities for influence in the digital environment. With theoretical propositions that can be both demonstrated and measured, the framework developed in this study is one that can be used by both instructors and practitioners in the field.

Instruction in digital diplomacy most often comes by virtue of any training received in the practice of public diplomacy. Most of the theoretical grounding in public diplomacy pedagogy is found in the public relations literature. To build on this foundation, curriculum on the structure of the network society, networked practices and networked diplomacy could be implemented into digital diplomacy training programs. Introducing students of digital diplomacy to the networked logics explored in this study (i.e. tracking redistribution and adoption of a particular concept or language used by a state on digital platforms) would facilitate a shift in practice away from mass communication logics guiding the use of Web 2.0 platforms. Instead of a focus on metrics to assess the use of these platforms that are essentially analogues to those used in mass media environments (number of followers, number of likes, or even number of

retweets), students would be equipped to note, visualize and analyze the larger impact of practices in the digital environment. Taking a networked approach to influence lends itself to a shift in thinking for strategists and practitioners. Transnational connections are most impactful when they are active; the edges produced in the network graphs in this study were revealing in terms of demonstrating the lack of active reference relationships for the MFA.

Practitioners can implement the approaches used in this study to measure the impact of digital diplomacy efforts. Practitioners of both public and digital diplomacy are in a constant search for measures of effectiveness and impact to provide rationale for the continuance and expansion of their efforts. Current measures often fail to accurately account for true impact in the digital environment. While reporting follower, like and retweet counts provides some utility in examining the impact of digital efforts, they lack depth in terms of telling practitioners the impact of those activities in the larger networked environment, and betray a simplistic view of digital influence. The ability to visualize one's position in a network, the extent to which consulate messaging permeates a network, and the extent to which that language is adopted by key nodes in a network is invaluable data. Castells' discussion of power and this study's extrapolation of those constructs into the realm of digital diplomacy provide specific metrics whereby embassies can measure digital impact apart from traditional means. Embassies can physically see where they are positioned in sub-networks on social media platforms, and can also see the extent to which they bring disparate nodes in those communities into closer communication.

Limitations

This project began a preliminary examination of networked influence on a particular platform (Twitter) in a particular geopolitical context (Israeli outreach to the US). As one of the two predominant platforms used in digital diplomacy efforts on the part of most states (Facebook being the other platform), the selection of Twitter for analysis was appropriate. However, different states place different emphases on different platforms; thus, future research should explore networked dynamics on platforms in addition to Twitter, such as Facebook and Weibo.

The focus on Israeli digital diplomacy efforts in the United States was bounded from a number of perspectives. First, it was bounded in terms of individuals sampled. While key strategists in the Israeli digital diplomacy establishment comprised a majority of the interview sample for this study, their reflections can still not be generalized to the entire population. The small sample size could mean that other perspectives on Israeli digital diplomacy efforts were not accounted for in this study. Second, it was bounded in terms of geographic scope. Given that recent journalistic and governmental narratives have circulated describing an impaired relationship between the United States and Israel, US-based digital diplomacy efforts were examined to explore the nature of these dynamics in the networked environment. However, future research should expand to other diplomatic outposts around the globe for Israel. Third, the focus on Israeli efforts was not performed in conjunction with particular events of diplomatic significance. For example, the majority of analysis in this study was conducted prior to Benjamin Netanyahu's March 3, 2015 speech to Congress. High-profile events of that nature affect

both content and networked logics used and should be accounted for in future study design and analysis.

Future Directions

Despite their seeming operation from a position of counterpower on Twitter, Israel has still benefited from network logics in other domains. In fact, much of the national narrative emphasizes its role in unique networks. For example, the nation brands itself as "the only democratic nation in the Middle East," and uses this narrative to connect with key networks in the United States and Europe. The nation also emphasizes its technologically advanced society, branding itself as a high-tech nation, and has fostered relationships with other technologically savvy countries and corporations. Obviously, the nation also positions itself as a key US ally, and uses this relationship to its advantage often. Thus, in other geopolitical and economic networks, they potentially operate from a more dominant position. Future work should further operationalize network power in other domains.

Future work should also apply the framework and propositions developed in this study to other states. A natural extension would be to apply the framework to other middle states in similar geopolitical position to Israel, such as Qatar. As discussed previously, Qatar shares similarities to Israel in terms of its small size yet significant geopolitical weight. It also exercises aggressive regional and international diplomacy using traditional statecraft (Kamrava, 2013), and through mass media hubs, such as Al Jazeera (Da Lage, 2005). The approach developed in this study to assess networked power can be applied to the Qatari case, as well as other nations, to ascertain presence on

127

Twitter or other social networks, and the nature of both latent and active relations on the platform.

