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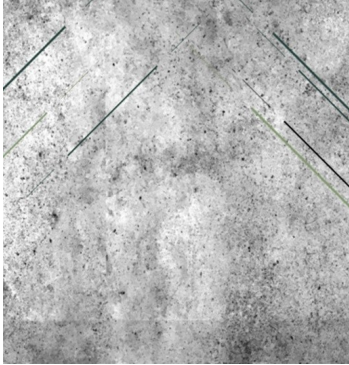## Volume 5, Number 2, 2025

Indonesia's Digital Diplomacy: An Analysis of Penta-Helix Collaborative

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Abstract

Digital diplomacy in Indonesia is run by a complicated governance structure that includes cooperation between government agencies and non-state actors. It mainly uses social media platforms and online media content to interact with audiences around the world, in contrast to traditional diplomacy, which depends on official state-to-state meetings. Through social media and other channel in internet, Indonesia actively used digital diplomacy to communicate with foreign entities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite its effectiveness during the pandemic, Indonesia's digital diplomacy governance is still largely unregulated and poorly understood. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Indonesian digital diplomacy ought to be managed with the participation of pertinent parties. The study investigates stakeholder dynamics in digital diplomacy using a qualitative methodology. It uses the penta-helix model of collaborative governance and the idea of digital diplomacy as its theoretical framework. Data triangulation is also used to improve the analysis's depth and dependability. In the end, the results indicate that both state and non-state actors should be a part of Indonesia's digital diplomacy governance, with the government serving as a catalyst and a regulator. The government is obligated to collaborate with the media, industry, academia, and civil society organizations (CSOs). MoFA's strategic planning for 2017 and 2020–2024, government collaboration with various businesses, university discussions on digital diplomacy (such as ITB, UGM and UI), FPCI's role as a CSO, and Kompas and the Jakarta Post's coverage of Indonesia's diplomatic interest are some examples of best practices in the country's digital diplomacy. However, the absence of comprehensive regulation remains a major obstacle to Indonesia's digital diplomacy. The study concludes by highlighting the necessity of a thorough and well-coordinated strategy that capitalizes on the advantages of each of the five penta-helix actors in order to improve the efficacy of digital diplomacy in a world that is becoming more and more digitalized.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance; Penta-Helix, Digital Diplomacy, Indonesia

Introduction

Digital diplomacy is part of a broader global trend where it is increasingly conducted through social media, artificial intelligence, and big data, allowing states to influence foreign publics, engage in soft diplomacy, and shape diplomatic strategies (Cerf, 2020; Reshetnikova & Samokhina, 2023). It is the technique of encoding social norms and hierarchies into visual representations, whereby diplomats utilize social media pictures to promote notions of international mediation and sovereign equality, strengthening conventional power systems (Møller et al., 2024) It means that Indonesia should tap social media and technology as an alternative in international relations. Even though this hybrid model keeps several traditional elements, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Indonesia mainly supports the flow of information and alignment with domestic goals through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. They want to make the country more well -known in the global digital discourse (Sari, 2021; Reshetnikova & Samokhina, 2023; Triwibowo, 2023a).

In the early days, there was a limited conception at first, followed by sporadic implementation, as these were couched in domestic imperatives like the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rohingya crisis, and palm oil, respectively (for further exploration (Triwibowo, 2023a). Indeed, Indonesia has been pursuing its goal to be a leader of the digital economy in Southeast Asia through ASEAN by investing in the development of digital infrastructure, pressing for digital inclusiveness, and encouraging regional collaboration by establishing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (Santoso et al., 2024). It has also developed new forms of public diplomacy, like harnessing Virtual YouTubers (VTubers), such as Hololive Indonesia, to promote its multicultural identity (Gallennius & Akil, 2024) and engaging with foreign audiences in interactive platforms. Another important point is, Indonesia was also able to boost its regional engagement with the launch of the Regional Conference on Digital Diplomacy (RCDD), which supported a global digital technology atmosphere (Listyowati et al., 2022) . One of the most prominent examples of using digital diplomacy for nation branding and tourism promotion is the "Wonderful Indonesia" program, which allows for economic efficiency by utilizing digital media to reach international cognitive audiences (Fahrizal et al., 2022). Theoretically, the future of public diplomacy looks brighter and more influential than ever, as it expands through technological means to reach new audiences; however, its success will still depend on the willingness of these diplomatic agents to also operate efficiently in these new tools and spaces (Bjola, 2015). Furthermore, from the digital diplomacy perspective, social media interactions are important because they can either hinder or elevate diplomatic relations, depending on how they are managed (Duncombe, 2019). As a result, Indonesian digital diplomacy enhances its economic and cultural connections and can also promote its global trade prospects, making it a middle state at a global level (Moenardy & Chandra, 2021).

