

DIPLOMACY IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

Technological development is considered one of the key determining factors of change and progress in society. Diplomacy, as an important instrument of interaction among societies, has also evolved under the influence of technological advancement and has been directly affected by these processes. Academic literature acknowledges that throughout the historical development of diplomacy, it has continuously transformed and improved under the impact of technological innovations. From this perspective, it is logically assumed that artificial intelligence, recognized today as one of the most significant technologies, will also have a substantial impact on diplomatic processes. This article analyzes the influence of artificial intelligence technologies on the field of diplomacy.

Keywords

artificial intelligence, international relations, diplomacy.

Introduction

Throughout history, technological progress has played a decisive role in shaping social development and transformation. Over time, a close and strong connection has been formed between diplomacy, which serves as a key instrument of intersocietal communication, and technology. Academic literature recognizes that technological advancements have influenced diplomacy, altering both its substance and methods of implementation. It is noted that diplomacy evolved alongside major technological breakthroughs, from the expansion of railway networks to the invention of the telegraph.

From this perspective, it appears logically grounded to assume that artificial intelligence, recognized as one of the most important technologies of the modern world, will also exert a significant influence on diplomacy. The primary objective of this article is to analyze the impact of artificial intelligence technologies—already producing notable effects in fields ranging from education to healthcare and from healthcare to security—on diplomatic processes [1].

Within the scope of these impacts, the article examines how artificial intelligence is entering the diplomatic agenda, the extent to which it is transforming the environment in which diplomacy is conducted, and how it can be utilized as a tool in diplomatic functions. Accordingly, the article first briefly reviews the concept of diplomacy, followed by an overview of the emergence of artificial intelligence and scholarly definitions of the term. The third section, which constitutes the core of the article, provides a detailed analysis of the topic “Diplomacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence” based on the aforementioned impacts.

The Concept of Diplomacy

The origin of the term “diplomacy” can be traced back to the Greek language. In Ancient Greece, the term *diploma*, meaning “folded in two,” was used to refer to officially folded documents granting certain rights and privileges to their holders. The French word *diplomat*, derived from this root, was used in the eighteenth century to describe a person conducting negotiations on behalf of a state. The term “diplomacy” entered academic discourse during the same period. In 1796, the Irish-English philosopher Edmund Burke used the term for the first time.

Today, various sources and scholars offer diverse definitions of diplomacy. It is commonly defined as the set of treaties regulating international relations, the activity and art of representing one's country in foreign states and international conferences, the duties and profession of individuals engaged in this activity, and the collective body of those performing such functions.

Within the field of international relations, numerous definitions of diplomacy exist, yet one of the most frequently cited belongs to Hedley Bull. He defines diplomacy as "the conduct of relations between states and other entities participating in world politics by official representatives and by peaceful means." Based on this definition, diplomacy can be understood in its broadest sense as the process of conducting international relations through peaceful means [2].

From this standpoint, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of diplomacy and foreign policy. These terms are often confused and used interchangeably. While foreign policy refers to a state's activities aimed at realizing its objectives and interests in the international arena, diplomacy denotes the processes and methods through which these activities are carried out.

Although the concept of diplomacy has a history spanning several centuries, its practical roots date back to ancient times. Diplomatic relations emerged as communities entered into interactions with others over matters such as marriage and trade. Although comprehensive historical records from early periods are limited, it is assumed that such interactions existed and that certain diplomatic practices were undertaken.

One of the earliest written treaties in history, concluded between the Egyptians and the Hittites following the Battle of Kadesh in the thirteenth century BCE, represents a remarkable example of ancient diplomacy. Diplomatic practices are also believed to have existed in Ancient Greece, a civilization of significant importance in international relations studies. Elements of diplomatic relations can be observed in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as well as in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The fact that Ancient Greece consisted of numerous small city-states facilitated the systematic development of diplomacy in the region [3].

Diplomatic activities were also present during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Similarly, diplomatic practices emerged within the civilizations of the Middle East. Treaties concluded among tribes during the early years of Islam and envoys dispatched to various regions for the purpose of spreading Islam serve as prominent examples of diplomatic practice in this area.

Diplomacy in the Modern Sense

Modern diplomacy emerged in Europe during the Renaissance period. Around the fifteenth century, the relatively autonomous city-states of Renaissance Italy systematized diplomatic practices and shaped them into a modern form. As diplomatic activities intensified among Italian city-states, the institution of permanent (resident) embassies emerged and later spread to other regions. The so-called "Italian system," recognized as the earliest model of modern diplomacy, remained in effect until 1648.

The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648 and comprising a series of treaties that ended the Thirty Years' War, marked a major turning point in the history of modern diplomacy. With the emergence of a system based on sovereign states in Europe, diplomacy became closely linked to the pursuit of national interests. Following this period, diplomacy developed through various stages and gradually acquired an institutional character.

