

# **Indonesian Female Ambassadors and Twiplomacy**

**Yosi Widuri and Ella S. Prihatini**

International Relations Department, Faculty of Humanities,  
Bina Nusantara University  
Jakarta, Indonesia 11480  
yosi.widuri@binus.ac.id, ella.prihatini@binus.edu

## **Abstract**

Countries in the world have been trying to encourage digital diplomacy, using social media such as Twitter. The use of Twitter as a diplomatic tool is known as Twiplomacy. Twitter has been widely used by governments in many countries as well as diplomatic officials to gather information and enhance the country's international image. Thus, the Indonesian government encourages diplomatic officials to actively contribute to the utilization of Twitter. Our paper focuses on the role of Indonesian female ambassadors in utilizing Twitter as a diplomatic medium. Where, this paper uses a data collection consists of the Twitter accounts of Indonesian female ambassadors as of 12 February 2021, using descriptive analysis of the extent to which Indonesian female ambassadors can actively contribute to the use of Twitter. Our data shows that, although Indonesian female ambassadors have not yet fully used Twitter, some of them have begun to realize the importance of optimizing Twiplomacy. For the level of engagement, we found that there were differences and similarities for each ambassador's account, where the difference was seen in the contrast of engagement as measured by the number of tweets and retweets, while there were similarities in the use of the same words related to hashtags. We also found that some of the new ambassadors' accounts on Twitter had more followers and some of them had quite a contrasting number of followers.

## **Keywords**

Twitter, Digital Diplomacy, Ambassadors, Indonesia and Women's Representation.

## **1. Introduction**

Modern diplomacy practices have evolved over the last few years, such as what is known as digital diplomacy. There are many studies discussing digital diplomacy which also influenced by the rapid development of technology. In this case, digital diplomacy by utilizing social media can be an interactive tool to introduce the State to the public both nationally and internationally (Costa 2017). Twitter is one of the most widely used social media as a medium of digital diplomacy, where according to the Twiplomacy website, there are 228 ministries of foreign affairs active on Twitter (Kampf et al. 2015). Furthermore, Twiplomacy 2018 also noted that 97% of UN member countries already have Twitter accounts (Sebayang 2018). In the practice of diplomacy, Twitter functions as a media platform for gathering information that is relevant to the formulation of certain policies and can influence the way diplomats view issues related to diplomatic forums (Manor and Segev 2020). Thus, social media such as Twitter has become a media platform that can be useful for diplomats, especially ambassadors to interact and manage digital communications.

Meanwhile, studies on representation of women in modern diplomacy assert that women continue to be the minority in this portfolio. Towns and Niklasson (2018) created a data set of all ambassador appointments made by the 50 highest ranked countries in terms of GDP in 2014 and suggest that women's share is around 15%. A recent report by the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (2021) stipulates that the proportion in 40 countries (including G20 and European Union) has increased to 20.7% in 2021. The Asian region sends the least number of female ambassadors (Towns and Niklasson 2018). The situation is even dearer in Indonesia as female ambassadors only accumulated to 5.23% between 1947 and 2021. This figure indicates gender inequality in ambassadorial appointments, in which ambassadors are serving as the heads of diplomatic missions, where they represent the national interests of the country abroad hence the prestigious status (Krook and O'brien 2012). Nevertheless, the global trend shows that more women are being appointed as ambassadors especially in countries with a more gender equal societies.

On the other hand, governments and diplomats in numerous countries have utilized social media platforms as part of digital-based diplomatic missions, considering the role of social media in voicing people's aspirations and shaping

public policies (Pohan et al. 2016). In the context of Indonesia, Indonesia is one of the countries that have utilized social media such as Twiplomacy to enhance diplomacy. Indonesia has carried out its digital diplomacy by utilizing technology, which is indicated by almost all Indonesian embassies using social media such as Twitter and Facebook, not only that, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi also encourages Indonesian diplomats to be able to adapt diplomatic tasks to the digital era (Madu 2018). In January 2020, there were 175.4 million internet users and 160 million in social media usage (Kemp 2021), meanwhile, according to the Statista (2022) in January 2022, Indonesia was ranked fifth in the world based on the number of social media usage such as Twitter, and accounts for 15% of all tweets (Pohan et al. 2016). Therefore, the utilization of Twitter as a public diplomatic tool is beneficial for diplomats, especially the Indonesian ambassador in terms of gathering information and interacting through social media in the countries where they operate. With the background explained previously, it shows that there are still few studies that discuss female ambassadors, especially in terms of how they use Twitter as a medium for diplomacy.