However, challenges of digital diplomacy remain. First, it requires clearer regulation and strategy for optimizing trade and security through digital diplomacy (Santoso et al., 2024). Second, the experience during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for Indonesia to adopt an open digital diplomacy model by learning from countries that have successfully adapted their foreign policy approaches (Triwahyuni, 2022). Third, its negative implications are particularly pertinent to digital diplomacy, where anonymity may undermine opinions in the political space (Perbawani, 2018). Additionally, from a broader perspective, the rise of digital media has significantly reshaped Indonesia's democratic landscape. While it has expanded youth participation in political discourse, it also presents challenges such as misinformation, unequal digital access, political radicalization, cyberspace control, and difficulties in adapting to rapid technological change (Saud & Margono, 2021; Triwibowo, 2023a).

Amid challenges, several countries develop the governance of digital diplomacy. In Estonia and Nordic nations, the cross-border implementation of the X-road becomes a form of digital diplomacy to extend influence and shape e-norms among geopolitically like-minded partners (Hardy, 2024). It is an open-source data exchange layer solution, which makes it easier for businesses to share information online in a safe and consistent manner. Additionally, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has developed an e-governance model aimed at digitizing public services, which forms the foundation of its digital diplomacy program. It has made digital diplomacy a component of its foreign policy approach (Antwi-Boateng & Mazrouei, 2021). Even more, China has discreetly and firmly internationalized its digital model. The Digital Silk Road (DSR) is a geopolitical initiative that expands China's technological presence across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. It is a strategic tool to exercise control over data flows, disperse governance rules, and lock partner governments into unequal digital dependencies (Vanberghen, 2025). Drawing from these three cases, this research highlights the urgent need to strengthen Indonesia's digital diplomacy through an effective governance framework—particularly one based on collaborative governance principles. Given Indonesia's large and growing base of internet users, digital diplomacy holds strategic importance. The involvement of both state and non-state actors further justifies the adoption of a collaborative governance model. Thus, this research will explain how to govern Indonesia's digital diplomacy.

Method

In order to thoroughly investigate the topic, this study uses a qualitative research. It starts with certain presumptions and employs an interpretive framework to comprehend how people or groups give social or human issues meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It usually uses a variety of data collection methods, including observations, interviews, and document analysis, with the researcher acting as the primary data collection tool (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It aims to reveal how the actors conducts digital diplomacy and should collaborate in digital diplomacy. Subsequently, this study uses secondary data about Indonesia's digital diplomacy and technological applications, such as books, journal articles, online newspaper, publications and other relevant sources. Furthermore, this research employs triangulation technique to test data. It becomes the process of using several techniques or data sources to create a thorough knowledge of a phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). Eventually, the study wraps up by summarizing its findings and how they advance scholarly knowledge of the governance of digital diplomacy.

This research uses digital diplomacy as framework of analysis. It uses technological instruments to reshape governments' and non-state actors' interactions, such as using social media, artificial intelligence, and big data in conducting diplomacy (Bjola, 2015; Duncombe, 2019; Manor, 2023). Through platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, it builds faster communication, helps governments engage with the public, counters misinformation, and fosters mutual understanding with other societies (Bjola, 2015; Hedling, 2021). Unlike the traditional diplomacy, which governments use formal state-to-state channels, this kind of diplomacy gives opportunity for direct dialogue with ordinary citizens, gives them a greater role in shaping, and responds to foreign policy messages (Bjola, 2015; Manor, 2023; Rachmawati et al., 2024). This shift changes the nation-state's monopoly over diplomatic narratives, opening the way for individuals, NGOs, and transnational networks to shape global affairs and widen the role of non-state actors (Bjola, 2015; Manor, 2023; Pamment, 2016). These actors are now central to global governance, and their success depends on using technology alongside shared values and strong leadership to bridge differences (Bjola, 2015; Duncombe, 2019; Manor, 2023). Shortly, digital diplomacy is changing not only the venues where diplomacy occurs but also the kinds of actors who hold influence.