The new diplomatic approach that began with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, convened after the Napoleonic Wars, eventually evolved into its present institutional form through

initiatives undertaken after the First and Second World Wars. In this regard, the League of Nations established after World War I and the United Nations founded in 1946 after World War II represent significant milestones in the history of modern diplomacy, as they institutionalized multilateral participation beyond bilateral relations among states [4].

A crucial step in the institutional and professional development of diplomacy was taken in 1961. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, adopted at a conference held under the auspices of the United Nations, established clear rules governing diplomatic relations among sovereign states, thereby granting diplomacy a professional status. The Convention also defined the main functions of diplomatic missions, including:

Representing the sending state;

Protecting the interests of the sending state and its nationals in the receiving state within the limits permitted by international law;

Negotiating with the government of the receiving state;

Ascertaining conditions and developments in the receiving state by lawful means and reporting thereon;

Promoting friendly relations between the sending and receiving states and developing economic, commercial, cultural, and scientific relations.

As diplomacy evolved historically and acquired an institutional foundation by the mid-twentieth century, the most significant innovations and scholarly debates in this field emerged in the twenty-first century. Rapid developments in information and communication technologies have had a noticeable impact on diplomacy, as they have on all aspects of social life. The opening of the internet to individual users in the 1990s and its widespread adoption since the 2000s brought about substantial changes in diplomatic practice. Diplomacy, fundamentally based on communication and interaction, entered an entirely new phase as a result of the widespread use of internet technologies [5].

Today, the concept of digital diplomacy—defined as “the use of the internet, information and communication technologies, and social media in conducting diplomatic activities and achieving foreign policy objectives”—reflects the transformation of diplomacy in the twenty-first century. Alongside digital diplomacy, terms such as e-diplomacy and cyber diplomacy are also used. Whether digital diplomacy constitutes a new and independent form of diplomacy remains a subject of academic debate. While some scholars recognize it as a new type of diplomacy, others argue that it should be regarded as a branch of public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy, interpreted as a means by which states and non-state actors seek to understand cultures, attitudes, and behaviors, manage relationships, and influence public opinion, is not a new concept. However, interest in public diplomacy has increased significantly in recent years due to rapid developments in mass media and communication technologies. This clearly demonstrates the close relationship between technology and diplomacy.

As a key factor driving societal development and transformation, technology continues to influence diplomacy, constantly reshaping it. Debates surrounding digital diplomacy further illustrate the growing impact of technology on diplomacy. From this perspective, the notion that artificial intelligence—recognized today as one of the most important technologies—will significantly influence and transform diplomacy emerges as a scientifically grounded and timely proposition.

Digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence-based solutions, are making important contributions to consular services, communication in emergency situations, and public diplomacy. Although traditional diplomacy conducted through representatives between sovereign states remains relevant, digital technologies have enabled not only states but also individuals and non-governmental organizations to become increasingly active participants in

diplomatic processes. As a result of the recent digital revolution, the role of technology in diplomacy has expanded dramatically, further strengthening the interaction between these two domains [6].

Artificial intelligence, which has driven profound changes across a wide range of fields from economics to healthcare, is undoubtedly exerting a significant impact on diplomacy as well. As noted, artificial intelligence is a general-purpose technology that, much like electricity, enhances and facilitates various processes. As an “umbrella technology” encompassing diverse methods and practices, artificial intelligence is therefore expected to have multifaceted effects on diplomacy.

Similarly, considering the current and future impacts of artificial intelligence in areas closely linked to diplomacy, such as military activities, the relationship between artificial intelligence and diplomacy is unlikely to be one-dimensional. Accordingly, reports prepared to better understand this relationship propose examining the issue across three main dimensions: artificial intelligence as a diplomatic subject, artificial intelligence as a factor shaping the environment in which diplomacy is conducted, and artificial intelligence as a diplomatic tool. This distinction is considered useful for accurately understanding the relationship between these two concepts.

Artificial Intelligence as a Diplomatic Subject

The widespread integration of artificial intelligence technologies, from household appliances to military equipment and weapons, has altered the nature of existing issues and introduced new questions and challenges to the diplomatic agenda. In areas critical to diplomacy—such as conflict, trade, the environment, and security—the use of artificial intelligence has transformed these issues and generated new topics for diplomatic engagement. On the one hand, artificial intelligence is significantly affecting traditional diplomatic issues such as climate change and migration. On the other hand, new challenges related to the use of artificial intelligence itself are being added to the diplomatic agenda.

For example, ethical debates surrounding the use of fully autonomous armed unmanned systems have become one of the new agenda items of diplomacy. From this perspective, analyzing artificial intelligence as a diplomatic subject can be effectively approached through three main dimensions: economic, military, and social.

