UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Discovering Digital Diplomacy
The Case of Mediatization in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Submitted by: Aino Huxley
Supervised by: Magdalena Kania-Lundholm

Department of Informatics and Media
Master Programme in Social Sciences Digital Media and Society
August 2014

Abstract

The increasing importance of media, especially digital media, in society has been studied widely, from identity formation to activist movements. In international relations studies digital media's impact has focused considerably on public diplomacy 2.0. This focus has caused a more holistic view of digital diplomacy to be neglected. This study explores how digital media's impacts as a part of mediatization are seen within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Semi-structured interviews with 11 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were conducted. These led to the creation of three thematic fields. The first one looks into how the agency of the Ministry is seen to be impacted by digitalization. The second section looks into how community building is seen as essential. And the third part investigated how the ministry evaluates the impacts of digitalization on other ministries of foreign affairs in the light of its own experience. The finding is that the ministry is expanding into a new digital sphere and that in the process of so doing the Ministry is not a tabula rasa, but it mirrors the cultural and political context of the country within the online sphere.

Mediatization, Foreign Policy, Digital Diplomacy, Actor Network Theory

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Introduction

Media has become such an integral part of our everyday that we hardly notice how many of our daily routines are connected to, or even acted out in media. The penetration of media into all aspects of society has been coupled with vast socio-historical processes, such as globalization, individualization and commercialization. Following this line of conceptualization, media's increasing interconnectedness in society has been termed 'mediatization' (Livingstone, 2009; Miller, 2011, p.1).

Digitalization can be argued to be the latest and most intense form of mediatization. Digital media[1] have become ubiquitous to the point where it becomes almost impossible to distinguish it from 'real life' offline, as the digital sphere has come to affect how meaning is made within society. Not only does digital media penetrate into the lives of individuals, but all society in general: states, organizations and even institutions such as religion (Lövheim;Jansson;Paasonen;& Sumiala, 2013, p.26; Lundby, 2009, p. 1).

Diplomacy is argued to be undergoing an "existential crisis" as the policy environment and the structures it operates within are growing more complex. These complexities and questioning of the essence of diplomacy are a part of the rapid change, taking place in society. The deep processes such as globalization and the increasing speed of communication are stated to be the root causes of these changes (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Shar, 2012, P.33). The term digital diplomacy has become a buzz word in the last years. With this rise of interest in digital diplomacy and the stated growing complexity of the environment of diplomacy, it is interesting to see how the conductors of diplomacy, namely, ministries for foreign affairs (MFA) perceive the impact of mediatization.

Ministries of foreign affairs are situated in a fascinating middle ground of global and local, national and international, and openness and secrecy. The main tasks of a Ministry are: foreign and security policy matters, often considered as highly

---

[1] Digital Media as a concept has been widely discussed in media studies. In this study digital media refers to all online platforms in cyber space. Thus the concept is not restrictive to only social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.

confidential and secretive. The diplomatic missions of an MFA serve the nation's citizens abroad. Lastly, MFA's conduct public diplomacy, which entitles maintaining and building relations to non-state actors as well as lay-people (MFA Finland, 2014).

The MFA of Finland presents an especially interesting case, as the Ministry has had a strategic online presence for already two decades (MFA Finland, 2004). Furthermore, the Finns as a nation can be characterized by their pride in technological advancement, to the point where discontent towards the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' seemingly slow adaption to digital diplomacy made it to the editorial headline in the most read newspaper of Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat*. "Sweden has surpassed Finland in Digital Diplomacy" (HS, 2014) the headline declared. Relations with Sweden have always been viewed as competition for the Finns.

Digital diplomacy often refers to state leaders' activity on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook. Fitting to the headline, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, was actually ranked as the third most connected head of state or MFA online (Burson-Marsteller, 2014). The Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb, was far behind, ranked 22nd. While the importance of MFAs being active on social media sites is undoubtedly becoming increasingly important, statements such as Sweden beating Finland in digital diplomacy are somewhat problematic.

First of all examining the meaning of the concept of diplomacy reveals that diplomacy means " [a] process of negotiation and communication between states that seeks to resolve conflict without recourse to war; an instrument of foreign policy." (Heywood, 2011, p.7). It is rather difficult to measure to what extent Bildt's or Stubb's tweets have affected diplomatic negotiations. Secondly, the term 'digital' is a complicated one, as Vincent Miller puts it: " it [digital media] is always being, modified, compressed, decompressed, linked and databased, and in that sense has the potential to exist in infinite versions" (2009, p.29). Thus the term digital entails a constant process of transformation. Furthermore, digital as a conceptualization encompasses all what is possible due to the internet: from mobile phones to all other information communication technologies, which are connected by the internet, and the institutions enabling them and even the experiences enabled by them (Miller, 2009, p.1; Choucri, 2012, p.7).[2]

---

[2] In this thesis digital media, digital sphere and the digital arena all refer to the transformative new arena of interaction, connected to the internet (Choucri, 2012, p.viii)

Diplomacy has always had to adapt and change to the particular communication forms and of its environment (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Shar, 2012, P.33). Digitalization appears as a holistic process which affects society in all parts; therefore, for the MFA this would mean change both in the forms of communication and expansion of the environment in which it operates. Thus understanding digital diplomacy simply as a tool for the MFA overlooks the wide transformative quality of digitalization.

Mediatization as, globalization affects different contexts in diverse ways, thus it is difficult to state whether Sweden beat Finland in digital diplomacy. As mediatization is a holistic process penetrating in to all aspects and actors in society it becomes interesting to see how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland perceives the impacts of digitalization brought by mediatization, and further how the process changes the agency of the organization and their actions and how they see these impacts in comparison to other states, for example Sweden.

Research Questions

As stated earlier this thesis will look into the process of how medicalization's impacts are perceived and adopted into the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For this the following main research question was formulated:

How is mediatization's impact on an organization perceived?
This question aims at investigating how the actors, which construct an organization, perceive the impacts which digital media brings forth in an organization. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland is used as an explorative case. Furthermore the following working questions were formulated to guide the research:

How does mediatization impact the perceived agency in the Ministry For Foreign Affairs of Finland?
This question seeks to explore how mediatization in the form of digital media is perceived to impact the agency of the Ministry.

How is context seen to be related to the impacts of mediatization?
This question points to investigate what impact context is seen to have on mediatization.

How do the interviewees compare impacts of mediatization on other MFAs compared to the MFA of Finland?
Lastly this question aims at looking how the different actors within the ministry see digitalization impacting other MFAs and how this differs from them.

Chapter Over View

The introductory chapter lays out the background and motivation for the study. The main research question is presented together with three working questions.

The theoretical chapter sets out by explaining the theory of mediatization and arguing for a constructivist approach for studying this complex and comprehensive process. It then goes on to present that to study medias increasing role in society it is beneficial to adopt some tools from Actor Network Theory.

In the methods chapter discuss the qualitative tools chosen for conducting this research. I present how the data was collected through interviews and how it was analyzed. Moreover, questions of ontology and epistemology; validity and reliability; and ethics are discussed.

The analytical chapter consists of tree thematic fields which emerged in the in the interviews. These thematic fields explore how within the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs the impacts of mediatization are seen. The firs section analyses how agency is perceived to change. The second section delves more into of how they see their actions online. Lastly, the third section looks at how within the Ministry other states' and entities' actions online are compared to them.

The findings from the analysis will be presented in the final chapter. The chapter will summarizes the findings from the three analytical sections and based on this conclude and discuss implications of the study. Moreover, limits and possible further studies are examined.

Previous Research

When I began working on this thesis I was interested in nation branding. The concept has become popular among governments world wide, and it has not only captured the attention of governments, but also their financial resources. States with established capitalist economies, as well as, states with emerging markets can be argued to have adapted the profit based marketing techniques, previously used by private enterprises. With these tools they create and communicate a particular version of national identity. Nation branding as a practical initiative and communication strategy allows national governments to manage their projected image in the global sphere and attract the "right" kind of investment (Aronzyk, 2008, p. 42). Simon Anholt has largely contributed to the field of nation branding; publishing a quarterly journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* and having consulted over 40 states on country branding and public diplomacy (Anholt, 2014; Szondi 2008). The Unit of Public Diplomacy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland was one of these states seeking Anholts help in creating a country brand. In fact, as maybe clear, nation branding and public diplomacy are highly connected.

The term public diplomacy started to be used in the mid 1960s; the term has since undergone several slight changes of meaning and is still conceptualized differently by different authors. In a traditional view, public diplomacy is seen as "governments *communication* aimed at *foreign* audiences to achieve changes in the 'hearts or minds' of people [emphasis on original]" (Szondi, 2008, p.6) Public diplomacy can, though, be seen to affect domestic publics as well in what is called 'engaging approach', meaning input from citizens on policy formulations; and as 'explaining approach' where the MFA aims to explain policy goals and diplomacy to the nation's citizens (Szondi, 2008, p.6).

In recent years many researchers of have begun to acknowledge the importance of public diplomacy in the actions of ministers for foreign affairs. While researching nation brandings affects in public diplomacy, I kept constantly reading about the terms 'digital diplomacy', 'e-diplomacy', 'public diplomacy 2.0', and even 'Twiplomacy' (Lichtenstein, 2010; Hanson, 2012; Khatib;Dutton&Thelwall, 2012; Burson-Marsteller, 2014). These terms were most often connected to the effects of the internet's intensified connectivity within public diplomacy. The general consensus

within public diplomacy seems to be, that the new information and communication technologies and the internet have strongly influenced the flow of information around the world, thus also affecting the very core of how MFAs interact with each other. They acknowledge that ministries will have to be ever faster informed and more available for other states, but also non-governmental actors such as citizens and NGO's (Grant, 2005, p.1-2). This becomes even more evident in the foreword of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael's report on diplomacy in the 21st century:

> We acknowledge that the institutions of diplomacy now have to work with a growing community of 'stakeholders', that diplomacy is becoming the business of managing networks and that public diplomacy is a key feature of the diplomatic environment. (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Shar, 2012, p.9)

With the understanding of the broadening scope of diplomacy, the concepts of digital diplomacy and public diplomacy 2.0 have become an integral part of studying public diplomacy. Multiple studies of the American State Department's work on social media, for example on the work of the Digital out Reach Team in the Middle East, are starting to emerge (Khatib,Dutton & Thelwall, 2012). Moreover, explorations of MFAs conducts on the different social media sights have increased, as Christian Christensen's study of the Swedish government's nation branding experiment on twitter: @*Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter* (Christensen, 2013). Additionally, multiple studies by students on the usage of social media tools in individual embassies, such as, Facebook and Twitter, have begun to emerge (Hoffman, 2013; Sillanpää, 2014). Even though some researchers have acknowledged the pervasiveness of the internet in foreign policy, as can be seen through the quote of Richard Grant "the Internet has its effects in foreign policy as it does in every other area of government policy." (Grant, 2005, p.1), I did not find studies looking into how people working in ministries of foreign affairs saw digitalization impacting the ministry as a whole. Most research studied digital diplomacy as a tool for public diplomacy, thus it was almost equal to public diplomacy 2.0. However, digital diplomacy was also used for an overall term for all actions MFAs conducted online.

This apparent ambiguity of the concept, made me interested in finding out how MFAs them selves saw the concept of digital diplomacy and how it affected their ministry. While conducting interviews at the Finnish MFA, it became apparent that people used the term as ambiguously as it was used in academic literature. Digital diplomacy was seen as ministers tweeting to broad audiences, and embassies being

present on Facebook. However the interviewees also talked about the pervasiveness of the internet and the impact of change in everyday practices.

Perhaps the concept of digital diplomacy restricts the understanding of the profound transformations mediatization as a whole has on MFAs. Mediatization studies have, for a while now, focused on the process of how media becomes increasingly intertwined with society and the construction of society. For example Stig Hajrvard (2008), Mia Lövheim (2012) and Knut Lundby (2011) have studied how media and the internet have affected religion through the process of mediatization. The mediatization of politics has been brought forth by Jesper Strömbäck and Frank Esser (2009). International relations and foreign policy have not been this keenly scrutinizes by mediatization scholar. Yet, I see that the theoretical backdrop provided by the process oriented theory, is well suited for studying digitalization's affect on MFAs.

Thus, the curiosity for this particular research stems from the ambiguous use of digital diplomacy. When the term is used as identical to public diplomacy 2.0, it undermines the broader effect of digitalization, which has affected MFAs through out their organizational structures. I am interested in researching how actors within the MFA see this change within their organization, as well as, outside, as it is both the inside and outside factors that impact them.

As seen in the editorial note from Helsinging Sanomat, many view the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as not acting swiftly enough to the change appearing in all of society. Perhaps this position is taken as digital media is only seen as a tool for communication. Fascinated by this perplexity, I pursued to explore how actors within the MFA of Finland perceive digitalization brought by mediatization, and further how the process changes the agency of the organization. The importance and academic contribution of this study is thus, to explore how a particular MFA sees the change brought by digitalization.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. I will firstly present a broad discussion of mediatization, problematizing the dominant view within the field, namely media logic. I will then argue how the constructivist stance, underlining the need for a multilayered and context dependent approach, is more suited for empirical analysis of mediatization. Finally, based largely on Nick Couldry's research, I argue that Actor Network Theory can add important depth for understanding mediatization. I acknowledge that this coupling does not come with out problems. But the tools acquired to analyze the empirical case of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are appealing.

Laying Ground for Mediatization

Mediatization analyses the process where media gains importance within society. When studying mediatization, a relevant starting point is the linkage of media to *practice theory* from sociology, as for a long period research regarded media as solely a transmitter. With practice theory a jump from media as a static object to a changing phenomenon (mediatization) could be done (Couldry, 2004, p. 115). There are two prominent schools of thought in mediatization studies, namely the *institutionalist* and the *constructivist* approaches. In the institutionalist view mediatization is seen as a double-sided process: on one hand, media emerge as an independent institution with a logic of its own, having its own rules, norms and modes of structure (Schillemans, 2012, p.44). Other institutions, such as politics or religion, adopt this logic. Simultaneously, media also become an integral part of these institutions, as a wide range of their activities is preformed through media (Lundby, 2009, p. 8). In a more social-constructivist point of view mediatization is compared to meta-processes, such as: globalization, individualization and commercialization. Some institutionalist who have incorporated this constructivist aspect, see that each of these meta-processes is driven by an 'ordering principle', which link certain developments and events together. Thus, connecting and dividing societal processes into types of boxes of origins depending on, which field of culture and society they derive from (Krotz, 2009, p. 25). The concept of mediatization, for institutionalist scholars, is capable of explaining a multitude of phenomena linked to mass media's impact on social change. This is based on the formerly mentioned process oriented conceptualization of media:

media produces and constructs their own reality by choosing news, which they see as news worthy, and framing it in a way suitable for them (Schrott, 2009, pp. 45). Most agree that media has become increasingly important in the course of history, as reality occurs more and more through media and referring to media. Consequently, all cultural and social reality should be seen as dependent on media (Krotz, 2009, p. 24). The institutionalist scholar Jesper Strömbäck views similarly, that all societal experiences from the individual's identity formation to political processes, are now mediated and mediatized. He further asserts that this discards the question of whether or not society and politics are affected by mediatization. Leading us to the question of how mediatized they are (Strömbäck, 2008, pp. 228-229).

It becomes interesting then to investigate what drives and sets the course of mediatization. As touched upon earlier, many mediatization theorists view that meta-processes, such as mediatization, are driven by an ordering principle. For example for media this would mean a media logic, for politics it would be a political logic. Media logic can be seen as a combination of a commercial, cultural and a technological logic (Lundby, 2009, p. 8). The commercial logic implies commercialization of both the media institutions and society as a whole. Where as the technological logic refers to how the mediation technologies shape content in production and reproduction of media (Lundby, 2009, p. 8). Thus it is this combination of logics under the umbrella of logic, which drive mediatization.

A multitude of scholars the field of media studies view media logic as the driving mechanism within and behind mediatization (Lundby, 2009, p. 7). In addition to being formed by the commercial, cultural and technological logics, media logic has certain inherent characteristics to it. These characteristics are for example: news media strategies, such as valuing news worthiness of a story; weaving story telling techniques in to the story; and a production, which is competitively driven (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 233). Furthermore, it is important to underline that understanding media logic as inherent for the mediatization process implies a inherent determinism and rigidness of mediatization (Rothenbuhler, 2009, p. 101). This can be seen in Hjarvard's view on mediatized politics:

> Mediatized politics is politics that has lost autonomy, has become
> dependent in its central functions in mass media [...] institutions
> have become more dependent on media and have had to adapt the
> logic." (Hjarvard, 2013, loc. 313/4497).

Hjarvard's claim entitles that politics, and other institutions in that matter, have in one point of time been independent from or not connected to media. Here the scrutiny of the concept of media becomes crucial, and furthermore whether one can argue for such rigid inherent qualities to media.

In the institutionalist view, media logic takes over politics. This translates to mediated politics, which in its basis means media constituting the main source of information of society and politics in general, for both citizens and decision makers. In other words: when a message is communicated through a mass medium and then recipients perceive the message as "realty" (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 230). When this process intensifies, institutions, events, and processes that occur beyond the individual's everyday become more relevant (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 231). The intensification of mediated politics leads to mediatization, implying that media become such an integral part of all contexts of life and society that they cannot be lead and analyzed without media.

In accordance to Meyer (2002), Strömbäck defines political logic as comprising of two dimensions: a policy dimension, where programs of action define the solutions for political problems; and a process dimension, which constitutes the efforts to find official support for these processes. Consequently, political logic is lead by decision-making and the implementation of these decisions (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 233). Based on this, one could argue that initially a MFA operates based on political logic as its main functions are to create foreign and security policy, and furthermore legitimize these policies with the general public and governing elite. Simplifying the over taking process in an institutionalis mater the development would look like this: when media logic is the dominant logic, requirements of the media are in center, indicating how the political communication should be acted out. On the other hand, when political logic dominates the political and institutional processes and norms shape the political communication (Strömbäck, 2008, pp. 233-4). For the constructivist side of mediatization studies, this paints a rather simplistic and skewed picture of the process. For them the process consists of multiple actors, and diverse processes. I will delve deeper into the difference in the next section.

Questioning Media Logic as the Driving Principle of Mediatization

Media can be seen as conduits, language, and as environments. Seeing media as

conduits, one looks at how media works as a vehicle for contents and messages; looking at media as language, one focuses on how the multitude of media formats frame messages, and how relations between sender, content and receiver are formed; seen as an environment media points to how media systems and institutions enable social interaction and change (Lundby, 2009, p. 7). When scholars apply the concept of media logic, they most often do not clearly define the type of media implied. Furthermore, the comprehensive meaning of 'logic' is often subsided. Most often, though, media logic is connected to mass media and the ways mass media is produced, and on how the message is seen coming from a sender to a receiver. The concept of 'mediation' becomes central here.

In mediation, meaning moves in a step-to-step manner: from a discourse or text to another, extending one meaning forward. This is also how media logic is seen to work: overtaking other institutions one step at a time. Instead of this linear progress, mediatization can be argued to be more of a process. Individual actors, in this view, engage continuously with the meanings and physicality of media. Mediatization is understood as an atomized concept, and consequently, the concept is able to curve away from the step-to-step, linear advancement which media logic suggests (Hepp, 2013, p. 36). Treating mediatization as a linear progress, one fails to bring forth the constant process of change media and media forms go through in society. Further, while institutionalists threat mass media as inherent to media logic, they leave out important processes such as digital media (Hepp, 2012, p. 7). A further underlying problem with this particular view of mediatization is the assumed natural, pre-existing processes, which are independent of media, such as politics. The view implies that emerging almost from nothing, pushed by the emergence and the advancement of the dominance of media logic, media begins to control other institutions (Rothenbuhler, 2009, p. 280). It is this, which reduces mediatization to a linear and deterministic theory.

The social constructivist approach sees mediatization as a part of societal changes. With this lens, medias effect in mediatization should be seen as driven by, and through interaction. Constructivist would see that the effects of mediatization are too heterogeneous to be translated into one media logic (Hepp, 2012, p. 6). Going back to Simmel, Lundby argues that mediatization is advanced by 'social form'. Social form, in short, refers to social interactions and how media intervenes and transforms these interactions. This approach then, leads to a broader and deeper

understanding of the complex processes of changes, which lead to transformations within society (Lundby, 2009, p. 11; 110). Mediatization should be seen as a historical, an ongoing and a long-term process, in which media has constantly been entangled in. Media, furthermore, becomes evermore apart of the social construction of life in an increasingly complex manner (Krotz, 2009, p. 24). Perhaps to understand mediatization through the constructivist lens more simply one could put it this way: it is the change in the manner of how we communicate while constructing our realities, the inner and outer ones (Krotz, 2009, p. 25). In this way mediatization becomes a mutually constitutive phenomena: it becomes an environment and simultaneously people interact with it and produce it.

There have been multiple concerns on whether political institutions or institutions of other social systems could be entirely determined by a media logic. To some it seems more appealing that aside one media logic, institutions, organizations and individuals could act based on a multitude of different logics (Schrott, 2009, p. 45). Additionally, according to Lundby, the term media logic is a simplification of the "*multiplicity of factors structuring media practices*", rather than describing a simple and coherent mechanism, namely a logic. Never the less, most mediatization scholars treat the concept in this latter way (Lundby, 2009, p. 104). Moving deeper into constructivist thought, mediatization is seen as a 'meta-process'. Meta-processes are conceptualizations, and include such processes as individualization, where the importance of the individual grow; or globalization, where global intertwines grows; and commercialization, where different forms of consumerism become prominent. As a similar meta-process, mediatization is also intertwined in the other meta-processes (Hepp, 2012, p. 9). According to Krotz, mediatization as a meta-process functions on a temporal, spatial and social level (Hepp,2012, p. 13). As Hepp states further, mediatization is to be seen as a conceptual construct, and it should be understood as "a panorama of a sustained metaprocess of change". Moreover, he underlines that the process of mediatization consists of "ruptures*"* and "contradictions"*,* and cannot thus be linear in its development (Hepp, 2013, p. 69).

For mediatization the backdrop within constructivist thought is that reality is constructed and reformed in social structures. The approach underlines individual actors, social context and history as intertwined in social interaction and as an effect create process. John B. Thompson stresses that media play an increasing role in the process of transformation, or in other words in the creation of meaning (Hepp, 2013,

p. 30). Hepp explains this increase based on Otto Groth: the number of intervening spaces, as well as, tensions has grown in society, thus, an atomization and individualization has occurred, while a a massification and uniformity stemming from the process of capitalism have emerged. This, according to Hepp enables a further mediatization, as in the process the medium becomes a part of previously direct interactions. To keep in mind though is that the new social situation respectively alters the medium (Hepp, 2013, p. 33). Though this molding force of media is close to the concept of media logic, the core of it is the process oriented view: "[m]edia only become concrete in communicative action" (Hepp, 2012, p. 17). Media constitute a potentiality of action, which is the molding factor of media. It is the circular process characteristic to constructivism, which is the basis for this molding potential: one should see that social interaction has equally a molding potential on the medium (Hepp, 2012, p. 17).

> [M]ediatization needs to be conceived as a meta-process that emerges from the continuous, cumulative circulation and embedding of media contents across everyday social action, rather than as a reproductive logic or recipe already lodged somehow within media contents themselves. (Couldry, 2013, p. 6)

In line with Coludry, Hepp emphasizes that communication becomes embedded in our actions. And contrary to the idea behind media logic, communicative action cannot be separated from social interactions. Thus, it is not possible to separate medium from interactions. Media only becomes powerful, according to Hepp, when in webs of practices. Thus in the social constructivist stance media cannot become an independent institution.

In accordance to the above, I concur that as long as the concept of media logic is used as an easy way out from explaining a complex process, we will not be able to study mediatization as the great meta-process that it is. It is not possible to reduce such a strong and vast process to be directed by one logic. As Lundby asserts: to be able to study mediatization to its fullest, one should scrutinize the interrelations between mediatization and the cultural change of certain context and field (Lundby, 2009, p. 105). Yet when one studies mediatization as an empirical process one is struck by a limitation of constructivism: "[c]ommunication technologies, after all, are real and material, both in their physicality and their ability to change particular social practices" (Clark, 2009, p. 93). Social constructivism does not take in to consideration

the impacts material objects as actors have on process. Especially when studying media it is rather impossible to disregard the inherent materiality of media, as underlined by Clark. This is why I will in the following sections suggest a coupling of constructivism and *Actor Network Theory*. Acknowledging that these two approaches have some fundamental differences, I argue based on Couldry (2008), that setting some of the conflicting views aside, one is able to create a match for media studies that explains mediatization in a uniquely profound way. Following I will explain some basics of Actor Network Theory, before proceeding to demonstw how they work together.

Introducing Actor Network Theory to Explain Mediatization

Actor Network Theory is a rather complex theory with a specific terminology of its own. I will first present a general overview, as well as, a more detailed explanation of the main concepts 'actor network', 'actant' and 'translation'.

General Introduction to the Approach

Actor Network Theory (ANT) is perhaps best known for its call to incorporate non-human objects into the scope of social theory, thus shifting away from the centrality constructivist ontology assumes to humans as constructors of reality (Sommerville, 1999, p. 8). The first indications of the approach were discussed in the end 70's, but Michel Callon first coined the term in 1982 (Law, 2009, p. 142). The approach was further developed in the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) by the above-mentioned Callon, Bruto Latour and John Law (Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 826). In latest years the approach has gained rather broad influence in fields such as International Relations, State studies and Organizational studies (Berry, 2013; Passoth & Rowland, 2010; Sommerville,1999) But it has not made is way to media studies (Couldry, 2008).

As Law puts it, ANT "is a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities, and methods of analysis" (2009, p. 141). The aim is to explore socio-technological process by treating both the social and the natural as equal, but also as relational in producing webs of reality. The relational nature of objects and humans should thus be understood as no reality or form existing outside the enacted webs. Reality thus, is an "effect" of relations within and forming the webs (Law, 2009, p. 141). In line with other material-semiotic approaches ANT provides tools for

describing the forming of these discursively and materially heterogeneous webs. Underlying in the term heterogeneous is that material and discursive relations within the webs rearrange and produce all actors, such as *objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, "nature," ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements* (Law, 2009, p. 141). In this way actors create a web, which is not limited to conceptual margins such as, social, natural or technical. The concept of 'translation' is of essence for describing the processes of interaction of the different heterogeneous actors within the webs (Sommerville, 1999, p. 9). ANT specialists lament that ANT is too often mistaken for a theory; instead it should be seen as an approach towards research. Instead of trying to explain the *why* of a case, takes a rather descriptive approach in elucidating the *how*. Thus as social theory it is often argued to not have a foundational approach with strong predetermined explanations. (Law, 2009, p. 141). Actor Network Theory's forte lies thus in detecting unexpected structures, relations and the ways power works in these relations (Law & Singleton, 2013, p.496)

Why incorporating ANT into media studies creates a stronger analytical basis, is that the network in ANT is "fuller" than usually in media and communication studies. It is not limited to social networks, but to networks of actions and actors (Hepp, 2013, p. 57).

Network

One of the most important features of ANT for media studies is how networks become seen as normal, regular and finally (slowly) as natural. Even though this is not that unique for only ANT, it is central for understanding the dynamics of media and mediatization (Couldry, 2008, p. 100). As stated before ANT's value for media studies lies in the understanding the spatiality of the broad networks. Here power can be seen as spread out, instead of being clustered in nodal points and with particular individuals. Further that he power in not *located* (as in the institutionalist view), but is rather a process (Couldry, 2008, p. 100).   Thus, understanding media as a nodal point in space, does not take into consideration the spread out nature of media. Instead adopting ANT's view of networks one is able to see how media spread out in the different spaces.

Actor networks are the ontological basis for ANT. Simply put, the networks are built up by the actions and interactions of humans and non-humans. These

heterogeneous actors generate the networks through alignment and advancement of interests by translating. Translation is a process of simplification and making similar (Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 826). I will return to the concept of translation later on. Actor-networks cannot be stripped down to a single actor or a single network. Similar to the general conception of networks, actor-networks are linked together by other networks of interrelated actors (Callon, 1993, p. 93) It should be kept in mind, as Callon underlines, that actor-networks are not equal to pre-distinguished and set networks. Instead actor-networks are in constant redefinition, as the actors realign their identity and relationships as new entities enter the networks (Callon, 1993, p. 93). This constant change is not limited only to human actors, but includes all that can be detected as actors. Networks are in constant change because of the circular movement of realignment: "[actors] are both changed by their circulation and change the collective through their circulation. They act and, as a result, demand new modes of action from other actors" (Sayes, 2013, p. 5). To put it more simply, actor networks have two sides to them: firstly they connect diverse actors (human and non-human) and secondly, they redefine and transform the elements they are made of. Within networks, actors are simplified, but these simplifications only last as long as another entity does not challenge the reality produced in this network, making it more complex (Callon, 1993, p. 93-94; 96).

There are a myriad of ways of how actors get enrolled into a network some of which are: negotiation, transaction, consent, physical violence, seduction (Callon, 1986, p. 208). These are only a few ways that ordering occurs in the network: as no overall or pre-distinguished natural, social or conceptual framework or scale exists. Sociological concepts such as micro and macro, do not exist outside the networks, rather they are "performative effects" of the certain networks under study (Law J., 2009, p.147). Each network constitutes and lays down its own metrics. As an example Law puts forth that nation state or class can be real, but not as explanatory foundations as such, instead they are made real through practice within the webs of actors they are observed in (Law J., 2009, p.147). Thus it should be seen that there are no foundational structures of society as realities are multiple. What keeps these realities together are the interrelatedness of entities (Law J., 2009, p. 152). Actor networks are thus not singular networks with a center, instead the networks are multiple and can associate to each other in an infinite amount of ways.

Law suggests further, that realities (or networks) hold together by 'othering'

or differentiating from each other, but also by actors flowing into the networks. The action, which occurs within the networks is that the heterogeneous actors mutually sustain each other; forces coming from outside are either dissociated or transformed to relate to the network at hand. But as Law underlines: "[t]he crucial point, however, is that the structure of the network reflects the power and the nature of both the forces available and the forces with which the network collides" (Law, 1993, p. 121). Thus the structures of power and the nature of the networks are in constant fluctuations as different networks "collide" or "flow" into each other.

As argued before mediatization is a metaprocess, which is context dependent, thus seeing research cases as networks brakes down the concept of mediatization to the complex context dependent processes that it is made of. Taking an ANT perspective makes us consider the embeddedness of the case under study and opens up to consider unexpected actors as affecting the process of media becoming a molding force. The naturalness of media can be described by the ANT term 'black-boxed', which points to media seeming as one holistic entity in such but more scrutinized more thoroughly can be seen to consist of a myriad of networks one can research the concept of media (Couldry, 2008, pp. 93;101).

Actant
To distinguish the special treatment of actors in ANT the entities under study are called 'actants'[3]. What is special with actants is that within and forming networks they are volitional; not merely something that reacts, but things that also act and have an effect. Thus, any discursive unit that can be detected, any individual actor, event, collective, machine or even force can be an actant (Law & Singleton, 2013, p.491; Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 829). Additionally, what in the social science's pre determined sense could be called micro and macro actors: computers, individuals, bacteria; and institutions, corporations, organizations, are actants (Sommerville, 1999, pp. 9-10). Based on the ontological stance of 'generalized symmetry' all actors are viewed as equal (Law, 2009, p. 145). This does not mean that they are similar, but only that they should be regarded as equal actors, regardless of whether they are humans or non-humans. Moreover, actants cannot be reduced to a single entity, they are always constituted by a relation, which then "(sometimes) make things" (Cordella

---

[3] As most ANT theorists use the terms 'actor' and 'actant' interchangeably, this will also be the conduct throughout this theses. It should be noted, though, that both are to be understood as actants.

& Shaikh , 2006, p. 15). This is why ANT is considered relational: it is the actants' multiple relations that give meaning to that entity, thus no actant possesses an inherent or isolated quality. (Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 826) As Latour sees actors as constantly reflexive: comparing, relating, expanding, creating standards and typologies, how they do these depends on the other actants within the networks. Some of these resist and seem stable. But as stated before, no actor network is inherently stable (Law J. 2009, p. 148; Latour, 2004, pp. 69-70). All actors, human or non-human, have agency to some degree. But again the quality and extent of agency varies on how they are influenced, how they themselves influence, and how they resist the influence of others. It is crucial to keep in mind that non-human actors are not mere intermediaries. They do not simply hold a place in a network structure, which could easily be taken over any other similar actor. They, just as human actors, produce and mediate in a way that has an effect (Sayes, 2013, p. 5).

On a more epistemological stance, within ANT the importance does not lay on the 'identity' of an actor but on the 'agency'. This abandoning of identity is what creates somewhat of a problem in combining the two approaches, but I will return to this later. Again as Sommerville brings forth, it is not important for the analysis of ANT whether the actor is *self-conscious* or in a *natural state*, instead the focus of the analysis is   relations with other actors (Sommerville, 1999, p. 10). Translating Sommervilles example to the present case: the MFA of Finland as an actant cannot have agency or act with out the smaller entities within its network (workers, offices, electronic devices etc.)

One of the major criticisms ANT has received concerns that one has to "abandon all distinctions between humans and non-humans" to be able to see them as equal (Amsterdamska, 1990: 499). This take on actants is valid and logical, but as emphasized often by ANT theorist: the approach does not propose a general theory of networks nor of agency. Instead the structure of agents and the networks have to be determined case by case. Thus ANT does not propose the researcher to understand all actants inherently the same, but to treat them in a symmetric way prior to analysis (Sayes, 2013, p.9) It is this underlying idea of symmetry which suggests, contrary to many others social theories, that non-humans hold sociological relevancy. In interaction it is meaningless whether the actor is human or nonhuman, what matters in ANT is the action occurring from interaction and the effects (Sayes, 2013, p.12). Again looking back at the concept of media logic, it is exactly this that creates the

basis for viewing mediatization as a metaprocess instead of a inherent logic. Media in it self cannot be viewed as merely mass media, or constringent and innate for a certain institution. Mediatization should be seen as a process in networks, which is different from network to network depending on how the actors constrain and force each other. ANT thus, also challenges the fixed notion of organizations such as MFA's, questioning the accepted view that they are stable and set actors, motionlessly stable in one place. ANT's contribution is to see organizations, such as media institutions, the MFA or even the state, not as things, but as practices and processes of actors, which create and translate them constantly (Passoth & Rowland, 2010, pp. 824; 828).

Translation

The concept of translation is central for understanding the interaction of actants. In the simplest sense translation means the attempt of making words identical. But perhaps as we have understood from the sections above, no two entities can be the same. Thus, as Law puts it "translation also implies betrayal: traduction, trahison". In its essence, translation is about attempting similarity, but also "shifting". It is about re-alignment and change (Law, 2009, p. 144). To be kept in mind though, is that there is no one way of translation; there is no one way that the action of linking and making similar (Law J., 1999, p. 8). But to shed some light on what Latour and Callon understand translation to be empirically, one could mention: "negotiations, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence" (Callon & Latour, 1981, p.279). In the core translation is the action where one actor tries to 'enroll' (through manipulation or force) another to a position where the actor can 'speak' and act on behalf of the other as their interests align with the successful action of enrolment. Thus, going back to actors and networks: their size is the outcome of translations (Callon & Latour, 1981, p.279; Sommerville, 1999, p.9; Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 829). Mediatization could thus be seen as the translation of media into the multitudes of networks. There therefore cannot be a set definition of mediatization as it is in constant flux. **(**Hepp, 2013, p. 51)

Marrying Mediatization with ANT

Nick Couldry, a professor of Media, Communications and Social Theory from LSE, questions most of mediatization field's research and deliberation of the social theoretical grounding based on ontology. Most mediatization research, according to

him, lack gravely, when it comes to clarifying the ontological foundations of their research. This becomes a profound problem when a process argued to cause social change, is under scrutiny. On a critical account of media logic, he questions if we should understand *social space* (society) as a singularity, where a single logic can affect all layers in a set manner (Couldry, 2013, pp.5-6). If society is transformed by one logic in a seamless manner, than how is it possible that media transformations can empirically be shown to differ form context to time. Ontologically the idea of media logic has leakages, which are patched by viewing mediatization as a "meta-category of social description", in other words as a social metaprocess, thus focusing on the changing dynamics and dimensionality of society. Mediatization research should then focus on the evolving and new types of "non-linear causality" which occur when media develop into a integral part of processes and interrelations (Couldry, 2013, p. 6).

The concepts process and changing dynamics should be underline here, as this is where Actor Network Theory can to contribute to media studies. ANT generates an approach to understand how objects in a historical manner, become integral and almost natural parts of processes, but also how these natural parts change within these networks of processes (Couldry, 2008, p. 93). ANT does not concern the social in it self, but the processes through which actors create lasting asymmetries. This for Caldry is vital for media studies as

> [m]edia institutions, whatever the pervasiveness of their reach and however responsive they are to their audiences, remain the beneficiaries of huge and lasting asymmetries in the distribution of symbolic resources. (Couldry, 2008, p. 99)

He further argues that the main contribution of ANT in media theory is its reminder that media does not blend into the social seamlessly, that is to say that there is a constant fight or movement between actors in the processes or as ANT theorists see them: networks (Couldry, 2008, p. 96).

In align with Couldry, I also see that it is the hybridity of actors relations that ANT theorists argue for, which is crucial for media studies (Couldry, 2008, p. 96). This acknowledgement of hybridity of actors in society thus ontologically defies institutionalists views of a media logic or as Couldry himself sees media logic regarding media as the "natural channels of social life and social engagement".

Media according to him has in a certain way been mystified as a "mediated center" (Couldry, 2008, p. 96). Instead of being this mystified center that has occurred out of the blue, media is a part of the process where technology seems to amalgamate into the social, or in ANT terms, when the action of translation occurs within a network (Couldry, 2008, p. 98). This is well put forth in the following:

ANT offers a precise and nonfunctionalist account of how actors become established as powerful through the stability of the networks that pass through them. The actor that is an obligatory passing point in a network has power, and the more networks in which that is true, the more power that actor has. As a result, over time, the ability of an actor to act effectively on a larger scale becomes established. (Couldry, 2008, p. 101)

To understand mediatization one should study contextdependently how the process of media (as institution and as physical objects) gain an integral role in the structures of institutions and organizations. Further how these dynamics are connected to a broader networks of competition (Couldry, 2013, p. 11). ANT, according to Couldry, lays down "fundamental insights" for understanding networks connection to space, as well as, the formation of power in these networks. Especially the notion of power asymmetries, and how these come to be seen as natural in processes even in such a way that they become hard to perceive as power, is an important insight into media studies (Couldry, 2008, p. 104). It is through these asymmetries and hybridity of networks that media becomes a kind of molding force. Thus media gains power in networks to "exercise a certain 'pressure' upon the way in which we communicate". (Hepp, 2013, p. 54).

To see this in ANT terms one has to consider the 'objects' of media also as molding. They are not just vehicles for transmitting social meaning, but they, as objects, affect reality and should be considered to do so equally to humans. As Hepp points out the process of molding only becomes concrete when they have been "appropriated" (Hepp, 2013, p. 55), or in ANT terms when they have been translated and have become rather stable in a network. It is this amalgamation of the constructivist and Actor Network Theory, which create the ontological and epistemological basis of this study. As stated earlier, there are grave discrepancies for combining these two approaches. I will discuss these in the following section, thus arguing that for understanding the empirical worlds process of mediatization, combining the two gives a strong and substantial base for describing and explaining

the case at hand.

Ontological Issues with the Marriage

Media studies lay in an interesting middle ground of technology and society. On one hand media constitute a medium, a technological object which transmits messages from point a to point b (or point c,d,e,f and so on). On the other hand, communicative processes affect and even change the social and cultural settings, which they derive from. Furthermore, they also change and affect the relationships participants have with their environment and one another (Couldry, 2013. p. 4). Unfortunately it seems that media studies is greatly divided though. Either media is studied as a technical object in it self or it is viewed as a part of societal processes, where it only gains meaning as a social construct. To fully live up to this middle ground of society and technology, which media studies poses, one should "develop a means of addressing technology as a real and material phenomenon" (Lister &al., 2003, pp. 289-290; Clark, 2009, p. 93).

Thus, in this study I have sought to mend this gap by combining Actor Network Theory's understanding of actor networks, where non-humans are also considered as volitional actor, with a constructive approach to mediatization (explaining process of how media becomes crucial in society). At first sight these two seem to fill each other's theoretical gaps well, but digging deeper ontologically, one finds problems in the combination. It could be argued then, that one should not continue on with research with such a discrepancy. But sometimes, perhaps, one should go over academic boarders to find explanations for empirical findings. Thus, I will here lay down the discrepancies of the two approaches, to show that the use of them does not come with out consequences.

Actor Network Theory specialist John Law suggests that there have been two prominent alternative approaches to study technology in a social context, namely constructivism and systems approach. Constructivism assumes that the natural world does not affect lived reality, as it is a social construction of individuals and collectives. Differences in viewing the structures of entities then, are based on the different interests and resources groups have (Law, 1993, p.111). Systems approach on the other hand sees that technology is also affected by the political, economic and social factors (Law, 1993, p.112). Technology in the early studies of structuring was

seen both as an enabling and constraining structure for human subjects. The approach was effective in describing how a certain technology functioned in organizations, leaving out the relationship of how technology affects the human and vice versa (Hanseth; Berg & Aanestad , 2004, p.117). The systems approach distinguishes between the system and the environment it is in, seeing that changes sometimes occur from outside factors. The approach, though, brings forth questions that are hard to answer, such as: how are limits defined for a system; or how can an environment's influence be explained concretely (Callon, 1993, p.100).

Both social constructionism and system approach see that "technology is not fixed by nature"; technology's relation to science is changing and technological stabilization can only be understood by relating it to a variety of social and non-technological factors. Social constructivism, though, sees that social relations are behind the advancement and stabilization of technological artifacts (Law, 1993, p.113). ANT could be argued to be an amalgamation of these. ANT, as Law asserts, does not see the social as standing behind all reality or systems of alone. Other factors such as economic, natural or technical might shape the system, and even the social more than the social interrelations that result from this. And this reasoning marks to the core of ANT. What separates ANT from system approach, though, is the focus on conflict, meaning the process of translation between actors. Consequently, in ANT both the *condition* and *tactics* in these conflicts should be studied (Law, 1993, p.114). ANT's point is to discover the patterns which occur when these conflicts happen, it is not to underline the social's importance in the network as in social constructivism (Law, 1993, p.114).

This is a point which also fits in with this study as I am not interested in the social in such, but the patterns which occur when media becomes an integral part of relations. According to Law, it is not possible to research the social, if one does not take into account the embeddedness of the socials and technical: when studying the social one needs to take into consideration "the hows of relational materiality" (Law, 2009, pp.147-148). ANT in general and this study enable an ontology that gives space to "purposive social action", which is not only constricted to the individual agency nor is it technologically deterministic (Clark, 2009, p. 94). This view on technology is central for media studies that operate in a so-called middle ground of society and technology. Lister and fellows, furthermore, argue that in humanities the necessity to use the term agency instead of relationality, has blocked many media cultural

researchers to incorporate technology in their research in a sufficient way (Lister &al., 2003).

On the other hand, one does need to understand the nature of the social to be able to understand mediatization (Couldry, 2013, p.6). In his article *Actor Network Theory and Media – Do they Connect and on What terms?* Couldry goes in depth on the points in which ANT can contribute to media studies, and where the problems lie. He asserts that ANT's limitations for media studies does not derive from understanding humans and non-humans as equal, but from the abandonment to understand human action. Consequently, it leaves no tools for media as a "social experience" and "social organization"*,* accordingly he states that "[t]hese limitations are rather grave and thus ANT in such cannot be used to describe media*"* (Couldry, 2008, p. 99)*.* The problem for media studies and especially mediatization is then that ANT is more of a "sociology of networks" instead of a "sociology of action". Couldry sees that ANT is "pathbraking" in pointing the researcher to consider material objects as active actors and translators in processes, and in unfolding how certain processes of translations sometimes become dominant. But he underlines that ANT does not offer a way to understand how certain interpretations keep on being interpreted and re-interpreted, for example text produced to be interpreted (Couldry, 2008, p. 102). This to Couldry suggests one more limitation of ANT:

> its lack of interest in the possibility that networks and their products go on being reinterpreted long after they have been established. This is an especially important problem in relation to networks that produce objects whose main purpose is to generate interpretations (such as media). (Couldry, 2008, p. 102).

ANT can offer a lot, in regards of understanding *how* networks are created through asymmetries, but it is not interested in considering *why* networks and being a part of them matter. The why becomes especially important in society and social consequences deriving from "power differentials" (Couldry, 2008, p. 102). Considering power is especially important for media studies, as media is a "vehicle for distributing social power", hence incorporating a social aspect for using ANT in media studies is essential (Couldry, 2008, p. 101).

It is these above mentioned gaps between media studies and ANT, which makes the approaches somewhat incompatible, yet if one acknowledges this and mends it in other ways, the basis they provide together create a worthy frame for studying mediatization (Couldry, 2008, p. 104). As Couldry concludes, the functional

aspects of ANT are too valuable to discard in the study of media. I have thus decided to use a social constructivist approach with certain concepts of ANT. I use the best-suited parts of ANT and social constructivism: I will use the understanding of symmetric heterogeneous networks, thus in regards of network creation, treating humans and non-humans as equal. Moreover, I will take the stance that all reality is relational and created within networks. Thus the central terms adopted from ANT in this study are *actor Networks, actants, the process of translating* and *black-box.* Going further though, I will not discard the notion of culture, sociology of action and interpretation, as these are critical for media studies (Couldry, 2008, p. 100). And thus the epistemological stance turns more towards the social, following the thoughts of Couldry:

> We need, in other words, to think about how people's cognitive and emotive frameworks are shaped by the underlying features of the networks in which they are situated (Couldry, 2008, p. 104)

This quote summarizes the main research question of this thesis. As I am looking at how the MFA is seen to be impacted by mediatization.

Summary

Mediatization simply put, is an umbrella term for explaining the process of how media becomes more important and intertwined in society. In this chapter I have sought to lay down the theoretical framework that will be used to analyze mediatization within the context of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I started out by presenting one of the dominating views of the essence of mediatization, which bases on the view of mediatization being driven by a media logic. I attempted to concretize how theorists using this approach see media logics advance to becoming an institution in it self and how it takes over other logics, as in political logic. Media logic, as argued, is a rather flat tool to use for analysis and is not flexible enough to actually explain the complexity of the empirical reality. I thus move on to reasoning, how a process oriented approach of social constructivism combined with the network oriented Actor Network Theory provide vivid tools for the analysis. This combination does not come with out its problems, though, as Actor Network Theorists do not take into consideration, or even reject the social environment. Media is a vehicle for distributing social power, and thus it is not possible to conduct media research abandoning the social altogether. This is also not the purpose of this study, instead the

combination of the two approaches is motivated by the excellent understanding Actor Network Theory provides for network creation and the aspect of spatiality that comes from this. Furthermore, the inclusion of nonhuman objects' importance in creating these networks is especially crucial for media studies, as technology is inherent to media. The combination of the two approaches emerged rather inductively, and this is why I see that they are well suited to guide the analysis of this study. In the next chapter I will explain the methodological decisions and processes of this study, and I will further explain how the empirical material lead me to combine the two approaches.

3. Methods

The aim of this study is to explore how the implications are perceived when an organization is mediatized. This said, the approach chosen for the research is qualitative (Bryman, 2008, p.17). The aim is not to quantify how many computers there are, or how many hours' employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland spend online. Instead it is to qualitatively comprehend how the impacts of digitalization are perceived. The chapter will first discuss the methodological basis for the study. Then the epistemological and ontological stance will be explained. Afterwards the sample of interviewees will be described, followed by an explanation of how the data was collected and how it was analyzed. Lastly, a discussion of the reliability and validity of the study will be examined, as well as, the ethical considerations and limitations.

Methodological Basis of the Study

Many researchers state that qualitative research is inductive. Accordingly, as *grounded theory* suggests it is a framework for the researcher to creates theory out of the collected empirical data (Bryman, 2008, p.541). The aim of this thesis is not to produce theory. Instead it aims to explore a context and time dependent phenomenon, guided by the theoretical notion of mediatization, thus a deductive approach is adopted.

As many qualitative researches, this study is similarly bases on a case study design. In a case study the researcher is interested in a "detailed and intensive study of a single case" (Bryman, 2008, p.52). The complexity and the uniqueness of the case is then in the fore of the study. This applies for the research at hand. By adopting a constructivist ontology, one acknowledges the context dependency of each case, thus I am studying the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland as a unique single case, alining with Bryman: " the case is an object of interest in its own right." (Bryman, 2008, p.52).

As I am interested in unfolding how mediatization affects the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a reflexive and changing agent, it was essential to adopt qualitative interview strategy. The study bases on the notion that all entities are formed in networks of actors, thus an organization as the MFA is a sum of its individual actors' actions in diverse and multiple networks. This is why in-depth

individual interviews were most adequate for the study. As Bryman points out,"rambling or going off tangents is often encouraged" in semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008, p.437). This was also welcomed in the interviews of this study, bringing more in-depth accounts on how the interviewees saw the digitalization's different affects in the ministry. The interviewees were even encouraged to this elaborate conversation style before the interview begun. This "rambling" often brings out what the interviewee sees as important (Bryman, 2008, p.437). This was also discovered in the interviews conducted: providing some very interesting material.

Departing from the interview guide following the narratives of the interviewee and asking follow-up questions can be argued to harm validity of standardization of the data collected (Bryman, 2008, p.437). To divert from having interviews consisting of entirely different topics, I incorporated a semi-structured interview model (Bryman, 2008, p.438). This enabled me to create rather vague and broad discussion topics based on themes rather than specific word to word questions. I designed an interview guide[4] based on eight questions/themes and two sub questions. These themes were did not have to appear in a certain order during the interviews but I was carful in assuring that all points were covered during the conversations. As stated the semi structured interview model lets the interview situation be flexible in regards to the interviewees' interpretations and framings of the subject matter. Yet with the guidance of themes the interviewer is helped to create somewhat similar settings in each interview situation (Bryman, 2008, p.438).

Epistemological and Ontological Considerations on the Research

The ontological stance of the entire study is constructivism, in a very basic sense, it asserts that society is created through the interaction of individuals, instead of material "objects out there" (Bryman, 2008, p.366). I will not go thorugh the entire debate between constructivism and Actor Network Theory again here, but the basic theoretical debate with matching the two stances used is that they perceive ontology differently. Or even deontologically in the ANT- sense. Thus this creates some questions about the ontology and epistemology of the entire study. As some ANT theorists would say: reality is constructed through actants' interactions within each

---

[4] See appedices 1. And 2.

interactive and relational network, thus there cannot exist one ontological stance. This is clear in Latours discussion with a student:

> But no, ANT is pretty useless for that. Its main tenet is that actors themselves make everything, including their own frames, their own theories, their own contexts, their own metaphysics, even their own ontologies . . . So the direction to follow would be more descriptions, I am afraid. (Latour, 2004, p. 67)

This might be taking deconstructionism a bit too far. Many claim that ANT has often been used merely as theory for describing actors or methodological guidance of how to describe actors or identifying interests (Hanseth, Berg & Aanestad, 2004, p.119). I must admit that this is also one part of how ANT is used in this thesis. I take the constructivist ontological stance in this study, but adapt some ANT concepts to it. Thus, reality is created within actor networks, it is always relational, context and temporally dependent. But, it is not restricted to human actors, nonhuman actors need to be also counted-in, in this relational relationship as they too are volitional actors. Yet when it comes to the researcher understanding or arriving at knowledge, it is done through interpreting.

The epistemological stance of this project thus bases on interpretivism, underlining that the research is always a reflexive process, which the researcher cannot distance herself from. ANT also views that the researcher, taking up the research project becomes apart of the network, thus affecting the process (Passoth & Rowland, 2010, p. 835). However, as ANT is not concerned with the social, it does not take the further step which interpretivism does, namely seeing that the researcher also becomes a part of the creation of social meaning. Meaning is socially constructed and is always relational, thus the researcher is always a part of the production of knowledge in the research. There is no objective knowledge the researcher can discover (Bryman, 2008, pp.15-17). Consequently research is always political. I have tried to be as mindful of this reflexive process as a researcher: trying to weigh decisions and discussions within the context of meaning making.

Interviewees

The approach of snowball sampling was used for finding the interviewees. This implies that the researcher initially contacts a few people relevant to the topic at hand, and then with their advice finds further people to interview (Bryman, 2008, p.184). I first contacted two people from the ministry to inquire after people they saw to

possibly be open to participate. I then got a few names from them with whom I made interview appointments. Already during the initial contact, one suggested some more people to be interviewed, thus more interview requests were sent. Again when contacting these people, I got some more suggestions for interviewees. I sent out an email to 12 people explaining the scope of the interview and to which institution it was for. I received 11 responses back and consequently held this amount of interviews. The group consisted of 5 female and 6 male interviewees. I had tired to choose as many interviewees with diverse backgrounds from the ministry, and succeeded in interviewing people of varying ranks and areas of expertise. As an estimate, the interviewees were aged between 35-65 years, which meant that there was a variety in the time the interviewees have spent serving for the Ministry. Furthermore, due to the rotation system of the Ministry, most had been placed in diverse positions before the ones they held at the time of the interviews. I was surprised by the interest the topic got from the interviewees and probably could have interviewed more people for this research, thus gaining a broader view. But already after a few interviews a pattern started emerge and I decided the 11 interviews, which I had conducted were sufficient.

Data Collection and Analytical Process

The data was collected in two periods between the 20th of March and the 8[th]of April. The first interviews were conducted at diverse locations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Helsinki, and the second group of interviews was conducted in host state of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. All interviewees chose the location and date for the interviews, subsequently all except one interview were held at the interviewee's office. This I believe was for the best of the interviews as it gave the interview situation a calm and familiar surrounding. The interviews were all recorded with a dictaphone and notes were taken during the interviews. I furthermore wrote down notes after the interviews. The interviews lasted between 35 to 50 minutes, resulting in approximately seven hours of recorded data, and 69 pages of transcriptions. Lastly, all interviews were held in Finnish, so as to ease the interview situation.

The analytical process started while taking notes during the interviews. Already when doing this, themes begun to emerge and some questions for the coming interviews were focused based on these. I started transcribe the first interviews while

conducting the others. The first ones were transcribed in their entirety, but as the thematic patterns begun to emerge, only relevant parts were transcribed. The actual process of transcribing showed to be valuable, as it made me become very familiar with the data. Moreover, I took notes for the analysis while transcribing. After this rather long process, I went through the documents making comments of the occurring themes on the side of the documents. I then created three documents for main topics: *Agency in the Digital Era*, *Building Communities*, and *Reflections on the Digital*. I divided all relevant comments under each main topic and organized the comments under sub themes. Then I went the through sub theme and chose the most representative quotes to be translated into the main body of text in the analysis. Thus, I could argue that the analytical process based on a *thematic analysis* and a partial *Framework* approach- partial in the sense that I did not use a table to index the quotes (Bryman, 2008, p.554).

During the analytical process, I re-modified the theoretical framework based on the empirical findings starting to emerge. I found that the process the interviewees were describing would not be able to be explained with out a through theory of constantly fluctuating networks, nor through theory which did not take material objects effect in the social reality into account. Thus the analysis and construction of the theoretical framework were worked on hand-in-hand. This strategy for analysis functioned well, and through the grouping of themes I was able to find interesting and profound explanations for processes of interest for this thesis. Creating themes and sub themes also helped create a sort of a mapping of the multilayeredness of the topic of study.

Considerations of Reliability and Validity

Reliability's basic concern is whether a study's results are replicable, and whether measures of the research's concepts are consistent. This, though, is applicable for quantitative research and is a more complicated question in regard to qualitative research (Bryman, 2008, p. 31). However, there have been theorists who propose whole new sets of evaluating qualitative research, which are developed to understand the nature of the research better (Bryman, 2008, p.377). Lincoln and Guba (1994) propose a set of criteria with, which to evaluate qualitative research. I see that two of these concepts could be valuable in determining the reliability and validity of this research. Firstly, they propose the concept of 'confirmability' in order to ensure

reliability of the research. This means that the research shows clearly that the: "researcher has acted in good faith". Accordingly: the personal values and theoretical inclinations of the researcher should not dominate the research. All research decisions should thus be explicit in the research (Guba&Lincoln, 1994, p.114; Bryman, 2008, p.378). While I tend to incline towards constructionism, I see that the adoption of ANT into the research shows that empirical material was listened to and followed. I have also been careful to explain why the constructivist approach was used and how the methodological decisions were guided by it.

Secondly, external validity is not possible to be obtained in qualitative research as the research is often base on single cases or small groups, and thus cannot be generalized in broader social settings (LeCompte & Goetz, 1983; Bryman, 2008, p. 376). LeCompte's and Goetz's way of examining internal validity can, however, be applied and does in my view provide a good way of checking whether the theoretical framework is in line with the empirical material. I see that in this study they do align as they have been worked on hand in hand. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba's concept of 'transferability' can be translated to internal validity (Guba&Lincoln, 1994, p.114; Bryman, 2008, p.378). As qualitative research is mostly concerned with in-depth case studies, internal validity can be assured by in-depth description in which the researcher describes the context of the case thoroughly. Thus the readers are given a strong background to judge the transferability of the case (Guba&Lincoln, 1994, p.114; Bryman, 2008, p.378). I see that this is accomplished in the research, as the introduction, section on the case, the analysis, as well as partial operationalization's within the theory try to describe the case as thoroughly as possible.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were a central part of the study already from the very beginning, especially as the empirical material was gathered through interviews. One of the first considerations when beginning to design the interviews, was to consider the ways the research possibly could harm the participants, and how to avoid such occurrences. Even though the subject under study does not represent a particularly sensitive topic, I wanted to ensure the confidentiality of records (Bryman, 2008, p.118). This meant that all records and identities of interviewees were treated as confidential. Moreover, special care was taken in the analytical section, so that the

identities of the interviewees were not reviled. This did not come with out difficulties, as Finland as a country and the MFA in such are rather small. Considerations on what might be perceived as hinting to a person's identity are rather relative. Sending the extracted quotes to be confirmed by each individual solved this problem. Not all interviewees gave their consent for using exact quotes, thus quotes from only those who gave their consent were used. Furthermore, by the request of the interviewees all quotes were modified to fit the language of the research. This meant that iterations natural for the spoken language were modified. Special sensitivity was displayed during this process as not to change the meaning in the quotes. Each interviewee is referred to by their rank. This will be explained in the forth-coming section explaining the case.

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, all interviewees signed a *form of informed consent*[5]. This gave the interviewee the possibility to be informed about the purpose of the research, what participating in the interview implied, which methods would be used and what the intended use of the research was, before the interview (Bryman, 2008, pp.123; 127) This form also gave the interviewee the right to pull their data out from the research when ever they wished and with out explanation. Lastly, to sustain the openness of the research, the interview guide was sent in beforehand to those interviewees who asked for it.

Limitations of Methods

The main critiques of qualitative studies in general are of ontological nature. Firstly, it is said that the approach is too subjective as it often is more unsystematic during the research process. Further the gradual narrowing down of the subject matter has also been seen as problematic by some quantitative researchers. I must admit that these "shortcomings" are also inherent in this study (Bryman, 2008, p.391). Yet I believe that they are important to qualitative research. The subject of my research did start broad, and was funneled down during the course of studying the empirical material. As I have argued, it is crucial to the researcher to exercise reflexivity during the entire research process, it is not possible for the researcher to find an objective truth. This is why it is important to be as descriptive as possible in the paper it self so that the reader can understand the research process as openly as possible.

---

[5] See appendices 3. and 4.

As already discussed also replicability and generalization create problems in qualitative research in the eyes of positivist thinkers (Bryman, 2008, p.391). It is not, though, the purpose of this research to create general theory, nor a study that could be replicated in its entirety as such, it is impossible to create identical social settings. Thus, even though some would consider these as limitations, in the ontological stance of the study they do not create a problem.

Instead I think there are other limitations to this method, which should be considered more profoundly. One of these would be the fact that the interviews were conducted in Finnish, consequently all transcriptions were also in Finnish. This meant that all the extracts chosen for the analysis had to be translated. It is clear that in all action of translation meaning is always shifted. Even though much caution was put into the translation, the meanings of words are always different in different languages, and furthermore the translator has the power to choose the wordings, thus unconsciously changing the meaning of the statement.

Secondly, the rather small amount of interviewees could be seen as a limitation, as I am trying to see how the Ministry is being affected by mediatization. I do believe though, that the broad variety of people interviewed gives a reasonably insightful description of the processes the ministry is going through. I also noticed that, those who I had sent the thematic areas beforehand seemed to have more in-depth answers for the talking points. Perhaps if I had sent in the themes to all interviewees, the other interviews would also have been deeper. This would possibly not have a good thing, though, as already I had an excess of material at hand.

Thirdly, not all interviewees gave their consent to use direct quotes in the analysis, thus the quotes could be seen as lacking in range. I tried to take this carefully in account and use the best describing quotes together with a comprehensive usage of all interviews.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to elucidate all methodological choices and implications. As this case study is interested in exploring how mediatization's implications on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland are perceived, and as the MFA, and organizations in general, are viewed as a sum of volatile actors, a qualitative approach was chosen. A semi-structured interview model was chosen to enable the interviewees to talk rather freely around the topics prepared beforehand. This presented to be a

fruitful method as the material to be transcribed was slightly overwhelming. The empirical material was structured based on a thematic analysis approach into three main thematic topics, which will serve as the three analytical subchapters in the next section.

4. Analysis

If one were to view the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs through an institutionalist lens, one would come to the conclusion that it has been deeply and thoroughly mediatized. One could come to this conclusion by analyzing the interview answers and seeing how much of the four stages, proposed by Strömbäck (2008), would appear from how the interviewees saw digital media impacting the MFA. One could conclude that media logic has been internalized into the organization and that media, especially digital media, affects every nook and cranny of the political organization. Or, when one can clearly detect that the communication behavior of the Finnish Prime Minister, Alexander Stubb, shows that he is in the second stage of mediatization: a separation between journalists and politicians has occurred. The Minister is constantly Tweeting messages, and thus becoming a certain type of media house himself, producing ready to use messages. Most academic, and lay people as well, can agree that media extend to all aspects of life and society. But if media is taking over and becoming the dominant logic through a linear movement and set change, how can one explain that the empirical material gathered showcases, that even in a seemingly singular entity, as the MFA of Finland, media is adopted in countless different ways. Moreover, I encountered an even larger obstacle with the concept of media logic when analyzing the following statement:

> *Diplomacy has always been communication. They cannot be separated. Even when diplomacy has been carried out in secret, serving as the basis of, for example, Hitler's and Stalin's secretly made Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact - the decision to keep the treaty secret was apart if a publicity strategy. Both parties have to always take on a position concerning publicity. The decision to keep the treaty a secret was, in fact, a strong tool of communication.* (Petri Tuomi-Nikula, Ambassador)[6]

As iterated in the theoretical section, the institutionalists see politics and media as inherently separate. However, one can understand from this quote of Ambassador Tuomi-Nikula, that the two are perceived interconnected rather inherently. Thus, the question under scrutiny should not be how far an organization has been mediatized, but how do they see mediatization as a transformative process impacting their practices.

---

[6] Two of the interviewees gave their consent to use their full name in this thesis, hence two will be referred to by their full names and the other interviewees will be referred to by title.

This part of the thesis will analyze the process of how the impact of mediatization, in the form of digitalization, is perceived within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. This section is divided into three subsections; the first one will look into how the agency of the organization is perceived to have changed. The second will look at how the digital arena enables an extension of community building the Ministry performs. Lastly, I will look into how the MFA reflectively sees itself compared to other states similarly affected by the impacts of mediatization.

Agency in the Digital Era

Ministries of Foreign Affairs are often seen as set and rigid organizations, which for decades have functioned in a set bureaucratic manner, undergoing no change. In some sense this is rather true: the organization has a relatively stable position in society with a powerful minister in its fore – it would be difficult to see this role challenged. The Ministry, also, has material symbols of its stability as a fixed institution with buildings and facilities around the world and in its capital. Hence, one can establish that the existence of ministries of foreign affairs have become natural, or in Actor Network Theory terms 'black boxed'. The institution of a MFA has become seemingly stable as an actor network, as it appears to not change. But the quite opposite is true, as one can establish with tools of ANT. A MFA is not a singular entity in such, it comprises of a multitude of actants, which act in an endless amount of different networks; as the actors within the networks are challenged they change. Therefore, process of change should be viewed as multilayered and as affecting different actors in diverse ways.

Society is similarly made of this constant change. The impression of stability of a MFA comes from the fact that the actors, which it is comprised of, are constantly adjusting and realigning, as the other actors in the networks negotiate their position. The effect of mediatization, and its newest and perhaps most intense form, digitalization, are a good example of this. Where above it was shown that media in different forms has always been connected to diplomacy, it is clear that media has become even more important and constantly present. Especially with the ceaseless development of ICT's and the digital sphere affecting most aspects of the ministry. Most of the interviewees referred to this as *diplomacy in a digital world*, or the *MFA*

in digitalized reality, implicating that most viewed the MFA as being constantly impacted by change. What was swiftly concluded was that digitalization is changing reality in different context in the MFA. For example, the possibilities of avoiding restrictions of physical distance: holding online courses for and having videoconferences with diplomatic mission staff. Another example brought up was the increasing pressure to be more open of the MFA actions in its different sectors. This is not only about openness, but also about the fact that the MFA has to have a presence on online platforms, if it wishes to maintain its black-boxed position. It was perceived that if it did not have a presence on in the new channels, legitimacy for its actions and existence would be compromised. In the following two subsections I will continue with this subject of legitimacy how it is central ford how the agency of the MFA of Finland is seen to be changed, and how the different actors in the MFA construct it in different ways online.

Agency and Digital Media

While digital diplomacy is an apparent catchphrase highlighting mostly the new role of social medias in diplomacy, the digital sphere has for a rather long time been a part of the Finnish MFA. The Ministry has since 1995 had a country branding website called *Virtual Finland*, which focused on creating a comprehensive overview of Finland to foreign audiences, as well as businesses (MFA Finland, 2004). In 2004 the site was updated "into a living medium that tells an enchanting and diverse story about Finland" (MFA Finland, 2004), and in 2009 the web page was renamed and redesigned. As the Editor-in-chief at the time Juha Parikka of the Unit for Public Diplomacy stated in a press release: "this is FINLAND is a new-generation web-based service with web 2.0 functionalities including RSS feeds and the community services Facebook, MySpace and Flickr"(MFA Finland, 2009). This process of updating web platforms portrays well how media is constantly shaped by the changes in society, both technological and social. Furthermore, the MFA has to adopt to these societal and technological transformations as well; trying to take in functions and tools which have not been part of their organization, but which have become important in society, such as Facebook or MySpace at the time. The creation of platforms in the digital sphere and the early adoption of digital tools is still a factor, which generates pride within the organization. The evolvement and adoption of

digital tools is connected to being aware of surroundings. This can be seen in the quote from an interview with an Official of the Unit of Public Diplomacy:

> […]*This is Finland, which previously was Virtual Finland was in -95 one of the very first country image sites in the world, in which a country and its lifestyle was portrayed in a strategic manner a goal oriented manner. Now in 2009 it was revamped into This is Finland. Practically it is the same site, but the name concept and way of doing it changed. […] I think we in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been alert of digital media early on.*

The Ministry is seen as being alert with the possibilities of the developing digital sphere. It is a source of pride for them to be seen as early adopters and understanding what diverse possibilities development can bring. Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the online presence has also been modified throughout, and especially that the community based social media sites were already adopted in 2009. Yet, it should be mentioned that public diplomacy units in general adapt to societal changes faster than the other units of an MFA. But digitalization has also entered other functions of the MFA and has enabled central digital tools and platforms for them:

> *In 30 years I have obviously seen vast change, and one of the most extensive is exactly in the speed with which messages are distributed. Before communication meant that the diplomatic missions abroad would send letters to citizens who had registered at the mission. Now the message is instantly available on the mission's homepage and Facebook-page, and one does not need to be registered. Hence the information reaches a broader audience.* (Officer at an Embassy)

This interviewee presents change, stating that adapting to it is always present in an MFA, yet with the increase of ICT's the change is seen as the most extensive yet. Communication was restricted by closed registers of citizens who had notified of their residence in the host country. Official letters informing citizens would be sent to those who had informed of their stay. The distance between the diplomatic mission and the individual was perceived longer, as the physical distance was underlined by a distance in time. Now information is instant, and can be reached by whomever, whenever wanted: the distance is seemingly smaller.

Therefore, as the actors adopt new ways of acting and interact with different objects the sense of time and space changes: the MFA and the information it provides is closer to individuals, also its no longer restricted to a few: it becomes more open, faster, and available for anyone. This instantaneous action enabled by digitalization

alter also how the MFA, or more precisely the different actors it comprises, of have to think about themselves, they have to adapt their agency to speed, but also interaction and broader remediation. Perhaps one of the biggest changes is the fading of material physicality, there is no longer need to send out letters or hand out brochures. The establishing of the agency has to come from new kinds of acts, meaning creating appropriate representation online, as can be seen in the following:

> *If we think of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Diplomatic Mission as parts of public administration, then the old manner is such that we have our own website where we put bulletins or that the bulletins are distributed to the press. Of course the Embassies' webpages are still apart of digital diplomacy, but in a sense for the first time there's a use of platforms which are built by someone else, and that they have originally been built for some other use. So we are moving into to this type of an arena. In it self, it's quite logical that we go where the people are, if people are on Facebook, Twitter or wherever: we are there communicating these things to them. Of course it changes the ways we do it. Or at least it should change: the same press bulletin is not in itself interesting, or the only format any longer. We have to be able to adjust to the ways communication is practiced on these social media mediums.* (Official of an Embassy)

As can be seen the MFA and its diplomatic missions, have adapted to the communication platforms where most people spend their time on. As stated before, the Ministry has been active online for a relatively long time. This presence was based on platforms that they themselves had built and designed to best suit the way they wanted to communicate, and how they viewed communication to work best of them.

As pointed out in the quote, the actants of social media platforms are changing the way in which the MFA has to communicate, and also how it sees itself present on these platforms. The MFA needs to be present where people are. This is a change of agency in the way that before, people would come to their online sites, platforms they had designed and had control over. Now for the first time the MFA has to enter into a new sphere where it no longer is the one formatting the platform. Most social media sites, as well as many other sites online, have become commercial, or someone else's property. This brings up new restrictions for the ways in which the MFA operates. And if it wants to maintain its position as a stable actor in society it has to adapt and translate some of its functions to fit these new networks. Thus, what used to be a single bulleting or a press release has to be framed in a new way, if the MFA wants to communicate and maintain itself. It is the people on these new platforms that constrain the MFA to join, but it is the platforms as an actant, which make them adopt

new ways of communication. On the other hand, it is interesting to observe that the molding force of the Ministry appears there too. It is not only the technology which molds the MFA as an actor it is also the MFA which with its actions changes the platform. Many social media platforms were originally created for something entirely different from what they are today. For example, Facebook was originally a site for comparing 'hot' or 'not' students. Gradually it transformed into a socializing site for friends to share photos and personal experiences. Now the site works as an intermingled information board where one can gain news from friends, NGO's, to government actors. Thus the digital platforms also adjust continuously, as the actors using it change.

As established previously communications has become important, or has always been important in the MFA. It has, though, been the function of communication specialists or those ranked high in the MFA's hierarchy to maintain it. An interesting change was mentioned often in the interviews: all saw a change in attitudes in the Ministry. This comes froth in the following extract from an interview with a Communication Expert:

> *Probably attitudes are continuously changing towards the view that each official is a communicator.* (Communications Expert)

Thus, not only is there a separate unit for communications, but as the speed of communication increases the extra stages one has to undergo when producing messages through a communication department, have to be reviewed. As messages expected to instantaneously be online, and increasing openness is required, time for messages to go through different stages within the organization grows limited. Consequently the Ministry has to rethink its employees in a new light: every employee becomes a communicator. This is again emphasized in the following:

> *[…] in a way through digital communication anybody can be the communicator, and that is quite a big change, particularly in a more traditional organization as this, where the message has been tried to control in a certain way. So when anybody from that organization can appear and be…that it's not necessarily bound to hierarchy who can voice interests messages to the target audience. Of course it changes the approaches and modes of thinking. The organization also needs to develop these practices so as not to lose control.* (Officer at the Unit of Public Diplomacy)

Through the view that anybody in the organization can and should be a communicator many organizations face complications, which they have not encountered before.

MFA's have been seen, and to an extent still are, as a machinery of bureaucracy and secretive information. Because there is a lot of delicate information great caution has been put into the iteration of messages. Today the ministry has to find ways to balance between a new kind of openness and confidentiality. The MFA has to consider its audience: what and how they need and want to hear, instead of placing something out there, which is not of interest to them. Subsequently, of essence for the MFA is to translate themselves in the networks, but also broadening the networks, which they consist of, to maintain the authority they have held. The difficulty is how to react and act to changes within the black box, while maintaining the structure of the box unchanged, or in other words how to change, but still maintain the old identity of authority.

It is this balance of a new identity and old identity of authority, which is at stake and negotiated with the intensifying presence of media. For the MFA it is important to reflect on how others change and what will become natural or black boxed. As an Expert underlined in one of the interviews:

> *Simultaneously it is important that we don't get caught in such hype too easily. We constantly need to think what the content of foreign policy is, and how we can soundly and knowledgeably talk about it. Being occasionally overactive on social media does not necessarily make foreign policy better.* (Expert)

When adopting new mediums, the different units of the MFA have to evaluate what form of the medium is essential for them: as established in the theoretical chapter mediatization is context dependent. Here we can see for example that a conduct, which works for some in social media, does not translate similarly to the MFA. The MFA is seemingly in a situation where it is evaluating the need to change some rather set ways, yet keeping its identity of public authority. Simultaneously understanding the needs to change to enable action and interact on the new platforms. With digital media the increase of speed has had an affected in all segments of society. As the speed of circulating messages has increased, so has the speed with which platforms and mediums change. Therefore it becomes crucial for the MFA to separate between "hype" and the essentials for legitimizing their authority.

Legitimacy and Agency

The requirements for diplomacy and the activity of MFAs are very different from a decade or two ago. Different sectors from the MFA have to be able to react much faster than before and that affects the content of messages that are sent. As described above every employee of the ministry has to have the capabilities to communicate on digital platforms. This can be seen as a certain type of expansion of the MFA into cyber space. Even though all of the interviewees emphasized that the traditional face-to-face diplomacy will not vanish, this new expansion adds to the palette of the MFA:

> *Digital diplomacy becomes an expansion. Behind-closed-door diplomacy, which requires confidentiality, such as negotiations, will not disappear. Instead an obligation for a web presence is emerging and we face constant pressure to increase the presence, and to communicate what we do.*
> (Harri Kilpi, [at the time] Information Officer, Expert in Digital Diplomacy)

As the MFA views it, an obligation to be present on the digital sphere has emerged. There is pressure form the different networks they act in, and if they wish to stay in these actor networks they need to adjust to the expansion of the networks into new arenas. As much of the society moves to act online, from individual, NGO's to commercial enterprises, the MFA also has to strengthen its presence online to secure its legitimacy in society. This also creates problems, as the digital sphere is an extension to the MFA's actions and not something, which is overtaking others. As the following interviewee expressed, they recognize that their unit had to be present online, yet it did not come with out complications:

> *Active participation on the different social media sites requires time and resources. With the current constant decrease of resources, keeping track of all of them is not possible. One has to be selective. Also, one has to be alert on social media that improprieties or misinformation do not get into circulation*
> (Official at an Embassy)

To create an active presence online one has to be constantly alert and understand the context. This requires resources to maintain and develop. One of the major problems an MFA can face is the spreading of misinformation. This not only sends out a message that is not right, it hinders the legitimacy of the MFA as having a certain type of knowledge. Thus the presence of the MFA is to maintain its legitimacy in a society, which is expanding. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland has for example begun to use Twitter for circulating important statements from the Foreign Minister and they have created a circulating task where an employee is in charge for answering all messages coming through social media. This function of being able to answer is

seen as important and especially essential for the MFA's social media presence. To create legitimacy the MFA has had, not only be present on new platforms, but also create new ways of communicating their messages. A vivid example of this was cooperation the Consular section did with a Finnish travel documentary duo, *Madveturs,* who filmed in extreme locations and are highly popular in Finland. This was done to raise awareness, but it was also an act that showcased the Ministry's ability to translate its messages to the social media context, thus showing that it is able to create a new type of authority.

In the online arenas, it becomes present that different content and platforms are meant for diverse audiences. This campaign was mean for Finnish citizens who travel, and for example the Unit of Public Diplomacy has to additionally consider the Finnish companies, which have begun to have strong online presence and which have to cater to customers and business partners who also established themselves online:

> *[...] and of course now days it's a prerequisite that everyone is online. Here we obviously hope that as a public authority we can help our companies. If we can help them by having relevant content online, which they can refer to or, which they themselves can use in their communications, of course that is what we wish for. It is a fact that one has to have a web presence, one can't be credible if with out it. As a member of a country or a represent of a company it's important that the country has a proper web presence, which the company can then refer to.* (Officer at the Unit of Public Diplomacy)

Bureaucratic organizations as the MFA can no longer be credible with out a relevant web presence. If all citizens and the country's companies are strongly active online and the country it self is not represented online, it looses some of its legitimacy. As seen through ANT, institutions are upheld by having an almost natural presence in networks. When these networks change and are modified the actors within them also need to change. The MFA of Finland, even though a seemingly stable network, is constantly transforming. As such, they have to reflect how and where to create the legitimacy for the power they hold. As could be seen from the extract, it is crucial for the MFA to have a functional and credible web presence, not only for them, but also for other actors. The meaning of new types of networks and communities merging online are discussed in the next section of the analysis.

Creating Communities

In this second section of the analysis I will present how creating different types of communities online is seen as essential, and how the cultural and political context of a state seem to mirror to the online platforms.

Cultural Context and Language in Creating Communities

Digital Diplomacy is a part of controlling and understanding networks, as well as, dialogues. As established before, the effects of mediatization and intensification of the digital sphere constitutes much more than the term digital diplomacy gives away. This section, though, will focus on what most see as digital diplomacy, namely how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland is creating communities online. Before the Ministry built its platforms online and could control them as wanted, now there is seen to be a trend toward autonomy of online communities. This poses increasing challenges for the MFA for controlling the platforms and messages, which are spread to the communities.

One of the most successful online communities the MFA has been able to create has been around the Twitter account of the Finnish Diplomatic Mission in Tokyo. The establishment of the Twitter account had been considered extensively but it had not been created until the tsunami of 2011 hit Japan. This proved to be particularly useful communication tool during the crisis. After this, the entire Ministry understood how powerful social media could be during crisis situations:

> *"One of our successful examples is the Twitter-account of our Diplomatic Mission in Tokyo. The Twitter-account exceeded the margin of 100 000 followers and has already for a while been the largest Twitter-account out of all diplomatic missions there. Some good practices can be established from it: a detailed plan for how it would be carried out; points of emphasis were made clear; and the resources were good; for example, they had a local native speaker as an employee who could answer all questions coming in through Twitter. This is not possible in all locations. Also, a reason why this might not work in all locations is that the fan base for Finland in Japan is already quite high: the knowledge of Finnish culture and brands, such as, Marimekko are high. Even to the point where it can be called fandom. So that might make it a unique case. "*
> (Harri Kilpi, [at the time] Information Officer, Expert in Digital Diplomacy)

During the tsunami crisis the social media platform showed the ministry the value of being present online. At the moment most of the Finnish Diplomatic missions are on Facebook and a few, including the MFA as an organization, are on Twitter.

Being present or even active online in it self does not guarantee a functional community. As established, the digital sphere for the MFA is not separate from the material world or context. Even with the online platforms being the same, the cultural context, which the MFA works in has a great effect on how the MFA has to act and communicate online. It has often been emphasize how the internet eradicates territorial boarders. In a way it does, in the manner of how one can interact online without taking the physicality of geography into consideration. Yet, for the MFA the cultural and political context is mirrored online.

As the interviewee above points out, one of the criterions for the success for the Tokyo account was that they had an employee who was a native and could communicate fluently in Japanese. Furthermore, Japan already beforehand has a relatively large amount of people interested in Finland. Hence, the interest for following the Diplomatic Missions Twitter account was already relatively large. Each diplomatic mission is affected by the networks it interacts within, thus none of them can adopt exactly the same communication strategy or content. The communities that form around and interact with the Ministry's different actants have to adjust to those ways of action, which are present in the networks that embed them. Moreover, to create a successful and influential community online, one has to have the appropriate capacities to act and interact, as the before mentioned native speaker or strong fan base. Hence the MFA has to focus its actions and understand its surroundings:

> *"We don't have the capacities, or very rarely have capacities for campaigns, which aspire to influence large groups of people in a host state. Instead we need to appropriate our capacities to those circles of people who can have an influence there."* (Harri Kilpi, [at the time] Information Officer, Expert in Digital Diplomacy)

Thus even though some countries might have the possibilities of creating large campaigns to enlarge their communities online, actats, such as resources, impact the ways the Finnish MFA can act. As explicit in the above quote, capacities and

resources such as the language skills of the employees or possibility to employ staff to work on a certain task, or simply the restrictions of budgets, have an effect on how the different units of the MFA can act and be interactive online. An interesting case though for restricting and enabling communities is the usage of Finnish language. In the Tokyo case their Twitter and Facebook are mostly in Japanese, thus it is clear who is framed to belong to the network. There are other instances where Finnish is used enhance a certain cultural context online for example in instances where blog posts are written in Finnish to report about actions of the Missions. Another example is the decision to create a news site for the Ministry in Russian to create a platform for Finnish news in Russian. These decisions point to the fact that cultural contexts are used to create boundaries online.

Building Communities with Individuals

What becomes crucial online, especially for the Diplomatic Missions, are the networks and a sense of community they create with interest groups. Especially when there is a need for informing citizens, being connected to interest groups on social media sites such as Facebook, enable the MFA's different sectors to keep in touch with citizens abroad:

> *Through the Diplomatic Mission's interest groups we are able to distribute information broader than on our own. A post on the Mission's Facebook-page is shared very fast.* (Officer at an Embacy)

The action of creating functioning communities where information is hastily and fluidly transferred is important especially in the context of the diplomatic missions of the MFA. What becomes evident in most of the interviewees' answers is that the communities are important, but establishing multi or two-way communication is not the central concern for the MFA. It appears that the creation, and the maintaining of communities of followers on social media, is more important than the interaction. This is interesting, as the basic function of social media is to be interactive irrespective of whether one is an individual or an organization. The digital arena seemingly creates a nonhierarchical space where actants' physicality should not appear as significant, yet the societal perceptions seem to translate into the digital sphere.

The organization keeps its black box status of authority and the individual still feels as a separate actant. This is also voiced by one of the interviewees:

> […] *for many there can be a certain hesitancy to comment on a Ministry of Foreign Affair's social media platforms, it is an authority, after all and I believe that it takes more to comment there than on a friends Facebook status […]At least we have provided the possibility. Citizens have the possibility to participate.* (Communications Expert)

One should also take into consideration, that mediatization affects not only how the Ministry has to adapt, but also how the individual citizen views their role towards the organization. Thus it is more meaningful for the Ministry to offer the possibility of interaction, and enhance it in those contexts where there is already a need or will for interaction. For the interviewees it seemed logical, and almost as natural, that the ministry extends its functions where people are and act. But the complexity of keeping these networks relevant for individuals and increasing them, is what seems to be challenging.

With the adoption of interactive social media platforms in its different units, one can see that the MFA is expanding the network where it interacts. But one can observe that it is trying to adjust and readjust to the platforms where individual people interact, trying to translate its position as an authority is maintained within the different actor networks. The MFA has found that in especially crisis situations these networked communities are important. Furthermore, these networks are essential for the Ministry, in locations physical locations where they cannot be present, due to limited resources. So the main function of creating stable and committed communities is to provide information to the MFA when needed.

Communities with Organizations and States

The new communities online are not only restrictive to connecting with individual people. As one of the Officials at the Unit of Public Diplomacy explained, online cooperation between the Ministry and other organizations has become important:

> *I can see that there is forming, and to a degree already formed, a tight Team Finland network also online. We are constantly exchanging ideas and sharing each other's linking.*

Team Finland is a network comprises of three ministries, public founded bodies and Finnish offices operating abroad. It consists of 70 teams around the world who aim at improving and aiding Finland's economic cooperation abroad (Team Finland, 2014). Creating these kinds of organizational communities with different actors has become even more crucial for MFAs. It enables a broader message, and for example in country brand work, the more organizations adjust and translate the communicated brand, the better it is for enhancing Finland's presence online. But also these groups become important in affecting the commercial networks where the ministry has not been present before.

Other types of communities that were mentioned were as growingly important for the MFA, were state elites interacting and changing opinions on Twitter. These have also been, perhaps, the most visible digital actions MFAs have been performing, and which are also often seen as digital diplomacy. Actors like the PR-agency Burson-Marsteller have created actants online, which aim at re-Tweeting and analyzing these tweets or compiling Storify feeds on different foreign policy debates discussed online by states, MFA's and state elites online. When these become important discussion hubs for foreign policy online it also becomes important for the Finnish MFA to be a part of.

Reflections on the Digital

In this last analytical section I will present how the interviewees compared the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland's actions online to those of other states. This brought up again how the physical context, and the cultural and political contexts are seen to impact the MFA's actions online.

Us and Them

The Ministry operates on a fascinating middle ground amid nation states, organizations and individuals. In the previous analytical section I discussed how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland view community building online between individuals, and between other organizations. Here I will explore how they view their actions in contrast to other nations' MFA's actions online. In general what emerged was that MFA's actions online were often connected to social media and how other MFAs act on social media, these social media actions were also seen as the major content of digital diplomacy. But when the interviewees were reflecting deeper on the

digital sphere, digital diplomacy and the MFA's actions were perceived to be occurring in a broader arena than just social media platforms.

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs *Diplomatic Portal* was brought up as an example of how states through the actants in MFA's could interact online (MFA Sweden, 2014). The website is designed to collect all needed information foreign missions' staff need when operating in Sweden. This is something that the Finnish MFA has also been considering; a similar platform where the diplomats from foreign missions in Finland could meet and discuss, thinking it would bring added value to their relations. Here the fading of physical distance is valued and the fluidity of information exchange is seen to improve relations. The reflections on the Diplomatic Portal, is a clear example of how to the MFA reflect and realign based on the other actants in the networks it is apart of. Expanding the communication with other countries, diplomatic forces online stabilizes the Finnish MFA's position in the networks where it acts with other MFA's.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the internet is often seen as open to all, and as a tool to improve transparency between citizens and elites. But seeing the process of mediatization and how the digital sphere becomes more mundane, the more stable networks of the physical world become represented online. One cannot dispute the impact of the certain openness and equalization of information online, but it is clear that the net is also used to strengthen already existing actor networks. For example the Diplomatic Portal could be seen as translation and extension of MFA's traditional ways of communication with Notes Verbales, these are a diplomatic a unsigned communication between states. Thus the Diplomatic Portal would be another way to strengthen the network of diplomatic missions in Finland.

In the previous analytical chapter I pointed out that the MFA feels pressured to be there were the people are, thus they need to have a web presence. A similar pressure emerges also on the macro-level where the MFA represents the state as a whole:

> […] *I would say that if we had not been so strongly present online, then maybe our country image would be a bit inferior. All nations do this, all are there and do the same kind of work* [on country image]. *One just needs to be present and consider one's messages. One needs to somehow stand out positively from the others. I think Finland has succeeded in this rather well. We are often connected with the Nordic reference group, but even there we have certain identity niches where we can stand out positively"* (Officer at the Unit of Public Diplomacy)

The extension to the digital arenas as a state is seen as a part of competition between states, and here interestingly mediatization of the MFA is intertwined with the process of capitalism. One can see here how a few actor networks flow into each other as succeeding in the network where actors compete with nation brands. Finland is constructed with the typology of a Nordic state, and hence there is competition within the actor network of Nordic states. Furthermore, to be underlined is that the digital arena has been accepted as a natural position within the competition of country brands. Finland's image would not be as strong if it did not act like other states and develop its online presence. Thus, actions on the digital arena have become an integral part of country brand work.

Most of the interviewees saw that affecting an other states policies will become an ever increasing phenomenon online. But how broadly, deeply and in which way one is able to do this is dependent on the resources the MFA can invest. Finland's resources were often compared to those of Sweden and more precisely the Swedish Institute. The institute is a public agency whose aim is to promote Swedish culture abroad, but also to work towards Sweden fulfilling its set international goals, for example in foreign policy, international aid and development (Swedish Institute, 2014). With the high amount of employees it has, it was reasoned that Sweden is able to create more sophisticated ways of interacting with target groups online. It was asserted that it is easy to place information online, the difficulty occurs when a certain impact is expected. As stated before, different resources as actants affect how the Ministry can act online, but so does the foreign policy stemming from the cultural context of the MFA:

> *An embassy's web presence in a country depends on what we want to bring forth. A good example is the Twitter-account of the Diplomatic Mission in Tokyo: they have been able to create a kind of goodwill through it. But it doesn't aim at affecting political process, as the Americans do. That's also the difference between American and Finnish Diplomacy: we haven't actively sought to affect political processes. Of course we try to affect through certain themes, but in a comprehensive manner. Whereas the Americans traditionally strive to impact, and even do impact, directly.*
> (Officer at the Unit of Public Diplomacy)

It becomes clear from this extract that the MFA acts based on what is best suited for the context, which it operates within. Thus it is not one code of conduct how a state best operates online and discusses with other nations' citizens. It is underlined here

that even though some states are seen to act in a certain way online, this might not be the way Finland should be present on the net. The policy pursued online is determined by the overall Finnish foreign policy and this is also seen as the reason for the different mode of online conduct when for example compared to the U.S. State Department. This questions the rather common idea that one cannot act bigger online than one really is, actually one can only act in the frames of the agency created within actor networks. United States has been exceptionally active online. Within the diplomatic mission context the American Diplomatic Mission in Jakarta has probably the best-known online presence. It has over 600 000 followers and it has developed a flourishing interactive community around its Facebook-site. Another interesting case is the State Departments Digital Out Reach Team, which actively engages with citizens of Middle Eastern countries on internet forums do discuss American foreign policy (Khatib,Dutton & Thelwall , 2012).

I would argue here, that it becomes evident that the internet is not an entirely new arena, or a *tabula rasa*. Instead as Actor Network Theory points out, it is an expansion of already existing actor networks. The networks, through interactions and negotiations between actants, expand into cyber space. Instead of entirely new practices, old established practices are translated into the digital arena. This furthermore shows that the frames (or black boxes) seemingly stay the same, meaning that the MFA continues to stabilize its agency as the same actor even though it undergoes challenges and changes within the different networks it comprises of.

Physical Context's Impact on Digital Presence
What has already been touched upon, and what most of the discussion above points to is that the context of the state, the cultural and political ideas and norms where the MFA operates has a significant impact on how the MFA acts online:

> *"I would like to emphasize here, as we speak of Finnish, that we should try to find comparisons in relatively similar countries, such as: Sweden, Denmark, Norway- these types of countries. Americans and the British are, undoubtedly, pioneers, but they have an entirely different range of resources, and most of all they speak English. And this is not only a question of whether we can or cannot speak English: we are legally bound to communicate in Finnish. Also, the English-speaking world is already a highly competitive environment, and the big actors have already established themselves there. It's a complicated situation in that sense. So, the object of comparison is important: the other Nordic countries have largely the same problems and challenges."*
> (Harri Kilpi, [at the time] Information Officer, Expert in Digital Diplomacy)

Most interviewees were interested in the actions by states such as the U.S or Great Britain, but they continuously made clear that a country like Finland would not be able to become such a big actor online as these. Firstly, because of resources: the MFA of Finland does not have same capacities as bigger countries do. But secondly the aspect of language is also central. The dominant language of the internet is English, with approximately 55,7 percent of websites operated in English (W3Techs, 2013). As brought forth this creates an immense field of competitiveness for anyone being noticed online. Perhaps even more interesting is how the law of the state so clearly translates into the digital sphere. As a public authority the different units of the MFA are legally bound to serve Finnish citizens in the official languages. This is a kind of actant that Actor Network Theory enables to be examined as volitional. Language as explained here impacts how and with whom they interact. The usage of language though, depends on the context online.

Somewhat connected to language, is how the MFA views the Finnish state. As seen from this quote, one should compare with similar states. Countries where the population is approximately same, and the culture and values as well as state economy are comparable. One can here see again that the online presence of the MFA is an expansion, instead of entering a free space where they can invent totally new ways of action. The following quote further underlines that the physical aspects of the state, whether it is the MFA of Finland, or whether it is an other state the MFA interacts with, impact the possibilities of acting online:

> ” [...]as a point of consideration, which one could note concretely [...] even though digital diplomacy is widely used, there are also many countries which do not. Fax can still be the main medium.” (Communications Expert)

This shows how the MFA has to take the context dependency into consideration when interacting with different countries. It is easy to lose oneself in the western hype of fast access. This shows, for example, that diplomatic missions operating in certain countries, or when collaborating internationally, have to adopt the media to fit that context. Thus, even though mediatization has intensified digitalization within the Finnish MFA broadly, it is still important to underline that it is not self evident in all countries or locations the MFA acts in.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the main three themes, which emerged in the interviews. The first section discusses how mediatization is viewed to have changed the agency of the Ministry. It shows how the MFA adjusts to modes of digital media, but also that with the increased importance of online presence, the MFA also changes the platforms through its interactions. One of the most prevalent points was that with the speed of information circulation that digitalization implies all employees have become viewed as communicators. Furthermore, the Ministry sees that it has to be present online to maintain its identity as an authority.

The second analytical part explores how online community building is viewed. It is interesting to see that the different diplomatic missions act online they have to take in to consideration what the host state is like and how Finland is perceived there. For example in Japan the Finnish MFA has been able to create a successful community around its Diplomatic Missions Twitter and Facebook pages. Some of the reasons for the success have been that they have used Japanese for interacting on these sites, but also that many Japanese people are interested in Finland from before. This would suggest that the digital sphere is an extension of actor networks, and is restricted and changed by the same actants as in the material world.

In the final section of the analysis, I present how the interviewees perceived the impacts of digitalization of other MFA's in comparison to the Finnish MFA. Here again the translation of cultural context became prevalent. Finland's online presence was seen as being comparable to states similar to it, such as Sweden or Norway. Furthermore, it was seen that the American tradition of foreign politics of directly trying to affect another state's internal politics could not be adopted to the Finnish MFA's online presence, as this was not the mode of acting in Finnish foreign policy.

In the next section I will answer the research question based on these findings, and I will furthermore discuss the implications and possible further studies emerging from the analysis.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Concluding Summary

This study has explored how mediatizations's impacts are perceived in an organization, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. As discussed in the introduction and theoretical chapter mediatization, is a process, which penetrates to all aspects of society. Digitalization can be argued to be the latest form of mediatization. As the MFA of Finland has had an active online strategy already for a few decades and it has viewed an online presence as important, it was chosen as a case.

To fully understand mediatization as a process, concepts from Actor Network Theory were applied. The concept of actor network served as the basis for understanding how organizations expand. The term actant allowed human and non-human actors to be viewed as initially equal, making it possible to study the Ministry both as a single entity and through the multiple actors that constitute it. Furthermore, the concept of black-box proved to be important for understanding how the ministry is able to maintain a seemingly stable agency while it undergoes constant changes.

Each of the three analytical sections provided answers to the working questions. The first analysis answers the question of how the agency of the ministry is perceived to change. It became clear that within the Ministry change is seen as a rather normal state for the Ministry itself and its surroundings. The Finnish MFA has been present online for a rather long time, but already in that time platforms have changed in nature. Before the ministry was able to create its own web sites and present information that it saw as best. With commercial entities starting to take over most platforms online, the MFA has to consider its agency in contrast to these. Furthermore, it was seen that the Ministry saw that they had to be present where people are, and thus have to adjust to an interactive approach online. Significant here, was that joining platforms where people were was perceived as important for maintaining their legitimacy as an authority in the changing social spaces. Thus to maintain legitimacy the Ministry has to adapt and translate is actions to fit these networks. Moreover, speed was seen as one of the strongest impacts on the agency of the Ministry. As digital media enables constant interaction the Ministry is moving towards viewing of its employees as communicators.

The second analytical section addressed the working question of how contexts are seen in relation to the impacts of mediatization. The digital sphere was not viewed

as separate from the material world or context. Even though the diverse diplomatic missions use the same platforms, the cultural context of the host country effects how the MFA acts and communicates. Thus, each diplomatic mission is affected by the networks it interacts within and as a result exactly the same communication strategy or content cannot be adopted. It has been argued that the internet enables non-hierarchical action, yet the identity of public authority was viewed as significant online; this implies that societal perceptions of status translate into the digital sphere.

The last analytical section answered the question of how the MFA compares impacts of mediatization to the digitalization of other states. Again here the context dependent view of mediatization became clear. The internet is used as an arena to strengthen already existing actor networks. Finland cannot, for example, copy the U.S. State Department's online actions, as Finnish foreign policy has entirely different goals. It seems as though the digital sphere represents a mirror where the state's political, cultural and social context are reflected.

Conclusion

Through the findings of the three analytical parts, and in line with the main research question of how mediatization impact on the organization is perceived, it is possible to make the following conclusion: the MFA perceives digitalization as a normal part of transformation in society, and of mediatization. As most actors within society, such as, individuals, commercial entities and states, are moving to the digital sphere, the Finnish MFA similarly needs to create a relevant online presence. The internet has long been viewed as a kind of Wild West where all actors can act freely, without ties to the physical world. However, instead of viewing cyberspace as a new space where all actions are possible, digitalization was perceived as creating an extension to the environment the MFA operates in. The digital sphere was not seen as a tabula rasa, but as an arena where cultural and political context limited and enabled action.

Discussion

As the impact of the digitalization of ministries for foreign affairs has not been studied, I see that this study contributes to the understanding of how all-encompassing digitalization has been for the Ministry. I further see that it contributes to the understanding that digital media and digitalization have larger implications than the conduct of public diplomacy 2.0 or the addition of social media to the tool box of

diplomats. I see that a study like this invites broader discussion of what implications digitalization has for the entire sphere of international relations, not only looking at how citizens gain new ways of political activism, but also how the distribution of power between states plays out online.

The interesting implications rising from this study are the importance of cultural and political context to the actions of the MFA online. As was stated earlier, the internet has widely been seen as a sphere where one can act without the restrictions of territorial boarders and social context. What the interviews showed was that the physical context of the host country as well as Finnish policy concerns were taken into consideration when acting online. Whether, this is how internet has always been or whether this is a change occurring from the intensification of digital media in the everyday context of life is an interesting question. Furthermore, an interesting question arising is whether other states view the online sphere in this way.

One of the main limitations for the study is the small amount of interviewees. Perhaps if I had been able to interview people from more departments I would have been able to detect other ways digitalization is viewed in the Ministry. Furthermore, one of the limitations was that it took me a while to understand how limited the term digital diplomacy was. When beginning the research I sought to understand how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland saw the concept of digital diplomacy. Through the interviews I understood how large the impact of digitalization was. Perhaps if I had not concentrated on the term digital diplomacy in the interviews deeper insights would have risen.

That said, I admit that this study became rather broad as the empirical material produced such interesting findings. I do think that in future research of digitalization and international relations it would be good to delimit the research to a smaller area. Some of the interesting themes, which had to be cut from this thesis would be interesting basis for further research. Themes such as the increasing importance of information war online were taken up. Information warfare is also a clear impact of digitalization on MFAs, and how they have to create new ways to deal with misinformation or even harmful information. Another aspect, which would lead to an interesting study, is states increased control over the internet. Again, internet has been seen as a free space, but as this study showed, a state's foreign policy is also translated online. This also implies that states' more harmful acts are also translated online. A further question deriving from this is how will the international community

and individual states react with policy to these creations of borders online. This study is a pioneering effort, which is equally new to the academics who study it and to the professionals who work within the field of foreign affairs. There are a lot of questions to be answered and to be found, I hope this study does both.

Bibliography

Amsterdamska, O. (1990). Surely you are joking, Monsieur Latour! . *Science, Technology, & Human Values* , 495–504.

Anholt, S. (n.d.). *Explained About Simon Anholt*. Retrieved 08 10, 2014, from http://www.simonanholt.com: http://www.simonanholt.com/Explained/explained-about-simon-anholt.aspx

Aronzyk, M. (2008). "Living the Brand": Nationality, Globality and the Identity Strategies of Nations. *International Journal of Communications* , 41-65.

Berry, A. (2013). The Translation Zone: Between Actor-Network Theory and International Relations . *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* , 1-17.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Socail Research Methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burson-Marsteller. (2014). *Twiplomacy Study 2014.* Burson-Marsteller, Twiplomacy. Geneva: Burson-Marsteller.

Callon, M. (1993). Society in the Making: The Study of Technology as a Tool for Sociological Analysis. In W. E. Bijker, T. P. Hughes, & T. J. Pinch, *The Social Construction of Thecnological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (pp. 83-106). London: MIT Press .

Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. In J. Law, *Power, action and belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* (pp. 196-223). London: Routledge.

Callon, M., & Latour, B. (1981). Unscrewing the big Leviathan. In K. D. Knorr-

Choucri, N. (2012). *Cyberpolitics in International Relations:Context, Connectivity, and Content.* Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Christensen, C. (2013). @Sweden: Curating a Nation on Twitter . *Popular Communication* , 30-46.

Clark, L. S. (2009). Theories: Mediatization and Media Ecology. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: concepts,changens,consequences* (pp. 85-100). New York: Lang Publishing Inc.

Cordella, A. & Shaikh , M. (2006). From Epistemology to Ontology: Challenging the Constructed "truth" of ANT . *Working Paper Series* . Department of Information Systems London School of Economics and Polical Science.

Couldry, N. (2008). Actor Network Theory and Media: Do They Connect and on What Terms? In A. Hepp, F. Krotz, S. Moores, & C. Winter, *Connectivity, networks*

and flows: conceptualizing contemporary communications (pp. 93-110). Cresskill : Hamton Press.

Couldry, N. (2013). Mediatization and the Future of Field Thory. *Communicative Figurations Working Paper No. 3* . Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research .

Couldry, N. (2004). Theorizin Media as Practice. *Social Semiotics , 14* (2), 115-132.

Grant, R. (2005). The Democatisation of Diplomacy: Negotiating with the Internet. *Discussion Papers in DIplomacy* . Netherlands Institutie of International Relations 'Cingendael'.

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Resaerch. In K. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Resarch* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hanseth, O., Berg, M., & Aanestad , M. (2004). Guest editors' introduction Actor-network theory and information systems. What's so special? *Information Technology & People* , 116-123.

Hanson, F. (2012, 03). Revolution @State: The Spread of Ediplomacy . *Revolution @State: The Spread of Ediplomacy* . Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy. Hepp, A. (2013). *Cultures of Mediatization.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hepp, A. (2012). Mediatzation and the 'molding force' of the media. *Communications* , 1-28.

Heywood, A. (2011). *Global Politics.* Hampshire: Palmgrave Mcmillan.

Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The Mediatization of Culture and Society.* London: Routledge.

Hjarvard, S. (2008, 06). The mediatization of religion: A theory of the media as agents of religious change. *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook* , 9-26.

Hocking , B., Melissen , J., Riordan , S., & Shar, P. (2012). *Futures for Diplomacy: Integrative Diplomacy in the 21st Century.* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. Clingendael.

Hoffman, H. (2013, 06 28). witter as an Instrument of Public Diplomacy: A Case Study of Sweden and Germany . *Master of Arts Thesis Euroculture* . Stockholm.

HS, Helsingin Sanomat (2014, 01 26). Ruotsi ohitti Suomen digidiplomatiassa. Retrieved 08 17, 2014, from www.hs.fi: http://www.hs.fi/paakirjoitukset/a1390689474936

Khatib, L., Dutton, W., & Thelwall , M. (2012). Public Diplomacy 2.0: A Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team. *Middle East Journal* , 453-472.

Krotz, F. (2009). Mediatization: A Concept With Which to Grasp Media and Societal Change. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences.* (pp. 21-40). New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Lövheim, M. (2012). Religious Socialization in a Media Age. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* , 151-168.

Lövheim, M., Jansson, A., Paasonen, S., & Sumiala, J. (2013, 12). Social Media: Implications for Everyday Life, Politics and Human agency. *Approaching Religion* , 26-37.

Latour, B. (2004). On Using ANT for Studying Information Systems: A (Somewhat) Socratic Dialogue. In C. Avgerou, C. Ciborra, & F. Lan, *The Social Study of Information and Communication Technology* (pp. 62-76). Oxforduniversity Press.

Law, J. (2009). Actor Network Theory and Metrial Semiotics. In B. S. Turner, *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory* (pp. 141-158). West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing.

Law, J. (1999). After ANT: complexity, naming and topology . *The Editorial Board of The Sociological Review* , 1-14.

Law, J. (1993). Technology and Heterogeneous Engineering: The Case of Portugese Expansion. In W. E. Bijker, T. P. Hughes, & T. J. Pinch, *The Social Construction of Thecnological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (pp. 111-134). London: MIT Press.

Law, J. & Singleton , V. (2013). ANT and Politics: Working in and on the World. *Qualitative Sociology* , 485–502 .

LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of Reliablility and Validity in Ethnographic Research. *Review of Educational Research* , 31-60.

Lichtenstein, J. (2010, 07 18). *Digital Diplomacy.* Retrieved 08 18, 2014, from www.nytimes.com: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/magazine/18web2-0-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Livingstone, S. (2009). Foreword:Coming to Terms WIth 'Mediatization'. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: Concept. Changes, Consequences* (pp. ix-xi). New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Lister M, Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Grant, I.,& Kelly, K. (2003). *New Media: A Critical Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Lundby, K. (2009). *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Lundby, K. (2011). Patterns of Belonging in Online/Offline Interfaces of Religion. *Information, Communication and Society* , 1219-1235.

Meyer, Thomas. 2002. *Media Democracy: How the Media Colonize Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.

MFA Finland, M. (2004, 09 29). *Ministry for Foreign Affairs revamps the Virtual Finland website*. Retrieved 08 14, 2014, from http://formin.finland.fi: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=62421&nodeid=15145&content lan=2&culture=en-US

MFA Finland, M. (2014, 18 08). *Operations and Finances*. Retrieved 7 8, 2014, from Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=15177&contentlan=2&culture=en -US

MFA Finland, M. (2009, 05 15). *Virtual Finland is now thisisFINLAND*. Retrieved 08 15, 2014, from http://www.formin.finland.fi: http://www.formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=164424&nodeid=15145& contentlan=2&culture=en-US

MFA Sweden, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden (2014, 08 11). *The Diplomatic Portal*. Retrieved 08 16, 2014, from www.government.se: http://www.government.se/sb/d/5285

Miller, V. (2011). *Understanding Digital Culture.* London: Sage.

Passoth, J.H. & Rowland, N. J. (2010). Actor-Network State Integrating Actor-Network Theory and State Theory. *International Sociology* , 818–841 .

Rothenbuhler, E. (2009). Continuities: Communicative Form and Institutionalization. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences.* (pp. 277-292). New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Sayes, E. (2013). Actor–Network Theory and methodology: Just what does it mean to say that nonhumans have agency? *Social Studies of Science* , 1-16.

Schillemans, T. (2012). *Mediatization of Public Services: how organizations adapt to news media.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

SierraClub. (2013, 12 16). *TTIP Investment Letter.* Retrieved 01 13, 2014, from action.sierraclub.org:
http://action.sierraclub.org/site/DocServer/TTIP_Investment_Letter_Final.pdf?docID=14701

Schrott, A. (2009). Dimensions: Chach-All Label or Thechnical Term. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences* (pp. 41-61). New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Sillanpää, M. (2014). Sosiaalinen media suurlähetystön palveluksessa. Tarkastelussa Suomen Washingtonin-suurlähetystön viestintä. *Masters Thesis in Filosophy* . Finland: University of Vaasa.

Sommerville, I. (1999). Agency versus identity: actor-network theory meets public relations. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* , 6-13.

Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics . *The International Journal of Press/Politics , 13* (3), 228-246.

Strömbäck, J., & Esser, F. (2009). Shaping Politics: Mediatization and Media Interventionism. In K. Lundby, *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences* (pp. 205-223). New York: Peter Lang Publishin Inc.

Swedish Institute. (n.d.). *About SI.* Retrieved 08 16, 2014, from www.si.se:
https://eng.si.se/about-si/

Szondi, G. (2008). Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences . *Discussion Papaers on Diplomacy* . Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

Team Finland, (2014, 07 14). *What is Team Finland?* Retrieved 08 15, 2014, from www.team.finland.fi:
http://team.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=46788&contentlan=2&culture=en-US

W3Techs. (2013). *Usage of content languages for websites.* Retrieved 08 16, 2014, from www.W3Techs.com:
http://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language/all

Appendices

Appendix 1. Form of Informed Consent in Finnish

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Aino Huxley

MSc Digital Media and Society
Department of Informatics and
Media

http://www.im.uu.se/

Käyntiosoite: Ekonomikum,
Kyrkogårdsg. 10, 751 05 Uppsala

Uppsala Universitet
Box 256, 751 05 Uppsala, Sweden

aino.huxley@gmail.com

Puh:
Suomi: 0407086310
Ruotsi: +46 765645299

Tutkimustiedote

Digitaalinen Diplomatia ja Ulkoministeriö

Tämä projekti tutkii digitaalisen diplomatia merkitystä Suomen Ulkoasiainministeriölle ja kuinka digitaalista diplomatiaa käytetään. Diplomatia on kauan mielletty kahden valtion välisenä ulkopolitiikkana, jossa valtion nimeämät diplomaatit pyrkivät edistämään suhteita kohde valtion kanssa. Globalisaation myötä taloudellinen kilpailu ja median vaikutus yhteiskunnassa ovat huomattavasti kasvaneet, haastaen perinteisen diplomatian. Suurien organisaatioiden, kuten Ulkoministeriön, on muokattava toimintatapojaan näiden suuntausten mukaisesti. Digitaalinen diplomatia on osa näitä muutoksia. Tämä tutkimus selvittää miten digitaalista diplomatiaa käytetään vastaamaan yhteiskunnan uusiin vaatimuksiin.

Haastattelutapa

Haastattelu tapahtuu haastateltavan henkilön kanssa etukäteen sovitussa paikassa. Haastattelu perustuu teemahaastatteluun, jossa haastattelu pohjautuu teemojen mukaiselle keskustelulle. Haastattelu kestää n. 0,5h-1h. Keskustelu nauhoitetaan.

Osallistumisesi haastatteluun on vapaaehtoista. Sinulla on milloin tahansa oikeus vetää tietosi pois tutkimuksesta antamatta selvitystä.

Haastattelujen käsittelytapa

Haastattelut numeroidaan ja käsitellään anonyymisti. Nauhoitettu haastattelu kirjoitetaan tekstiksi josta tiedot analysoidaan. Kun tutkimus on valmis on tiedot käsitelty niin, ettei haastateltavan henkilöllisyyttä voida tunnistaa. Tutkimustulokset julkaistaan yliopiston kirjastossa Graduna.

Kiitos ajastasi.

**UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET**

Aino Huxley

MSc Digital Media and Society
Department of Informatics and
Media

http://www.im.uu.se/

Käyntiosoite: Ekonomikum,
Kyrkogårdsg. 10, 751 05 Uppsala

Uppsala Universitet
Box 256, 751 05 Uppsala, Sweden

aino.huxley@gmail.com

Puh:
Suomi: 0407086310
Ruotsi: +46 765645299

Tutkittavan suostumus

Todistan, että

- olen lukenut ja ymmärtänyt tämän

  tutkimustiedotteen

- olen saanut riittävän selvityksen tutkimuksen
  aiheesta ja tavoitteesta

- osallistumiseni on vapaaehtoista

- annan suostumukseni käyttää
haastatteluntietoja tässä tutkimuksessa yllä
olevin perustein

Päiväys

Paikka

Allekirjoitus

Nimenselvennys

Appendix 2. Form of Informed Consent Translated to English

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Aino Huxley

MSc Digital Media and Society

Department of Informatics and Media

Adress: Ekonomikum

Kyrkogårdsgata 10, 75105, Uppsala

Uppsala Universitet

Box 256, 75105

Uppsala, Sweden

aino.huxley@gmail.com

Number:

Finland: 0407086310

Sweden: +46 765645299

Form of Informed Consent Conset of the Interviewee

This research explores the significance of digital diplomacy for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and how digital diplomacy is used.

Diplomacy has for a long time been perceived as the politics between two states; where the assigned diplomats of states aspire to promote relations with the host state. Through globalization the economic competition and medias role in society have increased significantly: challenging traditional diplomacy. Large organizations, such as the Ministry, have to mold their modus operandi accordingly. Digital diplomacy is a part of these changes. This research looks into how digital diplomacy is used to meet these demands posed by society.

Interview Method

The interview will take place in a location decided with the interviewee in before hand. The interview bases on a semi-structured interview model, where the interview is founded on theme-based discussion. The interview will take approximately 0,5h-1h. The discussion will be recorded.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You have the right at any time and without giving an explanation to pull your data out from the study.

Method of treatment of the interviews

The interviews will be numbered and processed anonymously. The recorded interviews will be transcribed into text from which the data will be analyzed. When the study is completed the information is processed, so that the interviewee's identity cannot be identified. The research results will published at the university library as a Master's thesis.

Thank You for your time.

Organization number:202100-2932

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Aino Huxley

MSc Digital Media and Society

Department of Informatics and Media

Adress: Ekonomikum

Kyrkogårdsgata 10, 75105, Uppsala

Uppsala Universitet

Box 256, 75105

Uppsala, Sweden

aino.huxley@gmail.com

Number:

Finland: 0407086310

Sweden: +46 765645299

Consent of the Interviewee

I confirm that

- I have read and understood this form of informed consent

- I have received sufficient information of the topic and objective of this study

- My participation is voluntary

- I give my permission to use the interview data in this study by the criteria above

Date

Place

Signature

Name in block letters

Organization number:202100-2932

Appendix 3. Interview Guide in Finnish

Haastattelukysymykset: digitaalinen viestintä ja diplomatia Ulkoasiainministeriössä

Yleiset kysymykset

1. Oletko kiinnostunut digitaalisesta diplomatiasta?
   1.1. Mitä digitaalinen diplomatia sinun mielestäsi on?

2. Miten viestintää ohjataan digitaalisessa diplomatiassa?

3. Uusi media perustuu pitkälti sosiaaliseen mediaan ja muihin vuorovaikuttamiseen pohjautuviin kanaviin, kuinka suuri organisaatio vastaa tähän yksilökeskeiseen viestintään?
   3.1. Kuinka odotatte henkilöiden toimivan näillä kanavilla?

Ulkoasiainministeriötä koskevat kysymykset

4. Kuinka näet, että digitaalinen diplomatia/ digitaalinen viestintä toimii Suomen eduksi?

5. Vaikuttaako digitaalinen diplomatia ja maakuva mielestäsi henkilöiden näkemykseen Suomesta?
   5.1. Onko sinulla esimerkkiä siitä kuinka digitaalinen läsnäolo on edesauttanut Suomea?

6. Onko tärkeää, että kansalaiset ovat aktiivisia Ulkoministeriön digitaalisen mediankanavilla?

7. Oletko huomannut erityisiä hyviä ja haitallisia toimintatapoja digitaalisessa mediassa
   - Ulkoministeriön osalta?
   - Osallistujan osalta?

Appendix 4. Interview Guide Translated

Aino Huxley
Interview Guide
Digital Diplomacy
19.03.2014

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Interview Guide: Digital Communication and diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

General Questions

1. Are you interested in digital diplomacy?
   1.1. How do you see digital diplomacy?

2. How is communication directed in digital diplomacy?
   2.1. How is communication steered in digital diplomacy?

3. New Media bases a lot on social media and other interactive channels, how does a large organization answer to communication centered on the individual?
   3.1. How do you expect people to act on these channels?

Specific questions regarding the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

4. How do you see, digital diplomacy/ communication being of benefit for Finland?

5. Does digital diplomacy and the country brand affect peoples view of Finland?
   Do you have and example of how digital presence has assisted Finland?

6. Is it important that citizens are active on the Ministry's digital media platforms?

7. Have you observed some particularly good or bad ways of action in digital media
   - As the Ministry?
   -As an participant ?