Along with digital diplomacy, collaborative governance is also used in the framework of analysis. It is defined as a governmental structure in which one or more public agencies actively include non-state stakeholders in a formal, consensus-driven, and deliberate collective decision-making process with the goal of managing public programs or assets or creating or implementing public policy (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In this research, the Penta Helix collaborative governance is specifically used in analysis. Historically, the Penta Helix model expands on the earlier Triple Helix framework, which includes academia, industry, and government as key drivers of innovation (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). It emphasized that these sectors' synergy led to knowledge and economy creation; however, later literature pointed out the need for a broader innovation ecosystem integrative perspective (Carayannis et al., 2012; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013). Subsequently, the emergence of the Quadruple Helix model, which incorporates the media and the public sphere as a fourth dimension, reflects this recognition of the critical role of media in shaping discourse, facilitating knowledge exchange, and fostering societal acceptance of technological advancements (Carayannis et al., 2012). Afterwards, the penta-helix collaborative governance model appeared and added to the institutional perspectives, the community and not-for-profit institutions induce synergistic cooperation to achieve innovation through the interaction of diverse resources (Sturesson et al., 2009). In this expanded framework, government, industry, academia, civil society, and the media are the five key actors are (Muhyi & Chan, 2017).

Results

Government as Regulator for Digital Diplomacy

The rapid digital transformation of Indonesia establishes the critical need for collaborative governance as its main priority. According to Statista, the number of internet users in Indonesia, along with internet penetration rates, steadily increased between 2014 and 2025 to reach 257.68 million internet users (Statista, 2025). From that statistic, Indonesia faces two opposing consequences from its rising internet penetration throughout the country. While it benefits from its growing internet penetration, this development facilitates the distribution of pornography and international as well as domestic online fraud (Darmastuti et al., 2021). Briefly, the success of digital transformation in Indonesia is influenced by the governance of it in the local, national, and international levels.

The Indonesian government runs digital diplomacy through national and international channels and requires full governance implementation at local levels. In the international level, the ASEAN Digital Literacy Programme (ADLP) has seen substantial growth because of Indonesia's crucial role in developing digital diplomacy, which advances social inclusion throughout Southeast Asia (Nawa et al., 2024). Besides, the RCDD demonstrates Indonesia's dedication to advancing regional digital cooperation which subsequently raises its power in the Asia-Pacific region (Intentilia, 2022; Listyowati et al., 2022). Furthermore, the ASEAN Smart Cities Network serves as a platform for Indonesia to strengthen its digital economy leadership through investments in digital infrastructure development and market inclusiveness within ASEAN (Santoso et al., 2024).

The national governance of Indonesia's diplomatic operations requires development through policy architectures and regulations combined with blueprints and collaborative projects among state and non-state stakeholders, including industry sectors together with academic institutions and civil society organizations and media outlets. As a middle power, Indonesia in international relations needs digital diplomacy regulations and coordinated policies that establish cybersecurity architectures and support international partnership development (Hastri et al., 2024; Priyono et al., 2023; Triwahyuni, 2022). Digital diplomacy became an official part of MoFA Indonesia's strategic plan during Joko Widodo's administration starting in 2017, and Prabowo Subianto's administration may have to continue this way (Triwibowo, 2022). To follow that, the upcoming MoFA Indonesia strategic plan needs to establish guidelines for managing Indonesia's digital diplomacy operations. It needs to include participants from both government sectors and non-governmental organizations, along with industry sectors, academic institutions, and civil society organizations and media platforms.

The social media implementation by MoFA Indonesia, as part of digital diplomacy, remains ineffective because national and local governance structures lack proper regulation to safeguard Indonesia's national interests. It uses Twitter alongside Facebook and Instagram as information distribution platforms to unify domestic agendas through a hybrid digital-traditional approach for enhancing international appeal and Jawa-Burgess connections during the digital era (Reshetnikova & Samokhina, 2023; Triwibowo, 2023a). Under Jokowi's administration, MoFA set digital diplomacy in part of its 2020 to 2024 ministerial strategic planning, which explains the strategic way how to conduct Indonesia's digital diplomacy, including the utilization of social media (Kementerian Luar Negeri, 2020). In the case of 2022 G20 presidency, Indonesia demonstrated the essential role these digital platforms play for international relations. However, on Prabowo's administration, MoFA has not shown digital diplomacy as a strategy in its relations to other countries, which the ministerial strategic planning is an ongoing process (Kementerian Luar Negeri, 2025). Whereas, the joint participation of all actors requires smart collaboration through digitalization approaches, which protect national interests and respect human rights and democracy and legal architectures. Moreover, disinformation and misinformation currently present a serious threat that endangers society as well as the nation. To anticipate that, the Digital Command Center (DCC) operated by BSSN and MoFA Indonesia protected national security

Command Center (DCC) operated by BSSN and MoFA Indonesia protected national security interests against the Free West Papua narratives (Madu, 2018). Briefly, the system lacks any defined architecture to determine state, and non-state actors collaborate in digital diplomacy.