First and foremost, it should be noted that artificial intelligence is primarily being developed under the leadership of the private sector. AI technologies developed by private companies are creating new opportunities and prospects in the business sphere. Companies utilize these technologies to develop new products and enhance existing goods and services in various ways. For instance, autonomous production and delivery systems, as well as AI-based software solutions, reduce operational costs and increase trade volumes.

Moreover, consumers benefit from higher-quality services in numerous areas, including public services, retail, and healthcare, where artificial intelligence has been integrated. Consequently, artificial intelligence generates economic value for its users. States seeking to capitalize on these opportunities invest directly in artificial intelligence and make extensive use of products and services developed by the private sector. As a result, governments closely monitor technology companies and establish close cooperative relationships with them.

Some states have adopted innovative approaches in this regard. For example, Denmark appointed a special diplomat to Silicon Valley—one of the world’s largest technology hubs—in 2019. This initiative, described as the world’s first “tech embassy,” clearly demonstrates that diplomacy cannot remain detached from technological advancement [7].

While artificial intelligence creates economic opportunities, it also generates certain risks. The misuse of artificial intelligence and the issue of accountability represent some of the most significant concerns associated with this technology. Although AI systems have the potential to improve human life and service quality, they may also be exploited for harmful purposes. For example, biased AI systems can lead to discriminatory practices in judicial processes and similar activities.

The question of who bears responsibility for harm caused by artificial intelligence is one of the most pressing issues today. This matter is debated across various sectors and levels. Particularly with the increasing deployment of autonomous systems, accountability has become a crucial philosophical and legal challenge. Determining responsibility for damages caused by such systems remains contentious from normative and ethical perspectives and has yet to be fully resolved [8].

Furthermore, artificial intelligence technologies developed by the private sector grant considerable power to these companies. In particular, it is argued that U.S.-based companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft (GAFAM) possess significant advantages in the field of artificial intelligence due to the vast amounts of data they control. These concerns have also been voiced by certain state officials.

In summary, artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and risks from an economic standpoint. The growing role of technology companies and the emergence of new AI-related issues are turning artificial intelligence into a key area of diplomatic engagement. Beyond its economic significance, artificial intelligence also exerts a profound influence on security, particularly as it is expected to act as a “force multiplier” in military affairs.

Currently, artificial intelligence is being applied in various military domains, ranging from decision-making processes and intelligence gathering to robotic and autonomous systems. The military use of artificial intelligence directly affects national and international security—central concerns of diplomacy. As artificial intelligence increasingly occupies a critical position in states’ security architectures, it has the potential to alter the international balance of power.

AI-based security tools provide substantial advantages to the states that employ them. Consequently, each state seeks to leverage the military capabilities offered by this technology. This situation may significantly impact the international security environment. However, the use of artificial intelligence for security purposes also entails certain risks. One of the primary concerns is the ease with which non-state actors can access artificial intelligence technologies.

As a general-purpose and relatively inexpensive technology, artificial intelligence is accessible and convenient for non-state groups as well. In particular, the potential for terrorist organizations to carry out AI-supported attacks poses a serious threat to international security. As a result, the security agenda of diplomats—key actors in national and international security—is evolving, and the military application of artificial intelligence has become one of the most pressing issues within the diplomatic sphere [9].

Conclusion

Throughout history, economic, social, and political issues have been shaped by technological advancement. Technology represents one of the most important determinants of societal transformation and development. Diplomacy, which fundamentally arose from humanity’s need to protect societal interests and establish communication with other societies, has likewise evolved in close connection with technological progress. Today, artificial intelligence—one of the most significant technologies of our time, transforming education, finance, security, and many other fields—is also exerting a notable influence on diplomacy and its processes.

As discussed, the relationship between artificial intelligence and diplomacy was analyzed across three main dimensions. As a diplomatic subject, artificial intelligence is directly linked to a political agenda encompassing economic, military, and social issues. This technology is not only altering the substance of existing diplomatic challenges but is also introducing entirely new topics into the diplomatic agenda.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence possesses the capacity to shape the environment in which diplomacy is conducted. In particular, the application of artificial intelligence in the military domain influences diplomatic processes as a means of interstate communication and interaction through its actual and potential effects on the international system. In addition, artificial intelligence directly impacts diplomacy by being employed as a tool in diplomatic activities.

As highlighted in the analysis, artificial intelligence technologies can be utilized in performing certain functions of diplomatic missions and in diplomats' daily work. Although these technologies are currently applied in some areas, several diplomatic tasks remain unaffected by artificial intelligence at present.

In conclusion, diplomacy is undergoing a certain transformation in the age of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is entering the diplomatic agenda as a distinct subject, influencing the environment in which diplomatic activities take place, and serving as a tool in the execution of diplomatic functions. In the near future, the impact of this technology on diplomacy is expected to become even more pronounced. As a topic, as a factor shaping the diplomatic environment, and as a diplomatic tool, artificial intelligence will undoubtedly continue to occupy an increasingly important place on the diplomatic agenda.

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