As alluded to previously, this study has demonstrated one way in which networked geopolitical power can be enacted, but given that network structures permeate society, there are other ways in which this form of power can be exercised by states. This study focused on a particular context in which it is enacted, through the digital diplomacy initiatives of a nation. However, this framework could be expanded upon by operationalizing other types of networked communication behaviors that equate to influence. This study has focused upon a particular sub-network (Twitter), but there are other sub-networks upon which influence and narrative-shaping occur. Future work should explore ways in which this framework could be expanded to include other platforms and actors, as this type of analysis could also be conducted for non-state actors.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This dissertation extended Castells' (2009) "communication power" construct
into a framework to assess influence in digital diplomacy efforts. Israeli digital
diplomacy was used as a specific national case to explore how states do (or do not)
appropriate networked logics in practice on Web 2.0 platforms. The developed
framework was tested in two ways. First, interviews were conducted with practitioners
of Israeli digital diplomacy to identify how both their strategy and Web 2.0
communication behaviors did (or did not) exemplify aspects of communication power.
Second, a network analysis of their activity on Twitter was conducted to explore where
they were positioned within key networks on Twitter, and the extent to which they drew
disparate communities closer into an active discourse on content aligned with their goals.

The results indicate that Castells' framework provides a theoretical foundation
enabling examination of digital diplomacy activities and their implications for
geopolitics. Specifically, the results indicate that the nature and degree of networking
practices on digital platforms can be translated into an additional measure for state
power beyond hard power.

In the case of Israeli digital diplomacy, the results indicate that the degree to
which network logics guide both strategy and practice is dependent on geographic
location. Central nodes to the organization, primarily Washington DC and Jerusalem,
had networked logics guiding their formation of community on Twitter, and engagement

with those communities. The majority of consulates sampled were less guided by this approach to digital strategy, and defaulted to mass-mediated understandings and uses of Web 2.0 platforms. Network analysis revealed that despite being connected (in most cases) to a variety of disparate sub-networks and key nodes in the digital environment, the MFA was not a frequently referenced node in the networks into which they were connected, particularly by influential nodes in those sub-communities. These trends indicate that they are operating from a position of counterpower on Twitter.

Recommendations for Greater Influence

This analysis has demonstrated two ways in which fostering influence can occur in a digital network. While many foreign ministries establish presence on a particular platform, they often stop there, or produce content in such a way that it lacks impact in the larger digital environment. This was largely the case for the MFA on Twitter, though key nodes in the organization had slightly larger impact. In order to increase networked power, consulates in the MFA should first begin tapping into larger discourses circulating about Israel in the digital environment by adopting commonly used hashtags in content production (#Israel,, #Iran, #Gaza, #Palestine, etc.). Hashtag utilization should be coupled with tweets aligned with the MFA's diplomatic goals; this provides an important start towards influence by introducing MFA content into larger discourses about Israel on Twitter. To reach adoption and redistribution, the MFA must first be present and visible in these conversations.

To begin this process, the MFA should specify discourses circulating in various sub-networks of the larger Twittersphere and adopt content that aligns with their goals in

those spaces. For example, discourses desiring regional civil liberties circulating in secular and intellectual Arab audiences in the Middle East should be ones in which Israel emphasizes the civil liberties enjoyed by Israeli citizens in juxtaposition to other states in the region. Conversations on Twitter desiring greater democracy in the region could be ones in which Israel emphasizes their status as the only democracy in the Middle East. For Twitter, hashtag utilization is crucial as a means to tap into larger discourses on the platform concerning those topics. It is in this manner, much like Qatar's Al Jazeera, that Israel can emphasize unity of perspective across audiences in specific geographic regions, and in other strategic parts of the network. Unifying the network in terms of common ideals, goals and narratives is a way in which the network can be programmed to support MFA diplomatic goals.

The other advantage of this approach is that it enables the MFA to be positioned in wider discursive spaces than solely in "warm audiences". Currently, the primary spaces in which MFA content is redistributed are within existing areas of support in their follower networks. While audience segmentation is often more pronounced in vast digital networks (Lotan, 2014), the use of broadly adopted hashtags coupled with MFA content enables the possibility for broader exposure beyond existing networks of support on Twitter (and on other platforms).