## **2. Literature Review**

The use of social media is one form of information and communication technology that has developed over the decades where it has affected aspects of people's lives in various fields. Public diplomacy is one of the fields affected by the rapid development of technology and the emergence of the internet (Costa 2017). The use of social media can be a means of communication between the government and the community. Social media can also complement traditional diplomatic practices by utilizing technology, which aims to expand networks, one of which is the global community network, where the research also states that Japan and Korea have used social media that focuses on promoting cultural products and national values (Park and Lim 2014). The same thing was also stated by researchers such as Pohan et al. (2016), who in their research argue that the use of social media in digital diplomacy is a complement to face-to-face diplomacy and has proven to be an effective tool to strengthen the message to be conveyed.

Social media such as Twitter has become an opportunity for governments in many countries, especially diplomats, to interact digitally with the global community. Manor and Segev (2020) argue that Twitter has functioned as a collection of information on diplomatic issues and other information relevant to the policy formulation process. Meanwhile, Kampf et al. (2015) reveals that Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) are significantly more active on Twitter, this is because Twitter only makes posts of 140 characters long, making it easier for MFA to quickly comment on world affairs and publish updated information. In addition, Twitter as a social media has also influenced the role of the ambassador. Manor (2019) research found that ten ambassadors contributed as much as 50% on Twitter than their embassy reach, which managed to attract more followers on Twitter, so in this case, the ambassador could substantially increase the embassy's digital reach and contribute actively to the practice of public diplomacy.

Talking about the role of ambassadors in using Twitter as part of their digital diplomacy, in fact, there are other problems in the practice of modern diplomacy, which are marked by the lack of representation of women in ambassadorial positions. Several researchers have examined the reasons that hinder women as ambassadors, one of which is the factor of gender stereotypes. Women viewed as weak and more passive than men, so powerful states tend to be prioritized for male ambassadors (Williams 2017). Even women are generally viewed as inappropriate in terms of foreign policy (McGlen and Sarkees 1993) In this case, there is a policy preference with a different point of view between women and men. Women are viewed as inclined to discuss foreign policies that focus on peace and social justice (Breuning 2001). Meanwhile, men often support military efforts in achieving foreign policy (Wilcox et al. 1996). Meanwhile, according to research by Rahman (2011), inequality in ambassadors' appointments is also motivated by views on marital status. Governments tend to avoid appointing single women as ambassadors because they are seen as more vulnerable to temptation.

Women's underrepresentation in ambassadorial appointments mirrors how gender disparity in political realm such as parliament (Prihatini and Siregard 2019; Prihatini 2021). Although studies have suggested that having more women in politics will eventually increase budget allocation for welfare spending (Prihatini 2021), more research is needed to formulate strategies to create gender parity. Historically, women have long entered the arena of diplomacy and have acted as agents of diplomacy from time to time through letter-writing networks and relatives, such as the roles of a queen and a diplomat's wife (McCarthy and Southern 2017). History also shows that women are rarely referred to as formal state representatives, and many of them function as unofficial envoys, behind-the-scenes negotiators, and informal mediators (Aggestam and Towns 2018). However, in reviewing the literature on the

research of Towns and Niklasson (2017), it is shown that the number of representation of women in the diplomatic corps worldwide is increasing, even at high levels as ambassadors which varies between countries in ambassadors' appointment. Meanwhile, some countries in the world have taken active steps in promoting gender mainstreaming in ministries of foreign affairs. In the case of Indonesia, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has realized efforts in gender mainstreaming, such as the existence of a policy that regulates the accommodating placement of diplomat couples in Indonesian Representatives overseas and the provision of family allowance facilities and assistance for children's education abroad (Kemlu 2019). Indonesia is also aware of efforts to encourage digital diplomacy, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Directorate General of Information and public diplomacy in 2002 (Madu 2018). With these efforts, it is important to see the role of Indonesian female ambassadors in using Twitter as a diplomatic tool which is also part of Indonesia's digital diplomacy.

### 3. Methods

In this paper, we use descriptive analysis, which aims to describe how active the use of Twitter by Indonesian female ambassadors is. We use a data set that describes several variables consisting of the number of tweets, the number of followers and followers, the number of retweets, the number of replies, years of joining, and the use of hashtags, which are then present in tabular form.