Subsequently, the digital scholarship implementation represents an essential strategy to encourage both academic institutions and professional practitioners to engage in digital diplomacy because internet penetration and user numbers increase throughout Indonesia. For example, the digital talent scholarships under Joko Widodo's administration consisted of Vocational School Graduate Academy (VSGA), Fresh Graduate Academy (FGA), Professional Academy (ProA), Government Transformation Academy (GTA), Digital Entrepreneurship Academy (DEA), Thematic Academy (TA), Digital Leadership Academy (DLA), and Talent Scouting Academy (Komdigi, 2025). This program provides diverse digital skills while receiving participants from industry and academia together with civil society members and media workers, even though most users reside in Java Island. As published on Katadata, the digital talent requirement for Indonesia will reach 9 million professionals by 2030 (Maulita, 2018).

Another important point is that, at the local level, the governance of Indonesia's digital diplomacy has to point to the city as an actor in this area. In order to successfully integrate information technology, public policy, and international relations, Mursitama and Lee (2018) offer the architecture of smart city diplomacy. It will greatly advance the body of knowledge in the field of smart city development, both academically and practically (Mursitama & Lee, 2018). Besides, city diplomats should also use the chance to promote any constructive integration of smart city diplomacy into other sectors (Grandi, 2020). Thus, a civil servant who serves in a smart city or para-diplomacy or international relations division can manage the relationship with the central government and initiate programs that support digital diplomacy at the local level. It can be a model of the governance of it at the local level.

The Involvement of Industry in Digital Diplomacy

The digital diplomacy of Indonesia's government opens close cooperation with private sector stakeholders to develop its digital infrastructure and public engagement tools. MoFA Indonesia works with telecommunications companies and tech startups to create safe digital communication channels, which deliver diplomatic messages and handle crisis communications according to (Triwibowo, 2023b). The partnership between these entities expands Indonesia's diplomatic outreach while maintaining uninterrupted information distribution during disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the partnership between public and private sectors becomes crucial during this period (Safitri et al., 2022).

Several industry-supported initiatives exist for evaluation, which support Indonesia's digital diplomacy. First, the Bali Message on International Collaboration in Digital Diplomacy states Indonesia's multistakeholder approach allows private companies together with academia and civil society to develop digital tools and strategies for cultural exchange and public diplomacy and economic diplomacy (Cindyara, 2021). The second RCDD in 2019 had a goal to establish partnerships between government entities and business sectors and other stakeholders to develop action plans for digital technology application in diplomacy (Yasmin, 2019). Subsequently, historical industries currently hold a fundamental position in digital diplomacy by supplying essential digital infrastructure and providing cybersecurity services along with technological advancements. In literature, the combined digital power of Google together with Siemens and Microsoft enables these major MNCs to develop political and diplomatic strength (Bjola, 2015). They contribute essential elements to digital diplomacy through their provision of soft power and their economic diplomatic practices. For example, the Korean Wave shows how digital soft power facilitates public diplomacy because both government and private sector entities collaborated to establish digital distribution platforms for cultural content while working to improve international perceptions of Korea (Jin, 2024). Thus, the government has to collaborate with industry in advancing Indonesia's digital diplomacy.

In practice now, Indonesia's government uses digital platforms to develop new public

engagement methods through strategic partnerships with private sector organizations, which enhance its digital infrastructure and public interaction tools. For instance, MoFA Indonesia works together with leading telecommunications companies and tech startups to establish safe, dependable digital communication systems, which help spread diplomatic information and handle emergency communications (Triwibowo, 2023b). Through this partnership, the Indonesian government reaches broader diplomatic audiences while maintaining uninterrupted information distribution during pandemic-related disruptions, including COVID-19. Subsequently, Microsoft Indonesia, together with Bank of Indonesia, Telkom Indonesia, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Communications and Digital Affairs, organized a digital training program that features Hackathon 2024 while launching elevAIte Indonesia (Irham, 2024). This cooperation gives the opportunity for targeted people to utilize technology in their lives. Subsequently, through Virtual Business Matching (VBM) platforms, Indonesia achieved economic progress by connecting with South Korea and other foreign nations while reducing traditional diplomacy expenses and time expenditures (Alamsyah et al., 2024). Besides, Indonesia has unicorns such as Gojek, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, and Traveloka to be potential partners in digital diplomacy (Santoso et al., 2024). Furthermore, The UN Deep Dive Workshop on Indonesia's Digital Transformation and similar platforms shows government leadership through their efforts to unite diverse participants for developing digital policy architectures. It maintains consistent dialogue with private companies and international organizations and academic experts to both develop new digital solutions and adjust to technological changes because multisectoral cooperation is essential for maintaining Indonesia's digital diplomatic presence on the world stage (Adhisti, 2025).