Towards A Networked Diplomacy

As noted earlier in this study, digital diplomacy is often positioned within the larger conceptual framework of public diplomacy. However, this conflation has been shown to be problematic given that the logics guiding public diplomacy are typically

131

rooted in mass media theory. Using a theoretical framework that is rooted in the logic of the network enables the study of digital diplomacy to take place not only in its own right, but in a theoretical context enabling its enrichment and advancement as a sub-field of study. Scholars studying digital diplomacy efforts can use the dimensions of Castells' logic to model a number of specific dimensions of power in the networked environment, including at the very least, 1) content created by states, 2) latent relations fostered by states and 3) active relations fostered by states in the networked environment. In particular, state content created for digital platforms could be identified and then mapped in the larger digital environment to explore the extent to which it is, at the least, referenced within the network, and at best, appropriated in a transformative manner.

The framework developed in this study has provided a mechanism to model the communication environment for digital diplomacy as a specific networked structure where influence operates in concrete terms. The constructs used provided a rationale for thinking about sub-networks as entities in and of themselves. This approach has already gained some traction in the literature. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) conceive of networks as "flexible organizations in themselves, often enabling coordinated adjustments and rapid action aimed at often shifting political targets, even crossing geographic and temporal boundaries in the process" (p. 753). Diani (2011) makes a similar argument in conceiving of networks as physical structures. Using this approach to conceive of networks as structures suggests a means to operationalize power and influence within those structures.

Doing so will provide researchers with insights into state activity in networked structures from a number of perspectives. Whereas soft power is notoriously difficult to account for, network data (e.g. digital content created by states, the latent relations fostered by states, active relations fostered by states in the networked environment, etc.) can be compiled and accounted for, just as a nation's hard power resources are (economic purchasing power, the number of tanks and guns a nation possess, etc.). "Networked geopolitical power" can be measured, and could provide empirical evidence of state resources, along with current measures, such as "Internet use" and "Internet penetration". This enables researchers to not only examine what content is created by states, but also to utilize more macro-level approaches to visualize and understand the impact of that content in the larger digital environment.

The extension of Castells' construct developed in this study also accounts for transnational activity in a way that speaks to *geo*-politics. Having an ability to visually map the degree to which states engage in active messaging with nodes located in disparate *physical geographies* is an important analytic tool. Using this approach, analysts can visualize the physical and networked spaces in which states (or other nodes) are having the greatest impact, or in which they lack any degree of serious penetration.

This study has shown that states with substantive digital influence are those who have active communication exchange with a variety of key nodes in a network who adopt and redistribute state discourse in their respective sub-communities. Within the Israeli context, this study has assessed their digital diplomacy activity across these dimensions and found influence to be lacking on this platform. The findings demonstrate

that while networked logics guide how practitioners in the Israeli MFA conceptualize the online environment (to a certain extent), those principles only bear out partially in practice. Despite presence on various Web 2.0 platforms and widespread *latent* connections on Twitter, they failed to register significant influence in the networks of which they were a part. This was due to the fact that programming of the network could not occur where active communication exchange and redistribution was absent.

The field of digital diplomacy is in a state of expansion, with growing numbers of practitioners and scholars dedicated to its advancement. This dedication has followed a digital emphasis in all realms of society. As Anne-Marie Slaughter (2009) describes it, we live in a society in which nearly every domain is networked:

> We live in a networked world. War is networked…Diplomacy is networked…Business is networked…Media are networked…Society is networked…Even religion is networked…[And] in this world, the measure of power is connectedness.

Given this shift, one of the most critical needs for the field of diplomacy is an expansion of its theoretical foundations. This study has developed a framework whereby digital diplomacy activity can be understood using logics native to its environment. Applying the communication power construct to the study of digital diplomacy provides scholars in the field a networked approach to conceiving of state (and non-state) communication behaviors, and a much-needed alternative theoretical tool to soft power when conceptualizing influence.

One of the primary contributions of this study is the provision of tools for us to conceptualize digital diplomacy as a social science. The study has provided a means to conceptualize the impact of online communication behaviors for states by identifying the

extent to which the content is adopted and distributed throughout their networks of interest on social media platforms. Power and influence have specific behaviors and outcomes within a network to which they are tied. Is the state able to generate, diffuse and affect the discourses that frame larger network discourses about them? Are they able to *connect* disparate networks to adopt a common language in reference to their culture and policies? These questions are able to be specified and measured in various Web 2.0 environments. This study focused on expressed strategy assessed through interviews and actual practice on one particular platform (Twitter), but the building blocks of this framework can be developed and used to measure influence in a variety of other Web 2.0 environments. Digital diplomacy practices span a variety of areas; this framework could be expanded to explore and measure other forms of state networked activity, providing the building blocks needed to further approach its study as a recognized social science.