### 4. Data Collection

To answer the question posed in the earlier section, we created a dataset which consists of the list of Twitter accounts of all Indonesian ambassadors. We further limit our analysis on Twitter handles owned by female ambassadors using NodeXL Pro software, a visualization and analysis tool that represents graph data and visual exploration of networks using MS Excel application. We calculate the number of tweets, retweets, and replies by these Twitter accounts to measure the engagement level for each female ambassador.

### 5. Results and Discussion

From the data we found, there are 5 out of 9 female ambassadors who use Twitter (55.56%). Where the other 4 ambassadors do not have Twitter, so we only analyze 5 ambassador accounts. From the five accounts, 80% (4 out of 5) female ambassadors started joining Twitter in 2015-2018 while another 20% started joining in 2010. while the number of tweets for each ambassador's account, there are 20% of the female ambassador's Twitter accounts that have tweeted more than 2,500 times, while the other 80% have tweeted no more than 350 times. On the other hand, only 20% of accounts are followed by more than 750 followers, while other accounts reach 80% with no more than 300 followers. From the results of Table 1, the Indonesian Ambassador to Poland, Siti Nugraha Mauludiah, is the ambassador's account with the highest number of tweets and followers, even though the account was created in 2015. On the other hand, Adityawidi Adiwoso Asmady's Twitter account for the Ambassador of Slovakia joined Twitter in 2010 but has the least number of followers of the four other ambassadors' accounts.

Table 1. Indonesian female ambassador's Twitter accounts

Country	Ambassador's Name	Twitter	Join	Number of Tweets	Following	Followers
Poland	H.E. Mrs. Dra. Siti Nugraha Mauludiah, M. I. A.	@snmauludiah	2015	2711	250	758
Finland & Estonia	H.E. Dr. Ratu Silvy Gayatri	@silvygayatri	2018	316	10	103
Peru & Bolivia	H.E. Dra. Marina Estella Anwar Bey	@BeyEstella	2017	282	94	98
Slovakia	H.E. Mrs. Adityawidi Adiwoso Asmady, M. A.	@Wiekeadiwoso	2010	259	65	23
Argentina, Uruguay, & Paraguay	H.E. Mrs. Dra. Niniek Kun Naryatie	@KunNaryatie	2015	90	47	267
Bangladesh & Nepal	H. E. Mrs. Drs. Rina Prihyasmiarsi Soemarno,	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, & The Bahamas	H.E. Mrs. Dra. Nana Yuliana, MA., Ph.D	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Denmark & Lithuania	H.E. Mrs. Dewi Savitri Wahab	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Italy, Malta, San Marino, & Cyprus	H.E. Mrs. Dra. R. A. Esti Andayani	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Based on available data, on average, Indonesian female ambassadors who have Twitter accounts serve in European and South American regions. This shows that none of the Indonesian female ambassadors have a Twitter account assigned to countries in Asia, Oceania, and Africa. In addition, the data also shows that one of the Indonesian female ambassadors started using Twitter as a communication medium in 2010 which is right after four years since Twitter was created in 2006. However, the data also shows that starting from 2015 to 2018, Indonesian female ambassadors succeeded in gathering followers who have 90–750 followers on Twitter.

Table 2. The engagement level of five Indonesian female ambassadors' Twitter accounts

Ambassador's Name	Tweet	Retweet	Reply	Hashtag
H.E. Mrs. Dra. Siti Nugraha Mauludiah, M. I. A.	162	158	10	indonesianway inidiplomasi (59), inidiplomasi indonesianway (24), inidiplomasi (21), indonesianway (9), indonesianway inidiplomasi negaramelindungi (7)
H.E. Dr. Ratu Silvy Gayatri	0	28	5	inidiplomasi (18), 'indonesianway jewelry diasporaindonesia (4), 'dairy estonia indonesia indonesianway inidiplomasi (3), 'indonesia finland (3), 'sudirmancup2021 indonesiabisaaindonesiajuara inidiplomasi (3)
H.E. Dra. Marina Estella Anwar Bey	4	248	23	inidiplomasi (16), iafbali2018 (6), unga (6), 'vmfachir indonesia4unsc indonesiasanmarino atruepartner4peace (6), 'atruepartner (5)
H.E. Mrs. Adityatwidi Adiwoso Asmady, M. A.	26	243	6	covid_19 (9), 'kbribratoslava indonesiaslovakia (6), 'inidiplomasi indonesiaway kbribratoslava (5), 'kbribratoslava inidiplomasi indonesianway (5), 'asean2020vn (4)
H.E. Mrs. Dra. Niniek Kun Naryatie	31	59	7	inidiplomasi (15), 'maiacolodenco economia argentina (9), 'inidiplomasi indonesianway (7), 'inidiplomasi indonesianway (5), 'tailandia vietnam (5)