Academia as Partner of Digital Diplomacy

The digital diplomacy of Indonesia primarily advanced through research and training together with policy development at academic institutions, including Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), and Universitas Indonesia (UI). For example, the Center for Digital Society, which belongs to UGM's Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, has organized multiple forums and workshops, including the Digital Diplomacy Must Respond to Global Challenge forum. This forum evaluates the modern digital foreign relations pattern, which shows how digital foreign relations might become essential for worldwide diplomacy during fast-paced globalization processes. This forum also points out the necessity of digital diplomacy effectiveness to overcome worldwide problems and enhance international relations (UGM, 2017). Besides, ITB learns digital diplomacy development through public lectures, which describe the rapid digital communication evolution and present its advantages and risks while emphasizing traditional diplomatic methods (Rayadi, 2017). Ideally, academic institutions develop strategic road maps for Indonesia's digital diplomacy while providing evidence-based policy recommendations through their relationships with other entities. Through joint research initiatives and capacity-building programs and joint seminars, the government obtains continuous updates of the latest academic ideas for its strategies. As a result, the mutually beneficial relationship between academics and government establishes, creative knowledgeable, and resilient diplomatic practices that enhance Indonesia's digital diplomatic position.

Public diplomacy projects, which should form a collaborative space for academics and government agencies, need to take advantage of Indonesia's digital storytelling capabilities. Universities such as UI, together with UGM and ITB, have shown dedication to expanding international recognition through their digital platforms (Rachman et al., 2024). These institutions actively engage in knowledge transfer activities, which generate significant effects across digital diplomacy research and teaching as well as international perspectives. Besides, the Indonesian government operates its own digital diplomacy system through the Wonderful Indonesia program, which supports tourism promotion and cultural representation while academic institutions fulfill their roles in this process (Fahrizal et al., 2022). It becomes a study-stipend initiative that maximizes academic expertise to establish compelling content and worldwide audience strategies. In economy, digital diplomacy stands out as a key illustration of government-

academia cooperation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia recognizes that digital platforms serve as powerful tools to support its economic diplomacy.

The government worked hand in hand with educational establishments to optimize information technology applications for promoting Indonesian market offerings on the international stage (Triwahyuni, 2022). This partnership between government and academic institutions enables researchers to establish and run policies besides boosting Indonesia's digital economic diplomacy. The government uses academic knowledge to address problems about misinformation and disinformation, which form essential components of successful digital diplomacy strategies (Madu, 2018). It recognizes digital diplomacy as a vital tool that helps foreign policy and national interests function effectively in the modern digital era. It created partnerships with digital experts through its initiatives to utilize their knowledge along with their excellence and innovative approaches. The partnerships cover public diplomacy and cultural promotion as well as challenge resolution and speed up worldwide cooperation. As a result, the digital diplomacy functions of academicians help build Indonesia's digital diplomacy while simultaneously enhancing the nation's soft power and global impact.

The Involvement of Civil Society Organizations for Digital Diplomacy

This approach not only enhanced international standing but also demonstrated government willingness to collaborate with civil society organizations for digital diplomatic development. For example, the RCDD proposed by Indonesia serves as a platform for governments to engage civil society in dialogue about digital technology and foreign policy issues throughout the Asia-Pacific region (Listyowati et al., 2022). From a public diplomacy perspective, it stands as a fundamental area where Indonesia's government maintains connections with its civil society. For civil society groups, the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI) becomes a popular civil society group for young people in Indonesia. It has operated as a partner of the Indonesian government to advance digital diplomacy since establishing itself as the most extensive foreign policy grassroots organization in Indonesia (FPCI, 2025). Briefly, through these initiatives, Indonesia shows its dedication to enhancing digital diplomacy by involving civil society.

Furthermore, digital media enables governments to establish superior communication channels, which motivates citizens to participate in diplomatic procedures. It developed the Index Citra Indonesia digital survey instrument to measure how foreign audiences perceive Indonesia through their opinions. This measurement tool allows the government to create targeted diplomatic activities, which enhances Indonesia's public diplomacy architecture (Siregar et al., 2023). By regards, the Indonesian government challenges a difficult strategy through the inclusion of civil society organizations in its digital diplomacy activities. However, the main obstacles consist of uneven social media use by government organizations and inadequate digital diplomacy tactics and potential misinformation problems (Madu, 2018; Triwibowo, 2023a). Subsequently, the government works to address its digital diplomacy challenges through improvements in digital literacy and diplomat capacity development together with international cybersecurity collaboration (Priyono et al., 2023). It maintains its dedication to enhancing digital diplomacy approaches through this kind of diplomacy, which aims to advance Indonesia's foreign policy objectives. It also maintains strong partnerships with civil society for digital diplomacy and uses online tools to connect with its stakeholders. Through its digital diplomacy efforts, the government has achieved public involvement as well as cultural exchange and economic diplomacy by using social media together with multistakeholder methods and digital innovation.

Strategic Collaboration with Mass Media for Digital Diplomacy

The Indonesian government has adopted digital diplomacy as an effective method to communicate its foreign policy objectives. The government agencies and diplomats occur through Twitter and Instagram and Facebook platforms to create dialogue with international stakeholders and establish relationships, particularly through MoFA Indonesia. It maintains an active presence on social media platforms to distribute information about Indonesia's foreign policy focus areas which include economic diplomacy and cultural exchanges and regional cooperation (Intentilia, 2022; Sari, 2021; Triwibowo, 2023a). To achieve that goal, mass media functions as a vital element which enhances these diplomatic activities. For instance, kompas.id newspapers along with other media outlets, have played a vital part in explaining environmental issues about the IKN development while focusing on beneficial news together with cultural elements (Safitri et al., 2024). Besides, the Jakarta Post along with other English newspapers functions as an instrument to communicate Indonesia's foreign policy by explaining its neutral stance in the U.S.-China power struggle (Martha et al., 2022). It uses these media channels to convert its policies into simple narratives which reach both Indonesian citizens and global audiences.

The Indonesian digital diplomacy architecture operates through efficient synchronization of social media platforms and digital tools. MoFA Indonesia continuously applies strategic digital diplomacy methods through Instagram to establish cultural connections with younger generations (Sari, 2021). Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, digital diplomacy became essential for Indonesia to maintain international partnerships while properly sharing its crisis management information (Cerf, 2020; Sari, 2021). The practice of digital diplomacy exists both as a government-managed strategy and as an adopted approach by individual diplomats alongside ministers. According to analysts the government's digital platform strategies demonstrate their awareness about these tools potential to shape public perception and diplomatic promotion opportunities.

The Indonesian government has to collaborate with mass media through digital diplomacy because both parties share similar objectives. Mass media is designed to distribute information to broad audiences and develop public opinion which helps the government deliver recent news directly to the people. In defense field, the coverage of Indonesia's defense diplomacy activity shows a mutually beneficial relationship in which national online news media presented the government's national defense strengthening effort in a positive manner (Astika et al., 2023). RCDD along with other extensive initiatives, serves as Indonesia's platform to connect with regional partners and address its foreign policy objectives for the Asia-Pacific region (Listyowati et al., 2022). The government's decision to use digital platforms showed its plan to establish diplomatic relationships and regional partnerships and took steps to collaborate with various media platforms to expand the promotion of its current digital diplomacy chapter. In this context, mass media becomes a strategic actor in Indonesia's digital diplomacy. During Indonesia's G-20 presidency, mass media was believed to be an instrument to raise healthcare architecture, energy transition, and digital transformation issues, which had been discussed in G-20 meetings (Antara, 2022).

Discussion

There are several findings that contribute to the knowledge of building collaborative governance in digital diplomacy (see Table 1). First, In order for Indonesia to be more involved in

international affairs without compromising its national interests and digital inclusiveness, this research urges the government, business, academia, and civil society to work together more collaboratively in digital diplomacy. For Indonesia, the collaboration between government and industry in digital economy, such as with Microsoft Indonesia, Bank of Indonesia, Telkom Indonesia, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Communications and Digital Affairs, is crucial in digital diplomacy (Microsoft, 2019). It highlights the vital transformation of industries in promoting digital diplomacy, especially through partnerships between Indonesia's government and industry players to advance technological innovation and optimize public engagement. Second, the country's digital diplomacy will flourish if both government and academic institutions can work hand in hand, produce innovative strategies for development, and have an impact on people's lives, be it in foreign policies, culture promotion, or economic engagement as well. Practically, the government has to build cooperation with Indonesia's top universities, such as Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), and Universitas Indonesia (UI). Third, the subjects at hand can show Indonesia's contribution by emphasizing how, by practicing access diplomacy among these groups, Indonesia demonstrates its digital diplomacy policy through the use of new, transformative digital technology to enhance engagement, exchanges, and opportunities across borders through culture and economy and includes a wide range of civil society actors.

Despite the challenges presented by the need for a strategic framework and the risks of misinformation, Indonesia's commitment to leveraging digital platforms presents opportunities for continued growth and innovation in the realm of diplomatic engagement through academia, industry, civil society, and mass media. Based on (Ansell & Gash, 2008), Indonesia's digital public diplomacy has to be initiated by public agencies, to actively involve non-state actors in decision-making, to create a formalized arrangement, and to focus on consensus on a public policy issue or management. MoFA Indonesia, the Ministry of Communications, BSSN, and other ministries have to collaborate in the national and local levels, including with the community, academicians, mass media, and businesses. It will prevent the dominant role of state in digital diplomacy (Bjola, 2015; Manor, 2023; Rachmawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, by using social media platforms from both state and non-state actors in digital diplomacy, it contributes to the rapid and unprecedented era of communication by promoting public participation, combatting disinformation, and fostering mutual understanding between governments and populations (Bjola, 2015; Hedling, 2023).

Table 1. Collaborative Initiative and Its Contribution to Digital Diplomacy

Actors	Collaborative Initiatives	Contribution to Digital Diplomacy
Government	• Under Jokowi's administration, MoFA Indonesia included digital diplomacy in its strategic plan in 2017 and 2020 to 2019; however, it becomes unclear under Prabowo's administration; • International cooperation with ASEAN Digital Literacy Programme (ADLP). Indonesia hosts and implements regional digital literacy training with ASEAN Foundation • MoFA Indonesia, BSSN, Bank of Indonesia, Telkom Indonesia, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications and other institutions have to work together in Indonesia's digital diplomacy.	Strengthens domestic & regional digital literacy, formalizes policy frameworks for digital governance, adapts institutional digital operations, and protects national interest.

Actors	Collaborative Initiatives	Contribution to Digital Diplomacy
Industry	• Partnerships among Microsoft Indonesia, Bank Indonesia, Telkom Indonesia, MoFA, and Kominfo through digital upskilling initiatives (e.g., Hackathon 2024, elevAIte Indonesia); • Unicorn tech firms like Gojek, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Traveloka offer further engagement potential.	Provides technological innovation, digital infrastructure, and capacity-building enabling broader, more resilient digital diplomacy engagement.
Academia	UGM's "Digital Diplomacy Must Respond to Global Challenge" forum; ITB public lectures on digital communication; universities helping craft roadmaps, policies, and cultural/economic strategies.	Brings evidence-based strategy, intellectual resources, and creative content for shaping effective and culturally informed digital diplomacy.
Civil Society	RCDD engages civil society in digital governance dialogue; Virtual Business Matching platforms aided economic diplomacy; FPCI supports youth engagement; Index Citra Indonesia surveys foreign audience perceptions.	Enables multi-stakeholder participation, inclusive exchanges, grassroots diplomatic channels, and feedback-informed policy adjustment.
Mass Media	MoFA's use of Instagram/Twitter to connect youth and global audiences; Kompas.id coverage of IKN development; global news through The Jakarta Post; media narratives during G20 & defense diplomacy.	Expands cultural and policy narratives, shapes public perception domestically and internationally, and amplifies strategic diplomatic communications.

Source: Author

The research recommends that Indonesia increase its international engagement through collaborative digital diplomacy between government institutions and business entities and academic organizations and civil society bodies to safeguard its national interests and digital inclusiveness. The public and private sectors need to unite within a shared forum alongside public institutions, which operate through collaborative governance for consensus-oriented decision-making (Kurniasih et al., 2023). Digital diplomacy requires Indonesia to form partnerships between government agencies and industrial entities, including Microsoft Indonesia and Bank of Indonesia, as well as Telkom Indonesia and the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications and Digital Affairs. The research demonstrates how essential industry transformations exist to drive digital diplomacy through collaborative partnerships between Indonesian government entities and industry stakeholders that enable technological progress and better public accessibility. The advancement of digital diplomacy within the country depends on government agencies joining forces with academic institutions to generate innovative development strategies that produce practical effects across foreign policies and cultural promotion and economic engagement. The issues at hand demonstrate Indonesia's role by point outing its implementation of access diplomacy between various groups to achieve digital diplomacy through modern transformative technology, which enhances borderless cultural and economic interactions involving multiple civil society participants.

Discussion

The findings from this study are essential for understanding democratic regress and electoral authoritarianism along with opposition party survivability in semi-authoritarian governance systems. The study examines the structural alongside institutional and organizational components of CHADEMA's 2020 electoral loss to improve scholarly understanding in three main aspects. The analysis supports previous studies about powerful political parties that exploit electoral regulations to preserve their control (Levitsky & Way, 2010) while showing how the NEC functions as an instrument for CCM rather than remaining independent. This study delivers additional insight into opposition challenges within hostile conditions through a detailed presentation of the joint impediments imposed by restrictive laws together with biased state machinery and imbalanced media access. Internal problems at CHADEMA adversely affected its ability to overcome external challenges because its leadership conflicts and poor connectivity to rural areas and inconsistent communication plan worsened the opposition party's ability to combat external constraints. The results support African electoral authoritarianism research (Bogaards, 2018) yet they highlight how opposition groups and institutional limits affect election results together.

The study demonstrates strong methodological integrity through its integration of descriptive analysis with legal review and media data yet various limitations remain unresolved. Analysis of official electoral returns and media reports may fail to identify hidden political factors below the surface (including secret coercion or grassroots dissent). Expanding the study to include comparisons between CHADEMA and other Tanzanian opposition parties like ACT-Wazalendo would showcase whether opposition complications stem from systemic issues or tackle specific party difficulties. The study's findings have constrained value of transfer for systems with comparable hybrid governance patterns but do not reflect the distinct Tanzanian model(Hydén, 2008). The researcher faced ethical concerns when obtaining data about state repression thus requiring usage of public records and anonymized interview responses but future studies should use participatory methods with opposition actors to resolve this issue.

CHADEMA's loss in the election cannot be fully explained by either voter disengagement or the ruling party's developmental agenda. The findings demonstrate that CCM's dominance proved structurally unstoppable because CHADEMA could not overcome the built-in institutional advantages. The findings suggest that electoral reforms including NEC autonomy and equitable media access would help create a level playing field in elections. The analysis reveals CHADEMA's shortcomings to adapt to the situation as a key factor that led to their defeat while highlighting the necessity of both political institution reforms and opposition reinvention through new leadership and network expansion efforts in rural areas.

Future studies should conduct comparative research on opposition resilience strategies within similar government systems such as Rwanda and Uganda. Public officials need to protect systems from government resource abuse and media bias but party professionals should maintain electoral strategy equilibrium with essential party institutional growth. The essential takeaway from this study confirms democratic backsliding can be reversed through collective efforts from legal defenders supporting reform alongside unified opposition forces striving to dissect authoritarian fundamentals. The current electoral landscape of Tanzania will continue to favor CCM's dominance unless proper reforms are put in place to safeguard democratic possibilities.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the combination of structural problems along with organizational weaknesses which led CHADEMA to lose the 2020 election in order to show how Tanzania's uneven electoral conditions support the dominant role of CCM. Competitive democracy suffers from institutional control which combines with resource imbalances along with organizational deficiencies in opposition groups leading to fragmented leadership, operational limitations and limited reach in rural areas. Electoral authoritarian systems persist because they create barriers that harm opposition groups simultaneously with the vulnerabilities of these opposition organizations according

Conclusion

In Indonesia, the governance of digital diplomacy involves both state and non-state actors. In practice, the government often plays a dual role—acting both as a regulator and as a catalyst for initiatives. To be effective, the government needs to work closely with universities, private companies, civil society groups, and the media—promoting innovation, sharing knowledge, and finding practical ways to improve communication while also strengthening cooperation in digital diplomacy. At the national level, the Digital Command Center (DCC) has become a key hub for internal communication and coordination, especially between MoFA Indonesia and BSSN, in the day-to-day work of digital diplomacy. At the local level, central and regional governments need strong partnerships, for instance, linking digital diplomacy efforts with smart city initiatives to ensure that technology benefits communities directly. In its coordinating role, the government should also build strong ties with the media, civil society, universities, and the private sector to push Indonesia's digital diplomacy forward. Some examples of good practice can be seen in academic forums at leading universities such as UGM, ITB, and Universitas Indonesia; in the Regional Conference on Digital Diplomacy (RCDD); and in the contributions of media outlets like The Jakarta Post and Kompas. Industry involvement is also significant, with players such as Microsoft Indonesia, Bank Indonesia, and Telkom Indonesia contributing to various initiatives. However, challenges remain—ranging from the lack of proper regulations at the national and local levels. Later, the next research needs to explore challenges faced by national and local government in regulating digital diplomacy in Indonesia, for example, the challenge of digital diplomacy under Prabowo's administration.

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