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APPENDIX A

ASSESSING NETWORKED DIPLOMACY USING INTERVIEWS

- **Programming:** To what extent are Israeli diplomats able to generate, diffuse and affect the discourses that frame global public opinion concerning Israel?
  o *Generation:*
    ▪ Can they list key **ideas** that guide discourse concerning Israel in the public sphere?
      • If yes, do they operate within these common ideas?
    ▪ Can they list key **visions** that guide discourse concerning Israel in the public sphere?
      • If yes, do they adhere to these visions?
    ▪ Can they list key **projects** that guide actors' practice for Israeli-focused digital content?
      • Do they participate in these projects?
    ▪ Can they list key **frames** that guide Israeli-focused content on digital platforms?
      • If yes, what are they?
  o *Diffusion:*
    ▪ To what extent do Israel's diplomats position themselves and their digital content within the following discursive networks?
      • Diplomatic networks
      • Al Jazeera
      • NGOs such as the United Nations, or other organizations such as AIPAC, CUFI, #IsraelUnderFire, and others.
  o *Impact:*
    ▪ To what extent are these discourses adopted by the previously listed nodes in the network?

- **Switching:** To what extent are Israeli diplomats able to *connect* disparate networks to formulate a common language about Israel?
  o In what ways do they articulate their connections with key nodes in their particular network of national influence?
    ▪ Washington?
      • U.S. Government
        o Key officials
        o Key institutions
        o Key lobbying organizations
        o NGOs
    ▪ Cairo?
      • Centers of Islamic theology

- o Al Azhar University
  - ▪ Doha?
    - • Al Jazeera
  - ▪ Jerusalem?
- o Are they able to connect these key nodes on digital platforms?
- **Power**
  - o Do Israeli diplomats conceptualize their global standing as an advantaged one? (yes or no)
    - ▪ Why?
    - ▪ What impact does this have on DD strategy?
  - o Do Israeli diplomats perceive that global players view Israel as advantaged?
    - ▪ Why?
    - ▪ What impact does this have on DD strategy?

- **Counterpower**
  - o Do Israeli diplomats conceptualize their global standing as a disadvantaged one? (Yes or no)
    - ▪ Why?
    - ▪ What impact does this have on DD strategy?
  - o Do Israeli diplomats perceive that global players view Israel as disadvantaged?
    - ▪ Why?
    - ▪ What impact does this have on DD strategy?

APPENDIX B

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND THE LOGIC OF THE NETWORK: INTERVIEW

PROTOCOL

1) There are a lot of actors producing a lot of content about Israel online. How would you describe online discourse about Israel right now?
    a. Are there any particular "rules of the game" as it were, when producing content?
2) Who are the primary actors producing content?
    a. Do you work with any of these groups on a regular basis?
    b. What kinds of relationships do you have with them?
3) Who are your target audiences in your digital diplomacy program?
    a. How do you think they come to their belief about Israel?
4) How do you decide what content to focus on and post on various platforms?
    a. To what extent does current online discourse influence your decision-making on content?
5) Before we conclude, I wanted to ask about a few specific cases that you've handled as an organization in the online sphere.
    a. The first case I wanted to ask about was your experiences producing online content for the 2012 Operation Pillar of Defense.
        i. What content did you focus on producing and why?
        ii. For example, there were a series of videos depicting rocket fire in the south of Israel. Can you speak to your organization's strategy for producing online content during this time?
    b. The second case I wanted to ask about was your experiences producing online content for the 2014 Operation Protective Edge.
        i. What content did you focus on producing and why?
        ii. Were there particular actors you sought to make connections with online to promote the Israeli perspective?
        iii. Specifically, any Arab language outlets? Al Jazeera or others?
6) 'Last, considering the work you do on a daily basis, are there terms or ideas you use that we've missed in our conversation?

APPENDIX C

ASSESSING NETWORKED DIPLOMACY USING NETWORK ANALYSIS

Proposition	Operationalization	Measure
1. Powerful states have the possibility for active communication exchange with nodes in various sub-communities.	Network graph demonstrates the state is positioned in close proximity to key nodes in various sub-communities.	Measured by geodesic distance between state and key nodes in a network graph.
2. Powerful states serve as bridges between key nodes in various sub-communities (switching).	Network graph demonstrates the state is positioned between key nodes in various sub-communities (serves as a bridge).	Measured using betweenness centrality of the state in the network, with high betweenness indicating greater bridging capacity.
3. Powerful states create messages that are redistributed by key nodes (programming the network).	Network graphs demonstrate active communicative relationships, with connections redistributing content into the larger communication environment.	Measured by multiple edges in the network graph that demonstrate information exchange and redistribution.