Table 2 shows the level of interaction of the five Twitter accounts belonging to the Indonesian female ambassador during their tenure as ambassador, as measured by the number of tweets, retweets, and replies. It is important to know the level of engagement of each account to understand the extent to which Indonesian female ambassadors actively use Twitter as a medium of diplomacy. Based on the data in Table 2 shows that Ambassador Siti Nugraha Mauludiah has the highest level of interaction, which can be seen from the number of tweets among the five other ambassadors. Meanwhile, Figure 1 is the most popular tweet that garners 50 likes from the audience.



Figure 1. The most popular tweet by ambassador Siti Nugraha Mauludiah's Twitter account

Where in the posting of these tweets, contains about her inauguration while serving as ambassador to Poland, and posts some photos of that moment. In addition, she has also retweeted 158 times, in which she occupies the third most retweeted position among the five other ambassadorial accounts. The data also shows that Ambassador Siti Nugraha only replied ten times while serving as ambassador. Meanwhile, there are the top 5 uses of hashtags by Ambassador Siti Nugraha, where the hashtag 'Indonesianway inidiplomasi' is the most frequently used hashtag, which has been used 59 times.



Figure 2. The most popular tweet by ambassador Niniek Kun Naryatie's Twitter account

Ambassador Niniek Kun Naryatie has tweeted 31 times, and has retweeted 59 times, and replied 7 times. Figure 2 is the most popular tweet by Ambassador Niniek's account, which was measured by the number of likes received from the audience, which was 728 likes. Where this number is included, the number of likes is the highest among the five other ambassadorial accounts. As seen from Figure 2, the Tweets contain congratulations on the inauguration of the new Uruguayan president, and Ambassador Niniek also mentioned that Indonesia is ready to increase its partnership with Uruguay the tweet has also been retweeted by 94 audiences. The tweet also shows that the ambassador, Niniek Kun Nuryatie, has actively contributed to playing her role as an ambassador, to maintain relations between foreign countries through her digital diplomacy which is also part of Indonesia Twiplomacy. The

use of hashtags such as 'inidiplomasi' is also the most popular tweets, wherein Table 2 also shows that the hashtag is the most frequently used hashtag, which is 15 times.

Figure 3. The most popular tweet by Ambassador Adiyatwidi Adiwoso's Twitter account.



Figure 3. The most popular tweet by ambassador Adiyatwidi Adiwoso's Twitter account

The level of engagement by Ambassador Adiyatwidi Adiwoso's Twitter account, occupies the second position in the level of interaction with the most retweets of up to 243 times, and the third position with the most tweets, which is 26 times. However, from the total number of tweets, she only garnered 1 likes for each of her tweets. Figure 3 is one of 26 tweets owned by the ambassador Adiyatwidi. On the other hand, the use of 'inidiplomasi' hashtag is not the most widely used by Ambassador Adiyatwidi's account in all her levels of engagement, but the use of the hashtag "covid\_19" is the most frequently used.



Figure 4. The most popular tweet by Marina Estella Anwar Bey's Twitter account

Figure 4 shows one of the most popular of the four tweets by Ambassador Marina Estella Anwar Bey's account. In the tweet, she posted a photo containing Indonesian products in Peru, where the tweets have been liked by 12 audiences and have been retweeted 6 times. Although the number of likes and retweets is not as much as the number of likes and retweets on popular tweets (see Figure 2) owned by Ambassador Niniek's account, Ambassador Estella has played her role as ambassador by using Twitter to expand her digital network in promoting Indonesian products in foreign countries to other countries or public audience. Table 2 also shows that although Marina's ambassadorial account only tweeted 4 times, the level of interaction based on retweets and replies was the highest interaction among the other four ambassadorial accounts. Meanwhile, the use of hashtags such as 'inidiplomasi' is the hashtag most often used by Ambassador Marina's Twitter account.



Figure 5. The most popular tweet by Ratu Silvy Gayatri's Twitter account

The ambassador's account Ratu Silvy Gayatri has the lowest level of interaction among other ambassadorial accounts, which is measured by the number of tweets, retweets, and replies. Where the ambassador Silvy Gayatri has never tweeted but has interacted based on replies 5 times. However, it should be noted that, although Ambassador Ratu Silvy has never tweeted, she has retweeted 28 times, with the most frequently used hashtag is 'indiplomasi'. Figure 5 shows the interaction based on replies between the ambassador's account Ratu Silvy Gayatri and the tweet account belonging to the Chief of Protocol, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

From these five ambassadorial accounts, there are differences and similarities in the level of engagement for each ambassadorial account. There is a difference in the level of engagement as measured by the number of retweets and tweets. There are 2 female ambassador accounts that retweeted more than 200 times, one ambassador account that retweeted more than 100 times and 2 other accounts had retweeted less than 100 times. Not only that, but the difference is also quite a contrast in the level of engagement based on the number of tweets, where there is only 1 ambassador who has tweeted more than 100 times, and 4 other accounts have tweeted no more than 50 times. On the other hand, the similarity in the level of engagement is in the use of hashtags, most of the five ambassadorial accounts use hashtags that use the word 'indiplomasi' for each of the top five of the use of hashtags. Ambassador Siti Nugraha Mauludiah's account is the ambassador's account that uses the hashtag 'indiplomasi' the most among other ambassadorial accounts. Meanwhile, the ambassador's account of Silvy Gayatri, was the last account to join Twitter in 2018 and is in the lowest position in terms of engagement. Meanwhile, the ambassador's account, Adiyatwidi Adiwoso, has been on Twitter for a long time and is in the second-highest position in the level of engagement based on retweets. While other accounts only garnered less than 60 likes.

## 6. Conclusion

Technological developments have affected aspects of people's lives, so that governments in various countries are trying to promote technology in various fields, one of which is in the field of diplomacy. Modern diplomacy practices have brought opportunities for ambassadors, especially female ambassadors to be able to take advantage of digital technology, such as social media as a diplomatic tool. In this case, Indonesian female ambassadors can play their role by utilizing social media such as Twitter as a complementary tool for diplomacy to represent Indonesia abroad as well as being able to gather information and interact with public audiences, considering that Indonesia is a country with the fifth rank as the most Twitter users in the world. In this study, we found that almost 60 percent of Indonesian female ambassadors have a Twitter account, and they serve in European and American countries.

The data suggest that newer accounts can outnumbered the older ones in terms of its followers, depending on how active the users are interacting in the social media platform. We also found that ambassadors' accounts that recently joined Twitter had more followers than accounts that had been on Twitter for a long time and some of them had quite a contrasting number of followers. This reflects how active the ambassadors' Twitter accounts are, which is measured by the level of engagement. The level of engagement for each ambassador's account is very diverse, such as there are very contrasting differences in the number of tweets, but on the other hand there are similarities between these accounts, such as the use of hashtag 'inidiplomasi' being the most often used. We conclude that Indonesian female ambassadors have not yet maximized the benefit of Twiplomacy to support their diplomatic duties. Female politicians are also divided in utilizing social media during election season (Prihatini 2020) as some of them are worried their campaign strategy will be in jeopardy. Further study could expand from here as to why female diplomats are lacking in terms of utilizing Twitter to improve Indonesia's digital diplomacy.

## **Acknowledgements**

This work was supported by the Research and Technology Transfer Office (RTTO), BINUS University, as part of the Student Thesis Article Publishing Scheme (STARS) 2022.

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## **Biographies**

**Yosi Widuri** is in her last year undertaking a bachelor's degree in International Relations at Bina Nusantara (Binus) University, Jakarta, Indonesia. Her research interests include gender, digital diplomacy, and women's representation.

**Ella Prihatini** teaches International Relations at Bina Nusantara (Binus) University, Jakarta, Indonesia. She received her PhD in political science and international relations from the University of Western Australia (UWA). She holds a BA in International Relations (University of Gadjah Mada/UGM, Yogyakarta) and Master of Development Practice (University of Queensland/UQ, Brisbane). Her research interests focus on women's political participation, digital diplomacy, comparative studies, and electoral politics in Indonesia. She also serves as an honorary research fellow at the University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth.