

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group

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Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.

(signature)



Olita HM Tupou,
30 June 2018, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Acknowledgements

This work has been the most trials-filled journey –from an all-time low due to force majeure, to the height of added responsibilities and demands- But all that is not smooth planning – is all worth it in the end – I am blessed with the mercy and grace of the Lord God Almighty.

With all honesty, I thank the tireless patience of my supervisor, Ambassador Kishan Rana, who has been so kind, encouraging free thinking and taking risk in this study. I thank the Coordinator for the DiploFoundation Masters programme, Mr. Patrick Borg, for all the professionalism and assistance guided through the DiploFoundation course.

To my family, the sacrifice is yours but the reward is mine, - I can never thank you all enough, for being there for me - from start to end.

Dedication

To the first diplomat in the family;

The second of High Commissioners to the UK in the family; and;

The first Lord Chamberlain to two reigning monarchs in the House of Tupou;

The stars are easier to pluck - than the vivacity of this lifetime, to fill your shoes.

Your constant industriousness - your humility is exemplar;

To my dear mother *Viela Kinahoi Tupou*, this dissertation is dedicated to you;

Abstract

Established in 2011, the Polynesian Leaders Groups serves to fulfill a vision of cooperation, strengthening integration on issues pertinent to the region and to the future of the PLG. Its nine – American Samoa, French Polynesia, Niue, Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Tonga and Wallis Futuna, is argued to have strength in numbers, resources and diversity, and a positive addition to the growing regional diplomacies in the South Pacific.

The study is an expedition in itself in understanding the relevancy of adopting a new statecraft of diplomacy, such as the use of social media, Information Communications Technologies and the Internet, to advance socio-economic and development interests of the PLG, and their connections with the rest of the world, independently as sovereign states or collectively as a region. Comparative analysis with other examples from other countries on their use of digital diplomacy will seek to build the argument on its novelty, relevancy and contribution to the Pacific Islands, but the PLG must decide whether it wants to pursue prosperity for its members in the Digital age, or be left behind.

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Acronyms

AOSIS	Association of Small Islands States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific
EU	European Union
FOSS	Friends of Small States
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
PLG	Polynesian Leaders Group
RECI	Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States

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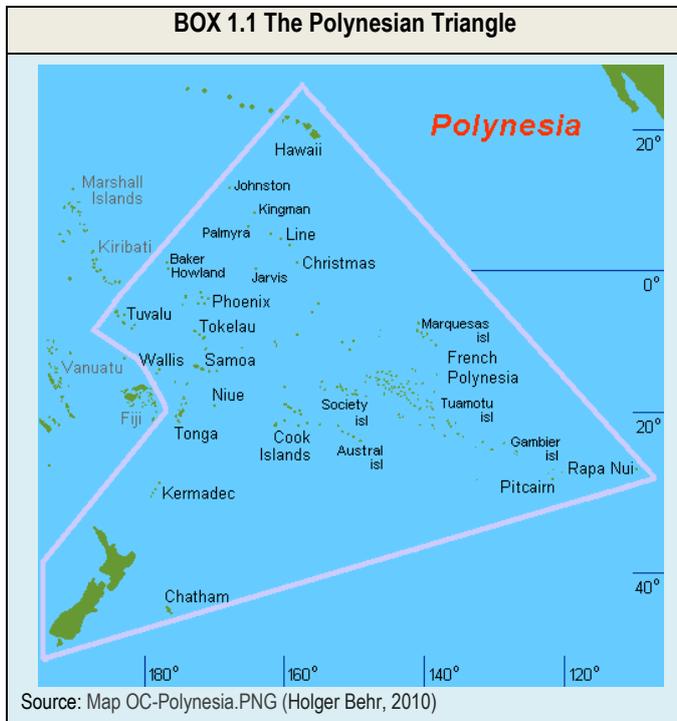
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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND SCOPE

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1.1 *Setting the scene*

Before the luxury and instantaneous convenience of Facebook, email and Skype and before the



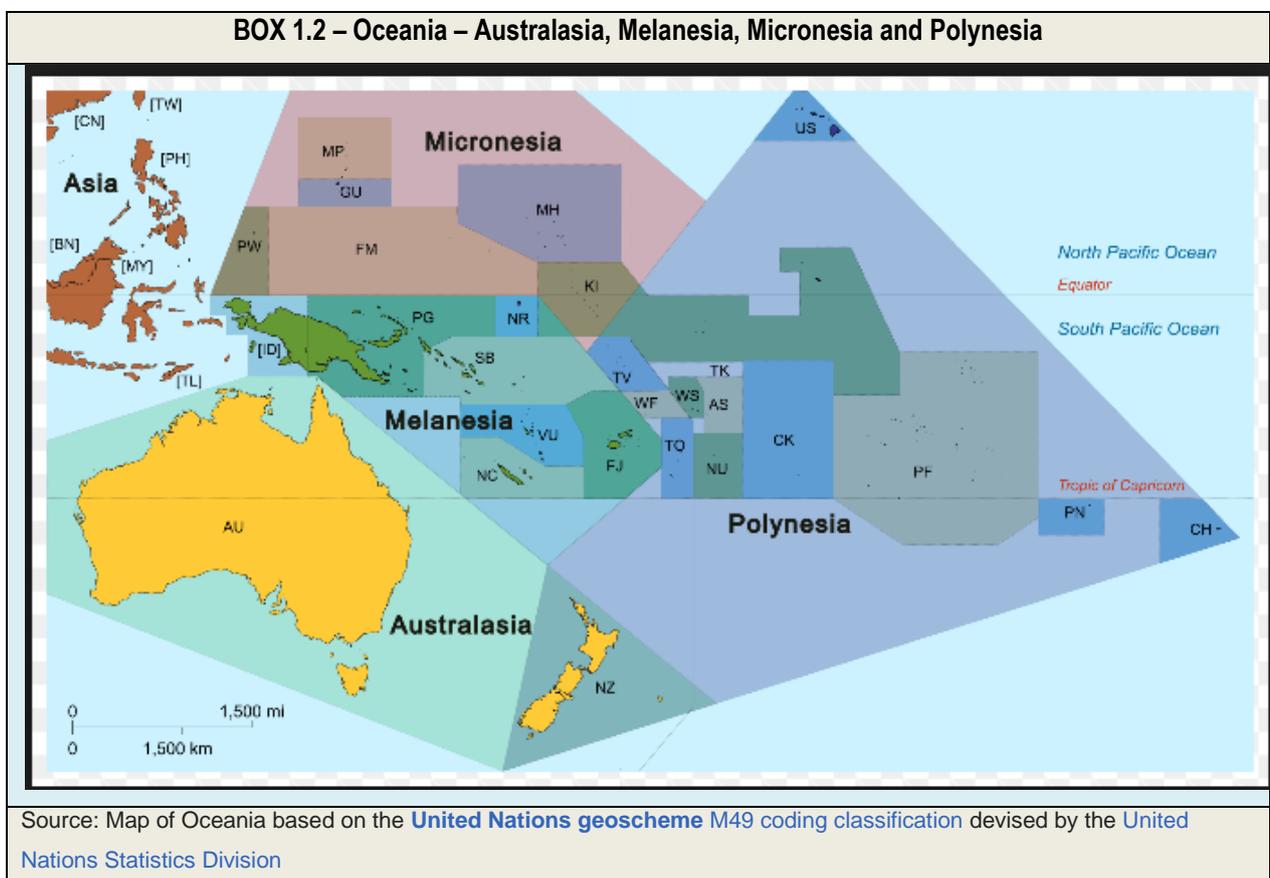
dawn of the era of modern travel, telecommunications and European contact, the islands in the Polynesian Triangle were known for their interconnectedness in those days, because of their deep cultural integration, respect for mythology, belief systems and tradition, which guided and bridge interactions across the Pacific miles of oceans from islands to islands.

Today, “lexicostatistical studies” (Elbert, 1953), indicated that the origin of the Polynesian people is based on evidence that there are “similarities in the dialects, language family, and culture” (Hiroa, 2010), primarily across the five main hubs of Polynesia, as in Tonga (translates *South*), Samoa (translates *Sacred Centre*¹), *Hawaii*, *Aotearoa* and *Tahiti*. This clearly demonstrated that the Polynesian ancestors were not only avid voyagers, travelling as far as the Polynesian Triangle to explore and settle, but to integrate and trade with other cultures across its path, influencing other civilizations, as they did in the smaller islands of Tokelau (translates *North*), Tuvalu (translates *eight standing together*) and Rarotonga (better known as the Cook Islands, translates *below Tonga*).

¹ Samoa was claimed to be genesis of Polynesia, Kuykendall, Ralph S. (1967). *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1874-1893, the Kalakaua dynasty*. University of Hawaii Press. ISBN 9780870224331.

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Traditionally, Oceania is a “geographic region that constitutes the sub-regional groups of *Australasia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia*” (Douglas & Ballard, 2008). Australasia alludes to larger islands and the-once continental land masses of Australia, and New Zealand. In this context, the term *Pacific Islands*, or the *South Pacific*, denotes all the islands in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, while *Oceania* (Box 1.2), refers to all three, plus Australia and New Zealand as Oceania countries.



But how did the Polynesians manage to conduct friendly relations between each group, before European contact, and what were then-diplomatic methods for cooperation and integration? Has these methods of diplomacy prepared or influenced how each island conduct their own bilateral relations with the outside world?

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Again, this poses another question of how has the largest ocean with the smallest continent of land mass, overcome such regional challenges? The geographical positioning of each grouping seeks to define the diversity and complexities of the Pacific Islands, and before the modern political systems of the Pacific that it is today, each group, share unique challenges, be known to the region, such as distance, remoteness, smallness and diversity in geography, climate, culture, politics, economies and peoples.

These unique challenges may have hampered the socio-economic development of the region, exposing the region to vulnerabilities in terms of maritime security, inaccessibility to markets for trade and investment as well limited resources for transport and communication infrastructures to bring forth development. The study is an expedition in itself in understanding the relevancy of adopting a new statecraft or modern methods of diplomacy, such as digital diplomacy, to pursuing the socio-economic and development interests of the Pacific Islands, and their connections with the rest of the world, independently as sovereign states or collectively as a region.

To begin with, Polynesia is selected as the sample for the study of digital diplomacy in the South Pacific. What is more important to draw attention to is that, Polynesia contains the largest membership of the region's political decision-making intergovernmental organization, the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), and the first myth is that, *what can be achieved at the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG), can complement the work of the PIF and incur powerful influence at the international scene.* Contrary, to its Melanesian intergovernmental organization counterpart, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), that is well-established and has been in operation for over three decades since 1983, and are made up of powerful, resource-rich members, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, it is

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anticipated that the PLG will bring a fresh-approach to regionalism, because it has a wider focus on regional connectivity, trade and investment, sustainable environmental conservation and climate change mitigation to human rights and promotion of cultural and traditional knowledge, which is more in tuned with sustainable development global issues, an extension of the narrow-focussed MSG, whose only agenda is to promote economic prosperity for its members.

The second myth is, that having the PLG established, *will complete the idea of sub-regionalism that can collate coordinated efforts at the PIF*, and since Melanesia has the MSG; Micronesia has the Micronesian Chief Executives, the cultural identity and uniqueness of the South Pacific will be best represented and influenced by the Polynesian Leaders Group, at the international arena. The final myth for this research is that, with the South Pacific experiencing evolving regional infrastructure and diplomacies, first, with Fiji, setting out to form the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), open to all Pacific Islands, beside Australia and New Zealand; and secondly, with Samoa on the other hand, as main initiator for the Polynesian Leaders Group, is setting out to do the same, appealing to Polynesian members, with Hawaii, Rapanui and Maori, as observers, to *promote a Polynesian alliance*, with plans to invite Fiji as members, whose part-Polynesian with the Lau Group, *this Pacific Islands race to rule the South Pacific*, continues to fuel the move to separate New Zealand and Australia from the Pacific Islands has never been more imminent, whilst at the same time, both Fiji and Samoa, are inviting non-traditional partners such as the People's Republic of China, Japan, India and the United States to support the work of each organizations. The "reconfiguration of the architecture for the Pacific Islands region has been a longstanding issue and has been very difficult, since the two metropolitan countries, Australia and New Zealand, are members of various Pacific regional institutions" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Fiji, 2015).

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But what competitive advantage does the PLG has, that it can better equip the members or the group in conducting its foreign policies objectives more effectively, regionally and globally, that the PIDF, PIF or any other sub-regional organizations have not yet already tried? What tools can the PLG embody to be more advanced and modern to be in sync with today’s globalization and digital age?

Digital Diplomacy can be statecraft to facilitate the achievement of regional cooperation and integration. In the age of readily available, affordable, and real-time access to Information Communications Technologies (ICT) applications and the Internet, the PLG can take a new approach to bringing forth regional integration and cooperation, as well as diversifying its foreign policy diplomacies to engage in digital and public diplomacy, which are powerful tools that is relevant to today’s expanding international agenda and multi-stakeholder political front.

Nine Polynesian islands as shown in Box 1.3, primarily the members of the Polynesian Leaders Group, have been chosen for the study, to serve three perspectives.

BOX 1.3– Polynesian Member States					
INDEPENDENT STATES	YEAR JOINED	SELF-GOVERNING ASSOCIATED STATES	YEAR JOINED	OVERSEAS COLLECTIVITY /TERRITORIES	YEAR JOINED
Samoa	2011	Cook Islands (NZ)	2011	French Polynesia (France)	2011
Tonga	2011	Tokelau (NZ)	2011	Wallis & Futuna (France)	2017
Tuvalu	2011	Niue (NZ)	2011	American Samoa (US)	2011

First, to examine how digital diplomacy can be instrumental to the conduct of a PLG state’s diplomatic activities in the international arena, and secondly, to assess how digital diplomacy can strengthen an intergovernmental organization to become more dynamic in addressing

common issues of concerns at the international level, and thirdly, will digital diplomacy be best fit statecraft for promoting, strengthening integration and cooperation at the regional level.

The approach will require an initial look at the transition from *traditional* to *new diplomacies* alongside, addressing both *old* and *new challenges* unique to the islands in the region. *Old challenges* will seek to encompass a discussion of decades of harmonizing the sovereign interests of the Pacific Islands to support regionalism with the initiatives to promote a *Blue Pacific*, a concept based on “encapsulating the Pacific Islands collective identity, Pacific home and resources”, in the understanding that the “Pacific can do better and do more collectively” (PIF, 2018). This is coupled and is justified by the Pacific Islands’ shared geographical complexities of isolation, smallness, cultural, socio-economic and political diversity.

On the other hand, *new challenges* in this context will discuss globalization and its hegemonic impact in the South Pacific, where the Pacific Islands are no longer isolated or immune to external shocks, and that the problems of the world becomes the problems of the Pacific in a cause and effect relationship, if not addressed. A decade and a half ago, since the turn of the millennium, the launch of the 2030 global agenda, the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs), that promotes inclusive development and the ambitious international goal to ‘leave no one behind’, has called for the Pacific Islands, who are at the most vulnerable end of the socio-economic and environmental global impacts, to localize the SDGs into the Pacific agenda, in a do or die mission. The very survival of the once-isolated, remote, and peaceful tranquillity of the Pacific have become more critical than ever, to adapt, to have a voice and to be part of the global debate and become part of the solution.

Therefore, the study of digital diplomacy in Polynesia will be argued in three parts. The first part is more nationalistic, will discuss how member states can re-examine their foreign policies to conduct their diplomatic activities more effectively, by unlocking the potentials of digital diplomacy. The second part will discuss the use of digital diplomacy to advance states or regional interests at the international arena, in four specific areas of sustainable development, namely, “connectivity, trade and investment, financial cooperation and addressing shared vulnerabilities” (UNESCAP, 2017). The latter part of the study is more inward-looking approach, based on the UNESCAP strategy for regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI), which seeks to examine the use of digital diplomacy in promoting regionalism and integration in the aforementioned areas, achieving trans-boundary sustainable development.

1.2 *Definitions*

Throughout the dissertation, a few terminologies will be used interchangeably, and may have the contextual meaning, depending on the application. For instance, *E- Diplomacy*, *Digital Diplomacy* and *Cyber Diplomacy*, all refer to the use of the Internet and ICT to conduct diplomatic activities. In broader terms, digital diplomacy is the “use of the Internet to solve foreign policy problems” (Foreign Commonwealth Office, 2012), from “enabling dispersed communities to communicate freely and act collectively, the Internet can both reinforce and undermine the nation state” (Westcott, 2008) but the “attraction of social media has turned this 21st century tool of diplomacy into a prime focus for debate, when it goes right to the heart of diplomacy’s core functions, negotiation and representation” (Hocking and Melissen, 2015).

Electronic Diplomacy (E-Diplomacy), for many years now have been part of the Pacific’s diplomatic activities, with the use of electronic means such as e-mail to broadcasts and

television for old-fashioned public diplomacy, to teleconferencing and distant learning to promote e-learning and e-education, the promoting of dissemination and publishing information online to be available for access, promotes the concepts of e-governments and other government services available on websites, portals and wikis.

On the contrary, the use of the Internet digital tools and social media to promote diplomacy, will qualify this research to explore digital diplomacy which has other emerging concepts of twiplomacy (twitter diplomacy), and the use of social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram and other communications applications, WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, Webinars for networking, is an important part of digital diplomacy. More importantly, how or will these quick fix applications, influence diplomacy of the Polynesian states and the work of the PLG as a whole.

The research will also make some reference to an increasing important aspect of digital diplomacy such as *cyber diplomacy* which will cover the aspects of privacy, security, governance and freedom of information online, an area that is making some significant importance in the Pacific such as *cyber security*, *cyber safety*, *internet governance*, which will no doubt be critical to harness this statecraft, in order to be effective in achieving diplomatic objectives.

1.3 *Thesis statement*

The use of the Internet and Information Communications Technologies to conduct diplomatic activities or digital diplomacy in the Polynesian Leaders Group countries can be statecraft for the members' national governments to gain wider global support and political actions,

in achieving their foreign policies objectives in international connectivity, addressing shared vulnerabilities; promoting trade, investment and deepening economic cooperation. On the other hand, Digital Diplomacy can be more effective in achieving regional integration on these issues.

1.4 *Research objectives*

The dissertation will explore and discuss the following objectives in order, to analyse the approach by the PLG to digital diplomacy;

- i. how digital diplomacy can assist the PLG achieve regional cooperation and integration through
 - a. centralized repository knowledge and information management hub
 - b. promote public and regional diplomacy
 - c. use connective technologies to facilitate beyond consular activities, cultivation of networks, contacts between Heads of Government Offices and MFAs;
 - d. coordinated disaster awareness and response agenda
- ii. to establish the potential challenges and opportunities that digital diplomacy can offer to the PLGs states;
- iii. to analyse the common digital red tape to digital diplomacy in the PLG states;
- iv. to provide best practices solutions for the PLG states from similar small states and regional organizations engaged in digital diplomacy;
- v. to explore the Pacific diplomacies and the address the limitation of resources that guide the diplomacies of the Pacific Islands;

- vi. to explore the fact that smallness is no longer an issue in digital diplomacy which caters for any actors in international relations pursuing any diplomatic agenda;
- vii. to explore how digital diplomacy is more popular and effective with Non-state actors compared to Central Agencies vs Diplomats and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- viii. to explore how leaders and political will is critical for the survival and acceptance of digital diplomacy;
- ix. to explore whether regional cooperation can promote digital diplomacies at state levels;

1.5 *Hypothesis*

- a) Digital Diplomacy is the 21st Century statecraft for Pacific regionalism and integration;
- b) Digital Diplomacy will prove more effective, and cannot be statecraft to be harnessed in isolation, by only diplomats and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but together with other central Offices of the Prime Ministers and Presidents who are imminent channels for political will, as Polynesian leaders must draw from the interests of the state, pooling resources and expertise from state and non-state actors alike, to successfully advance these national interests at the global arena.

1.6 *Methodology*

1.6.1 Publications Research

The dissertation will review relevant publications and journals on the area of RECI and digital diplomacy and how to relate with the Pacific PLG case study. Due to its novelty in the Pacific, there is limitation in the publications of digital diplomacy or the subject of diplomacy in the

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Pacific, let alone the islands foreign policies, and cannot be mistaken for the lack of resources or publications, interpreted as lack of diplomacy, for the Pacific whether Samoa or Tonga or Fiji, Polynesia or Melanesia, the Pacific way, is the norm for Pacific diplomacy, advancing interests is still in infancy due to many reasons from lack of resources and capacity, but that is not the Pacific Way to advance interests as it is a Western culture to advance own interests upon others, but to bridge relations or to build friendships and cooperation, is the Pacific diplomacy, however, today, this unwillingness or unassertiveness to advance interests in order to achieve economic development or secure land and people from natural and man-made disasters, is a must for Pacific Islands to undertake, across borders, region and across the international platforms, and if they cannot boldly fulfill this diplomatic activity in traditional methods through face to face negotiations, than in the age of modern technology, the use of e-diplomacy and digital diplomacy is an uncharted territory for research and study as well as implementations.

Access to publications or literature on digital diplomacy in the islands of the Polynesian Triangle that is not there in the public domain, or the diplomatic activities of the islands has been a challenge, and should there be any materials on the topic, the publication is an experience or perspective of foreigners, who discuss Pacific foreign policies and diplomatic activities, without respect to the understanding of culture, traditional knowledge and the Pacific way, thus challenge this research to balance perspectives, and make best efforts to supplement the document research with survey and interview and documentary methodologies to support the research objectives outlined.

Access to the journals of Pacific organizations, materials on works undertaken to pursue regional issues, from the Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Islands Development Forum, available

online and by request, seeks to provide supplement information about the topics of research, however relevancy and application to the topics to the study of digital diplomacy is lacking. Comparative analysis with other examples from other countries on their use of digital diplomacy will seek to build the argument on its novelty, relevancy and contribution to the Pacific Islands.

1.6.2 Interviews /Questionnaire

Although the use of the Internet and ICT has been informally adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and related Agencies in many countries, the availability of data or statistics on this topic and how the Internet and ICT is used to conduct diplomatic activities, is not in print, the research undertook a quantitative study. The main component of the methodology included interviews and dispatch of questionnaire survey to regional organizations, PLG state members, the PLG Secretariat, HOG Offices, MFA, and those who work in digital diplomacy positions in successful case studies, such as Australia and New Zealand for comparative purposes. Questionnaires were being administered through various formats, through email distribution, or circulated web links (available on: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DXKHNQJ> and <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KBZ6XMT>, administered to the PLG members and the regional PIF, PIDF and UNESCAP secretariats including a questionnaire for Polynesian Leaders.

1.6.3 Documentary Analysis and Observations

As the study is a new area, a documentary on the dissertation will be collated to demonstrate the importance of using e-tools for digital diplomacy and how such tools can be taken advantage of to reach the wider audience trans-boundaries and on a global level through the

information released or published on the Internet on research on digital diplomacy in the Polynesian islands and using the PLG, a new intergovernmental regional body to amplify the voices of many in the international fora and billion of Internet audience online. Interestingly, the growing importance of the role of public diplomacy is a vital element for digital diplomacy, for which the study objectives will appeal to.

1.6.4 Polypedia

Polypedia is the prototype solution for creating a digital web space for information and knowledge sharing, amongst PLG members for the coordination, collaborating, communicating their priorities and projects for cooperation and integration.

A link to the demo prototype wiki type *Polypedia*, inspired by the US's Diplopedia or Corridor project will be provided during the research to relate to the issues being researched and how a website can be a step towards closer cooperation between the Polynesian states and promoting integration on many issues. The pilot website will be created and available on

<http://www.click-tongatoday.net>

1.6.5 Social Media propaganda

The dissertation will provide first-hand experience from engaging the research study and investigation, observation, analysis and reporting using social media platforms to see digital diplomacy in action, assessing challenges met, opportunities available when administering a Facebook or Twitter account that tries to promote digital diplomacy, but receive other issues of privacy, security, whereby the study will benefit from.

1.7 Literature Review

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This area of study is relatively new, and the Polynesian Leaders Group have been established in seven years, and met annually, and yet each members of the PLG has adopted digital diplomacy as part of its foreign policies. Resources are limited in written and online.

Two excellent basis for exploring this topic of digital diplomacy in the Pacific, can be based on (Fry & Tarte's, 2015), *The New Pacific Diplomacy*, which explores the increasing Pacific political forums competing with the Pacific Island Forum, to unite the Pacific on various issues, regional and international. Firth's *The New Regionalism and its Contradictions*, discusses Intervention and State-Building in the Pacific: The Legitimacy of 'Cooperative Intervention'.

Other reviews by Lawson (2016)'s Regionalism, sub-regionalism and the politics of identity in Oceania and Iati (2017)'s *Pacific Regionalism and the Polynesian Leaders Group*, is close to heart discussion of the position of the PLG in Pacific Regionalism. Another key contribution by Tarte (2017) on *The Changing Paradigm of Pacific Regional Politics*, talks about regional integration and changing diplomacies, that governs these relationships.

1.8 *Limitation & Strength of Study*

Without boldly stating that the concept of digital diplomacy is met without some reservation or inclination to adopt or invest in by many Polynesian countries, the strength of the study is that whilst digital diplomacy is slowly taking the scene in regional issues, as a tool for promoting regional priorities, the PLG itself has just agreed to setup a permanent secretariat in 2017, will give this research the ambitious purpose and vision to set the scene for ushering in digital diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft.

Best practice examples from small states diplomacies provided an important roadmap to the PLG's own digital diplomacy journey, at the same time, the perspectives obtained from each

PLG country, into how they want the PLG to work, and expand in the future, by embracing new technologies and diplomacies, can provide lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

The limitation of the study is owed to the bureaucratic red tape that many agents of foreign policy, are reluctant to neither share information nor open to culture change in the conduct of diplomatic activities, especially with the emergence of non-state actors and non-MFA agencies as players in international relations. The study is a mind-set changer to adopting a new statecraft that if pursued and recognized at the national level, will be transcending with great benefits, at the regional level.

CHAPTER 2: FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE POLYNESIAN STATES

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the tranquillity and paradise in the Pacific was changed forever, with the dawn of European colonization. The close ties between the Polynesian Triangle, became sidetracked as Hawaii was overtaken by the Americans, Aotearoa became New Zealand under the Dutch and the British, and the Easter Islands, became distant strangers as part of the Latin Americas. The centre of Polynesia, Samoa, was under the German, whilst, Tahiti, became French Polynesia and the rest of the Polynesian islands, Tuvalu, Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau, became protected territories of New Zealand. Tonga, however, the last remaining ancient Kingdom, was never colonized by any foreign power, contrary to the once-upon-a-time island Kingdoms of Hawaii, Tahiti, Aotearoa and Samoa, though Tonga, the last remaining ancient Kingdom of Polynesia, became a British protected state in the 1900s, at the height of German colonial rule and invested interests in Tonga to be annexed as part of its Polynesian territories.

For centuries, the cooperation and integration between Polynesia became a setting for quiet diplomacy; wary of encouraging alliance between traditional allies will offend their benefactors. But Polynesia was not the only centre stage for change in the Pacific, its relatives in Micronesia and Melanesia; each had their share of takeover and dominations by the Europeans.

After the Second World War, maritime security and peace in the Pacific came at a turning point, for the Americans and sister countries New Zealand and Australia to seize the opportunity to turn the Pacific into their territories, promising security and peace for the Polynesian islands, by setting up military bases, and annexing territories as an extend of their power in the region. For instance, the US took to American Samoa, whilst New Zealand, took

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to the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, as free association territories. On the other hand, France took to the Tahiti Islands and Wallis and Futuna, amongst other territories in Melanesia. The concept of sub-regional Pacific began to fade into the background as the Polynesian people became ethnic minorities, in their own multi-cultural Pacific, and become associated or supplementary citizens to the country of former colonial rule as overseas territories. A 2013 Census, demonstrated that the New Zealand population is dominant with over 74% European, 14% Maori, 11% Asian, 7% ethnic Pacific people (Tongans, Samoans, Tokelauans, Niuean and Cook Islanders) and 1% originating from (Middle-Eastern, Latin American and African) MELAA countries [New Zealand Statistics, 2013].² Similarly, the French-influence in Tahiti, has resulted in 78% of the population being Polynesian (Tahitian, Marquesan, other Polynesian cultures), whilst 12% are Chinese, and 10% of mixed (local French- 6% and metropolitan French – 4%) [CIA, no date]

The independence of the Polynesian islands of Niue, Tokelau and Rarotonga as sovereign states, were influenced by New Zealand, as self-governing but associated states, with granting of access to New Zealand as New Zealand citizens, with some control over their foreign affairs.

Since most Polynesian states gained independence in the 1960s-1970s, this paved a new path for each islands to pursue own nationalistic socio-economic interests abroad, vigorously establishing diplomatic relations, expanding their bilateral and multilateral relations over the last four decades.

² The New Zealand Statistics census on Ethnic group (single ethnic or combined group may vary in proportion), for instance: “53.5 percent of Maori identified with two or more ethnic groups, compared with 46.5 percent who identified solely as Maori.” The proportions of people adding up to each ethnic group do not therefore add up to 100 percent” [New Zealand Statistics, 2013].

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BOX 2: MEMBERS OF THE PLG- SIZE, GDP VS POLITICS					
COUNTRY/ FLAG	SIZE**	*GDP (PPP)	POLITICAL SYSTEM	INDEPENDENCE	PRIVILEGE / PEROGATIVE
FRENCH POLYNESIA 	4,167 sq km	\$17,000	Overseas Collectivity (France) Parliamentary democracy	-	French Citizens, elected President and executive government have control over land, sea, transport, regional affairs whilst foreign affairs by French Ambassador,
SAMOA 	2830 sq km	\$5,700	Republic	1962	Independent-conducts own diplomatic/foreign affairs
TONGA 	720 sq km	\$5,600	Constitutional Monarchy	1970	Independent – conducts own diplomatic/foreign affairs/defence
NIUE 	260 sq km	\$5,800	Self-Governing - Free Association (NZ)	1974	New Zealand Citizens, but Foreign Affairs/Defence managed by NZ
COOK ISLANDS 	240 sq km	\$12,300	Self-Governing - Free Association (NZ)	1965	Cook Islanders are NZ citizens, maintain own diplomatic relations, but represented at UN by NZ
AMERICAN SAMOA 	197.1 sq km	\$13,000	Territory(USA)	-	Residents not US citizens, have own immigration laws, elected governor and executive
WALLIS & FUTUNA 	78 sq km	\$3,800	Overseas Collectivity- France)	-	Wallis/Futunans are French citizens, regional affairs represented by the President of the Territorial Assembly, foreign affairs by French Ambassador, defence responsibility of France
TUVALU 	30 sq km	\$3,800	Parliamentary democracy	1978	Independent –conducts own diplomatic/foreign affairs
TOKELAU 	12 sq km	\$1,000	Non-self governing territory (NZ)	-	Tokelauans are NZ citizens, but Foreign Affairs and Defence are provided by NZ as Tokelau is administered by an Administrator under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade -NZ
(** Source: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2015) (*Source: WTO, 2016)					

Considering the varying degrees of diversity in Polynesia, with differences in size, population and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Box 2), these factors were not enough to determine how diplomacy had worked and influenced some countries to become independent, such as Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu, whilst others were claimed as overseas territories, as with French Polynesia and Wallis & Futuna, while at the same time, smaller remote islands with limited resources and baseline GDP such as Niue, Tokelau and Rarotonga became significant as associated states to the largest Polynesian Island, Aotearoa.

Other factors may have been in play here, other than the call for maritime peace and security in the Polynesian region, because while other parts of Polynesia are being colonized and occupied, other parts that have strong traditional and political systems which have been in

practice for centuries, as in Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu were equipped to withstand external influences. There is no other better way to understand the critical role of the Polynesian Group for the future, then to conduct a careful examination of each of the members' bilateral and multilateral relations journey which gave it not only a footing in the international arena, but a quest for re-discovery of their Polynesian knowledge, heritage, traditions and cultures at the regional level, which if the Polynesian Leaders Group pursue wholeheartedly may bring integration and cooperation to the region once more.

Such diversity can provide an interesting playing field for new diplomacies to thrive, to grow or for the small states to be exploited, except for the fact that the priorities of the Pacific small islands developing states (PSIDS) for sustainable development, takes precedence for these countries. The global world's concept of sustainable development is promoting a self-sustenance lifestyle to enjoy the socio-economic prosperity of today, whilst securing and preserving some for future generations. In other words, this is based on the mindset or the approach of the "affluent countries to push the non-affluent countries and the rest of the undeveloped world, to achieve the future [they] want" (UNRES 2012). According to Key, sustainable development thrives on three principles, where it depends on the "use of existing resources, building on it for economic and future benefit"; "working together with [affluent] governments, encouraging multi-stakeholder partnership and collaborations" and lastly to, seek the assistance of the affluent country once more to, "to empower their country capacity, to be able to be sustainable" (Key, 2014).

Quite simply, the 2030 SDGs initiative, fronted by the United Nations, appears to be another form of 21st Century global colonization incurred by the strong upon the weak, under the facade of pursuing modern diplomacies for the global good. The fact of the matter is, as this

study will discuss in later chapters, it is the overconsumption, competitiveness and irresponsible management of resources and pollution of the environment by affluent countries, which are the main culprit for the sustainability of those developing economies and countries most affected by the global issues of climate change, economic downturn, transnational crimes, poverty and inequalities.

The Pacific Islands, for instance, who have already had their own unique challenges of distance, size, remoteness, extreme weather patterns and subsistence economy; the question of their survival from the adverse effects of these global issues, has been undoubtedly affected two-fold, and to address these sustainable developments, it is a question of each individual Pacific Islands Countries' nationalistic efforts, or integrate as a region and collaborate and cooperate on addressing these issues, in order amplify their voice and positions at the international platforms and arena.

Moreover, this Western idea, similar to the concept of foreign aid, has influenced the self-sustenance of many Pacific Islands, for instance, Tonga has survived centuries of traditional food systems and cultural practices in medicines and lifestyles, but after 40 years of dependency on foreign aid and assistance from overseas donors, the country's progress and growth were depended on the focus of political leaders of the day, how they utilize those aid to assist citizens awareness or self-preservation or enforce building codes for disaster proof shelters and homes, for instance, instead of diverting the foreign aid to support political agendas. To change these decades of dependency will be a challenge to small developing islands. Should the Polynesian islands change their mindset from focussing on smallness and more on relevance to the world agenda for survival, as in the later examples of Tuvalu and Kiribati, in the region, and Singapore and Malta, in other parts of the world, this mindset-reset

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will be a game changer for each Polynesian nations to positively engage in a transition and development that is sustainable, have continuity and longevity.

Equipped with limited resources, capacity, know-how and technologies, the survival in the Polynesian states is on a day-to-day basis, and being sustainable at the socio-economic to climate security level, will take second priority, unless enough political will is led to put in place proper mechanisms and policies, promote awareness and resources to invest for the future, are available. Most often, the PLG members identify their sustainability by regional cooperation and integration. At the national level, the PLG states, can exceed some weight on pursuing their priorities, using digital diplomacy, primarily, as a statecraft to advancing their foreign policies objectives, at the bilateral and regional level, and amplify their voices and positions, by appealing to the wider global communities and critical target audience, which can be more effective online, affordable with real-time delivery and result-oriented focus compared to traditional face to face summit diplomacy.

As foreign policies are “strategies by which a government pursues its national interests through dealings with other countries and international organisations”, it often “relates to or overlaps with, defence policy and overseas trade and economic policy” (Green, 2012). Of course, these sets of policies may include but not limited to, an economic diplomacy aimed at ushering in economic prosperity for the country as in trade and investment; an environmental policy which draws attention to its climate disaster financing , resources management and conservation issues; a security policy which is critical to the nation’s physical safety and well-being and security of its resources, maritime, transport, communications, energy and food systems; and perhaps most importantly, is the art of diplomacy that a nation uses to reach those goals, and advance those interests and policies.

2.1 Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

To get a better understanding of the foreign policy objectives and diplomacy of the Polynesian Leaders Group, the purpose of this section, is to familiarize with the foreign policies and diplomacies of each member state, their bilateral and multilateral relations as independent states, self-governing associated states and territories.

2.1.1 Samoa

“We thank New Zealand for additional funds, we know [they are] going through rehabilitation work because of the earthquakes – that is the reason why we look for more effective partners, because we know that no one donor can provide all the assistance, that is why it is important for small islands states to widen its sphere of friends to come in and help us...”

H.E. Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa, (NZ's Pacific Reset Programme, 2018)

No Polynesian state has experienced the fight for independence as intense as that with the



Republic of Samoa. In the late 19th Century, Samoa gained a lot of attention when superpowers Great Britain, the United States and Germany were all binning for the control of the island. In those days, the central position of Samoa in the Pacific made it an ideal ‘trade posts’ to Asia, Europe and the Americas, an advantage that Samoa today, as the Permanent Secretariat, should maintain

Figure 1 – Map of the Samoa Islands (GraphicMaps.com, 2018)

and serve useful if it steers the Polynesian Leaders Group clear of its chartered course as a strong sub-regional organizations in comparison to the other regional platforms (Kennedy, 2013).

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Samoa’s struggle with Great Britain, the United States and Germany was not without impact, as the relations they shared, has bequeathed a legacy that made Samoa’s foreign policy a strategic one, a mutually beneficial partnership, where Samoa can take a give-and-take approach with all its foreign relations (*Box 2.1.1*). Although the struggle by Samoa to

BOX 2.1.1: Samoa – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES PRIORITIES	BILATERAL (over 87 countries)				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST/ AFRICA		
SAMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widen sphere of friends to work with: Creating opportunities for Samoa Creating opportunities for export to overseas markets Security and environmental policies 	UK	India	Canada	Israel	NZ Australia Fiji PNG FSM Marshall Is. PIF PLG SPREP	UNDP FAO UNESCO WHO ADB
		Belgium	Korea	USA	Egypt		
		France	Japan	Columbia	Turkey		
		Netherlands	China	Argentina	Peru		
		Russian Fed.	Thailand		Maldives		
		Sweden	Indonesia				
		Spain	Philippines				
		Greece	Malaysia				
		Switzerland	Pakistan				
		Italy	Bangladesh				
		Germany	Sri Lanka				
		Austria	Singapore				
		Croatia					
		HIGH COMMISSION (2)		EMBASSY (4)		CONSULATE (4)	HON CONSUL (8)
		Australia New Zealand		Belgium PRC Japan USA (UN Permanent Mission)		Sydney Auckland American Samoa Fiji	Argentina Australia (QLD, NSW) Austria Cyprus Denmark Germany Hong Kong

Source: Government of Samoa, 2018

“preserve its ancient political system”, led to division of the islands amongst the three colonial rule, Samoa’s road to independence was unfolding, when New Zealand, a growing Polynesian metropolitan influence within the region, “took over Samoa and administered the islands until its independence in 1962” (Kennedy, et al). Again this association with New Zealand continues to be important for Samoa, as a trade and security partner, as New Zealand can provide military support, since Samoa do not have a military, although Samoa manages its own foreign and diplomatic affairs. Samoa’s history with Great Britain, Germany, the United States and New Zealand, continues to shape it into the resilient, outspoken nation that it is today. As Samoa, takes an active role in the region, with the Pacific Islands Forum and the initiation of the Polynesian Leaders Group, it will be powerful leader in regional affairs, if it gets enough support from its Polynesian members on the issues and initiatives that the Group seeks to pursue and promote.

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2.1.2 Tonga

“Tonga’s achievement to date is much rendered to non-traditional partners, with respect to regional partners – who have as much right and welcome to compete and to make tangible and a visible difference...”

Hon. Samuela ‘Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister of Tonga, (*‘Conversations on infrastructural cooperation by China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, 2018)*



Figure 2 – Map of the Tonga Islands (GraphicMaps.com, 2018)

A renowned Pacific historian, I.C. Campbell, referred to the Kingdom of Tonga, as the “only one that was not subject to direct colonial rule during the age of European hegemony- yet Tonga’s political system is ‘grafted European institutions on traditional chiefly government to complement the imported religious and economic structures that were universally adopted during the nineteenth century” (Campbell, 1992).

Hailed as the epitome of independence and sovereignty, how has such independence paved the future relations for the ancient Polynesian Kingdom with the international arena? How can the friendly Island Kingdom upgrade itself from maintaining friendly relations to relentlessly pursuing competitive economic prosperity and aggressively addressing inevitable transnational and global security threats such as drug trafficking, climate change, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and cyber-terrorism?

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In Tonga’s short international relations history, perhaps there are two notable turning point in its diplomatic history, first in 1900, when it became a British protected state,³ where Great Britain was responsible for its external affairs; and secondly, seventy years later in 1970, when it regained independence, and took over its own military and foreign affairs. An overview of

BOX 2.1.2 –Tonga: KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES PRIORITIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST/ AFRICA		
TONGA	<i>Friends with All, Enemies with None</i> <i>Look East – Policy- for trade and investment opportunities</i> <i>Environmental Policy- Tonga is a signatory to the Paris Agreement and party to various conventions addressing climate change</i> <i>Maritime Security Cooperation</i> <i>Economic Policy - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) -Tonga is a signatory to the UNCLOS⁴</i>	EU	China,	US	Israel	Australia	UN,
		Denmark	Japan	Brazil	UAE	Fiji	IMF,
		France	India	Chile	Iran	Samoa	WTO,
	Finland	Malaysia	Canada	Egypt	NZ	WMO,	
	Romania	Singapore	Mexico	South		FAO,	
	Russia	Thailand	Columbia	Africa		ITU,	
	Sweden	Indonesia	Argentina	Maldives		IMO,	
	Switzerland	South Korea	Cuba			UPU,	
	UK	Pakistan				PLG	
	Russian Federation	Bangladesh				AOSIS	
	Greece	Sri Lanka				PSIDS	
	Netherlands						
	Italy						
	Czech Republic						
	Spain						
	Germany						
	Ukraine						
	Turkey						
	Slovakia						
	Cyprus						
	Poland						
	Norway						
	Iceland						
		HIGH COMMISSION (2)		EMBASSY (4)	CONSULATE (5)		HON. CONSUL(7)
		Australia		PRC	NZ (Auckland)		Hong Kong
		Britain		Japan	US (San Francisco)		New Delhi
				US (UN Permanent Mission)	Hawaii (Consular Agent)		Manila
				UAE	Special Envoy – UAE		Tel Aviv
					Special Envoy - Asia		Dusseldorf
							Sydney
							Zurich

Source: Government of Tonga, 2018

Tonga’s key diplomatic relations and foreign policies in *Box 2.1.2* indicates Tonga’s growing diplomatic activities in all regions, and expanding membership in the regional and international platforms.

Tonga has strategically posted diplomatic missions and consulates in all four corners of the globe (one in London to be accredited to all European countries, three in the Asia-Pacific (Beijing Mission in China, Tokyo Mission in Japan, Canberra Mission in Australia to cater for

³ Protected States requires the representation of a British Consul to handle the external affairs of the Kingdom

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this region and three in the US (the Consular Agent in Honolulu Hawaii, Consulate General in San Francisco for the Tongan diasporas and the Permanent Representative Office to the UN in New York). For nearly half a century, Tonga's traditional development partners have been Australia and New Zealand, who is dominating in the Kingdom's regional memberships, however, Tonga has tried to break out from longstanding and traditional friendship with Europe to adopt a Look East Policy, targeted as welcoming partnerships with non-traditional partners in South East Asia, especially mainland China and the Arab States.

In the region, Tonga is supporting all other regional initiatives, by being a member of the Pacific Islands Forum (initiated by Australian and New Zealand), Polynesian Leaders Group (initiated by Samoa) and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (initiated by Fiji). In 2015-2016, Tonga publicly supported the fight for self-determination and independence of West Papua by addressing the human rights issues in this region, at key high-level international meetings,⁴ which further drew regional to international attention to the issue.

Tonga's recent move to support the PIDF⁵ and the campaign for West Papua⁶ has made it a popular support amongst the Melanesian counterparts, where Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are moving to support Tonga in its own regional engagements and initiatives. For instance, before Tonga withdrew from the hosting of the Pacific Games in 2019, Papua New Guinea was ready to support the Kingdom in its hosting (Government of Tonga,

⁴ The 46th Pacific Islands Leaders' Forum (2015), Leaders' Communiqué https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2015-Forum-Communique_-_Port-Moresby_-_PNG_-8-10-Sept.pdf, the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (29 September, 2015) <http://webtv.un.org/watch/tonga-general-debate-70th-session/4519086422001#full-text>; Meeting of the International Parliamentarians for West Papua at the House of Parliament in London, England (3 May, 2016) <http://www.westpauaparliament.org/government-of-the-kingdom-of-tonga-support-west-papua/>

⁵ Tonga joined the PIDF in 2013, and established a National Sustainable Development Board in 2017 as part of its commitment to the PIDF Charter and priorities (Government of Tonga, 2017).

⁶ Free West Papua Campaign- Led by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua to address human rights violations in West Papua

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2016). Tonga and the Solomon Islands have longstanding relations, with Tonga’s peace keeping mission support to the RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands), which were “led and funded by Australia and New Zealand, and a collaboration between fifteen countries including five Polynesian states - Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu, five Micronesian states - FSM, Kiribati, Palau, Nauru and the Marshall Islands; and three Melanesian states - Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu” (RAMSI, 2003).

Whereas Fiji, who is leading the PIDF, is looking to Tonga as an emerging favourite strong member, from the Polynesian states, in its movement to integrate the Pacific Islands without New Zealand and Australia. Fiji, Tonga and Samoa shares traditional links in history, trade, cultural systems, and Samoa’s absence from Fiji’s PIDF, has made Tonga an important ally in the PIDF.

2.1.3 Tuvalu

"The people of Tuvalu, we are never giving up and we will maintain our leadership for global action against climate change," "The people of Tuvalu, we are never giving up and we will maintain our leadership for global action against climate change,"



H.E. Mr. Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu (1 May, 2017, RNZ)

For such a relatively small island, Tuvalu’s bilateral and multilateral relations is empowering when it takes an active role in the discussion table in the international arena

Figure 3- Map of Tuvalu (GraphicMaps.com,

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on global issues. Over the last decade, the “major international issues facing many Pacific islands involved environmental challenges – and Tuvalu like any other Pacific Island Countries have made Climate Change issues a top priority in its foreign relations issues” (Government of Tuvalu, 2011).

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1978, Tuvalu as one of the smallest Republic in the world became a member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth.⁷ In the region, Tuvalu maintains very close relations with New Zealand, Australia and Fiji of which has a High Commission in Suva. Similar to Tonga, Tuvalu is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Polynesian Leaders Group and the Pacific Islands Development Forum. It is also a signatory to various regional initiatives including a signatory to regional trade and investment agreement PACER Plus, spearheaded by Australia and New Zealand, of which Tuvalu sent some of its labour mobility workers to its seasonal schemes.

⁷ Tuvalu joined the Commonwealth and the UN in 2000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade- New Zealand)

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BOX 2.1.3: Tuvalu – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST/AFRICA		
TUVALU	Environmental Policy Maintaining Climate change advocacy momentum Regionalism	UK	Japan	USA	UAE	Australia	Commonwealth
		Finland	South Korea	Cuba	Kuwait	New Zealand	UN
		France	Taiwan	Mexico	Palestine	Fiji	ACP
		Denmark	India	Columbia	South Africa	Kiribati	AOSIS
		EU	Philippines	Canada	Morocco		ADB
		Belgium	Malaysia	Brazil	Lesotho	SPC	FAO
		Poland			Israel	PIF	ILO
		Austria				PIDF	IMF
		Luxembourg				PLG	ITU
		Turkey					UNESCO
		Russia					UNCTAD
		Italy					WHO
		Georgia					UPU
		Poland					WMO,
		Armenia					
		Greece					
		Switzerland					
		Germany					
		Slovakia					
		Romania					
		HIGH COMMISSION (1)	EMBASSY (1)	CONSULATE (2)		HON CONSUL (11)	
		Fiji	USA (UN Permanent Mission)	Switzerland Tuvalu House		UK Taiwan Australia Philippines Belgium Japan Germany NZ South Korea Singapore USA	

Source: Government of Tuvalu, 2018

At the international level, Tuvalu maintains diplomatic relations with various countries (Box 2.1.3) in Asia, Middle East, the Americas and Europe. Tuvalu is amongst the only Pacific Islands that retains its diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan). A study by the International Business Publications (2011) reveals that Tuvalu has various diplomatic presences in Suva, Sydney, Brussels, London and at the UN in New York.

2.1.4 Cook Islands

“Very much like New Zealand’s Pacific re-set [of which we share flexible free association] , the Cook Islands will re-set partnerships to move beyond a development focus to one of equality and mutual benefit, [now that]we ‘graduate’ to a developed state and thus become ineligible for ODA from OECD member countries”,

Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of Cook Islands, New Zealand Institute for International Affairs (Wellington, 4 April 2018)

While many Pacific Islands including Tonga (“Friendly Islands”), and Hawaii (“Sandwich



Figure 4: Map of the Cook Islands (GraphicMaps.com, 2018)

Islands”) were “named by the British explorer Captain James Cook during his voyages” in the 18th Century, Rarotonga were named after the explorer and became a British colony (Government of Cook Islands, no date). Until 1901, when New Zealand, “extended its boundaries to include the Cook Islands”, it was argued that the “aim of making the Cook Islands a free-association states” , was to assist the

Cook Islands Government focus on domestic affairs and implementation of basic social and economic programmes, so to speak, reduce the Island state’s dependence on New Zealand aid”, whilst at the same time New Zealand will continue to monitor external affairs and international relations, on behalf of the Cook Islands (Government of Cook Islands, et al). Unlike Tonga, who had the same arrangement with the British, when it became a British protected state for 70 years (1900-1970), Tonga was able to break away from this arrangement, refusing to be a British protectorate versus its protected state status, to maintain its full independence, the Cook Islands on the other hand, although a free association and self-governing state of New Zealand, remains limited in the conduct of its international affairs.

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BOX 2.1.4: Cook Islands – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL (49 states)				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST /AFRICA		
COOK ISLANDS	Regionalism One China Policy	Monaco	Japan	US	South Africa	Australia	ICAO,
		Norway	China	Antigua /Barbuda		Samoa	Commonwealth,
	Belgium	Malaysia	Brazil		Palau	WHO	
		UK	Singapore	Chile		Solomon Is	EU
		Turkey	Thailand	Cuba		Nauru	ACP
		Malta	Israel	Jamaica		PNG	ILO
		France	Iran	Panama		NZ	FAO
		Switzerland	India	Peru		Kiribati	IMO
		Iceland	Philippines			Tonga	WMO
		Germany	South Korea			Niue	UN Women,
		Holy See	Timor-Leste			Fiji	UNDP
		Kosovo				Tuvalu	UNFPA
		Portugal				Vanuatu	UNESCO
		Netherlands				PLG	UNHCR
		Czech Republic				PIF	UNODC
		Spain				FSM	AOSIS
		Italy					PSIDS
		Bosnia					
		EU					
		HIGH COMMISSIONS		EMBASSIES		CONSULATE	HON. CONSUL
		Wellington- NZ				Auckland-NZ	Sydney-Australia Monaco Oslo-Norway Istanbul-Turkey Honolulu-US Los Angeles-US

Source: Government of the Cook Islands, 2018

For instance, the aspects of New Zealand supremacy and colonialism, lingers in the immigration status of the Cook Islanders (New Zealand citizens), their shared currency (New Zealand dollar), their representation at the United Nations, where the Cook Islands is represented by New Zealand. Many critics stated that “while Cook Islands is responsible for its foreign policy and a member of some UN agencies, (Box 2.1.4), New Zealand still represents the Islands “at the main international body” (RadioNZ, 2017). The fight for self-determination at the UN seat, remains, a goal for the Cook Islands Government, although, it cannot deny the mutual benefits it enjoys from New Zealand’s representation at the international fore and the benefit it has brought to the Cooks Islands economy.

The region is where Cook Islands can fully exceed its membership and participation in the intergovernmental platforms of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Polynesian Leaders Group, independent of New Zealand. The relationship that Cook Islands shares with New Zealand, gave the islands freedom to explore its own economic prospects from its Exclusive Economic

Zone (EEZ), which will be discussed in later chapters. For instance, the OECD later in the year in 2018 will announce the “re-classification of the Cook Islands, whose economy is dependent on the development of the tourism sector, as a ‘developed state’ from small islands developing states (SIDS)” (Wyeth, 2017). This will give Cook Islands an important responsibility in the Polynesian Leaders Group, to inspire other members to work hard towards their economic cooperation.

2.1.5 Niue

“What we can offer the world...is an example of a country that is trying its best at this moment to become self-sustaining, and is determined to become self-sustaining...”

H.E. Toke Talagi, Premier of Niue (*Development Policy Centre, 2015*)

Interestingly, the island of Niue, similar to the Cook Islands, is continuously “raising the prospect of joining the UN, and the freedom to “negotiate with UN organizations and the



Figure 5: Map of Niue (*GraphicMaps.com, 2018*)

International Monetary Fund on an even footing” (Pacific Islands Report, 2016). Due to “90 percent of Niue’s population living in New Zealand, and an estimated 1500 of the resident population live in Niue”, the islanders are privileged New Zealand citizen passport holders (Australian Government, no date). As Niue is part of New Zealand’s realm, the Government of New Zealand has a

“continuing responsibility to provide necessary economic and administrative assistance to Niue” (Quentin-Baxter, 1999). Recent Pacific Islands Report published that the “New Zealand Ministry of Foreign has no problem in Niue chasing membership of the United Nations, but risk threatening the rights of Niueans to New Zealand citizenship”, however, the Premier of Niue, similar to the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands⁸ who raised the same UN seat bid at the international arena reluctantly stated that, “[the

⁸ Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna emphasized that “ innovative thinking brought the special friendship deal into place fifty years ago [self-association relationship] and the same innovation could happen again [Cook Islands becomes an UN member]” was then dismissed by then-New Zealand Prime Minister Key, as “a separate UN seat for Cook Islands would be inappropriate” (RNZ, 2015)

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UN membership] is not an issue and there is no desire to alter the New Zealand relationship” (Pacific Islands Report, et al).

BOX 2.1.5: Niue – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST		
NIUE	Smallness is not relevant, as Niue is focussed on self-sustainability	France EU Turkey Italy Kosovo	China India Malaysia Japan Singapore Thailand	Brazil Cuba	Israel	Australia Fiji New Zealand PNG Cook Islands Nauru Samoa PLG SPARTECA PIF SPC	UNESCO, WHO, WMO, FAO, IFAD, OPCW, AOSIS ESCAP (Associate member) UN, ACP (Non-state member)
		HIGH COMMISSION	EMBASSIES	CONSULATES		HON. CONSULS	
		Wellington-NZ	Brussels – Permanent Mission to the EU	Paris- Permanent Delegation to UNESCO			

Source: Government of Niue, 2018

It can be determined, that both Cook Islands and Niue, are limited in their conduct of international relations, since the full membership with the UN can afford opportunities for more financial support and exposure in the global level. At the same time, it can be argued that New Zealand, continuously flags the citizenship as a method to keep the association states out of the grasps of non-traditional partnerships with other super powers, especially China, the United States and Eastern Europe, who wish to garner influence and support in the Pacific Islands. According to a briefing by the New Zealand Foreign Ministry for the incoming Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Rt. Hon. Winston Peters in 2017, the relations with the Asia-Pacific was a critical focus of New Zealand’s foreign policies, especially the “two relationships that [New Zealand] must get it right – is that of the United States and the China” (Government of New Zealand, 2017), where both countries have “increasing influence on global affairs – and are crucial to the region’s stability”, the paper emphasized. To understand the foreign policy priorities of the associated states is to understand the foreign policy objectives of New Zealand itself.

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Nonetheless, Niue participates as a member on a few international organizations and UN Agencies (as in *Box 2.1.5*), which includes the African, Caribbean and the Pacific Group of States (ACP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organizations (WHO), World Meteorological Organizations (WMO), Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) where it is an Associate member.

At the regional level, Niue is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG), and various Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA), where it can extend its full negotiations and membership as an independent state.

2.1.6 Tokelau

“Trust us; our practice of self-government is on track!”

Hon. Aliko Faipule Siopili Perez, ‘Ulu ‘o Tokelau,
Inauguration Speech, (March 6, 2017, Nukunonu, Tokelau)



As part of New Zealand’s realm, Tokelau is administered by the Government of New Zealand through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as a non-self governing associated state.

Tokelau, the smallest member of the Polynesian Leaders Group, has the largest potential for economic prosperity, and challenges for maritime security in its EEZ. Similar to

Figure 6: Map of Tokelau (*GraphicMaps.com*,

Niue and the Cook Islands, it continues to advocate at the meetings of the UN Decolonising Committee, for the “United Nations system to assist Tokelau and not exclude it from accessing global financing assistance, including climate and environmental assistance”, which is an imminent threat to Tokelau’s survival (RNZ, 2018). Tokelau which is recognized by the UN as a non-self-governing member state continues to push for self-determination, to enjoy the same opportunities as Niue and the Cook Islands.

In the inauguration speech delivered by Tokelau’s new ‘Ulu ‘o Tokelau, Mr. Siopili Perez emphasised Tokelau’s plea for self-governnance and “re-devolving all powers of the Administrator [NZ], as well as any future planning to be done in Tokelau will be by Tokelauans for Tokelauan” (Pacific Guardians, 2017).

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BOX 2.1.6: Tokelau – FOREIGN POLICIES & KEY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST		
TOKELAU	<i>Leave no one behind</i> <i>Environmental diplomacy: Save Tokelau</i>					New Zealand Australia PLG PIDF	Non-self government member state (UN) Associate Member (PIF)
		HIGH COMMISSION		EMBASSIES		CONSULATES	HON. CONSULS
		-		-		-	-

Source: Government of Tokelau

Tokelau is an associate member of the Pacific Islands Forum, but a full member of the Pacific Islands Development Forum and the Polynesian Leaders Group, where it can enjoy regional negotiations and partnerships with members and stakeholders.

2.1.7 American Samoa

“We recognize there are many truths in our relationship and destiny with the United States. As we navigate the waters of an uncertain future, we cannot allow the political process to be solely dictated by others or taken completely out of our hands. It is a struggle we cannot afford to lose because future generations (Samoans) depend on it.”

Hon. Lolo Matalasi Moliga, Governor of American Samoa (UN, Decolonization, 2017)

American Samoa can be depicted as the part of Samoa that *did not get away and now almost-forgotten-* in other words, when the US once valued the “Pagopago Harbour as the best harbour in the South Pacific” a century ago, this value may have depreciated in today’s terms, for “it currently seemed a very small harbour, with less worth than a transformed airport strip for the San Francisco-Hawaii-Samoa-Australian route” (Blakeslee, 1928), and coupled with the challenges of “distance and maintenance of such territory, south of the equator”, American Samoa may seem a daunting task and priority for the United States, nowadays the priority of the US lies with an inward-looking approach in *making America great again* and therefore, the

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

future of American Samoa may continue to be an unincorporated territory, shelved as one of the US's trophies (Foreign Affairs, 1928).

In the international front, the US territory, does not formulate foreign relations, unless through the US Department, but on the regional front, the islands have more rooms to manoeuvre on regional to global concerns, which it can collaborate and partner with its Polynesian members at the PLG, and the PIF.



Figure 7: Map of American Samoa (GraphicMaps, 2018)

When American Samoa became a member of the Polynesian Leaders Group, this warrants an “innovative approach” and infant steps for revisiting the “non-self-governing territory status by maintaining its relationship with the US, and protecting the Samoan way of life” but also Polynesian heritage (Sagapolutele, 2017), which according to the Executive Director of the American Samoa Governor’s Office of Political Status, Constitution, and Federal Relations, Tapaau Dr. Daniel Ago, “going forward with American Samoa’s territorial status must be firmly vested in the authority of the people of American Samoa,” he emphasized in a presentation to the UN’s Decolonization regional seminar – after all, America, the greatest democracy of all, understands the very concept of the power of the people, best, then no other country in the world, and to set precedence by living by example within its own territories, it is argued, will make America, the best democracy it hailed to be.

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BOX 2.1.7: American Samoa – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST		
AMERICAN SAMOA	US in the Pacific			USA		PIF (Associate Member) PLG (member)	
		HIGH COMMISSION		EMBASSIES			CONSULATES
		-		US Embassy-Suva		-	-

Source: Government of American Samoa, 2018

While the focus of the Polynesian Leaders Group is on strengthening the regional connectivity and cooperation of its members, this may provide the very integration that American Samoa needs, when the seat of the permanent secretariat in this regional intergovernmental organization, presides with the mainland Samoa, who is an emerging independent voice in the region and the wider international arena, in various areas of imminent concerns to the global debate, such as climate change and solidarity of the small islands developing states, since many of the UN’s regional meetings in the Pacific, including the Third UN International SIDS Conference in 2014, was hosted by Samoa, amongst other UN mandate reviews such as the Samoa Pathway PSIDS Mid-term Conference, all pertinent to the UN’s SDG progress and reporting.

Tonga on the other hand, has an economic cooperation relationship with American Samoa, when the Late Majesty King Taufa’ahau Tupou IV, exchange lands with American Samoa and plots in Tonga , to grown root crops, taro and tapioca, for market access and trade in American Samoa of Tongan grown food crops.

2.1.8 French Polynesia

“The people of French Polynesia did not wish to be guinea pigs for ideological clashes”,

H.E. Mr. Édouard Fritch, President of French Polynesia (UN, 2017)

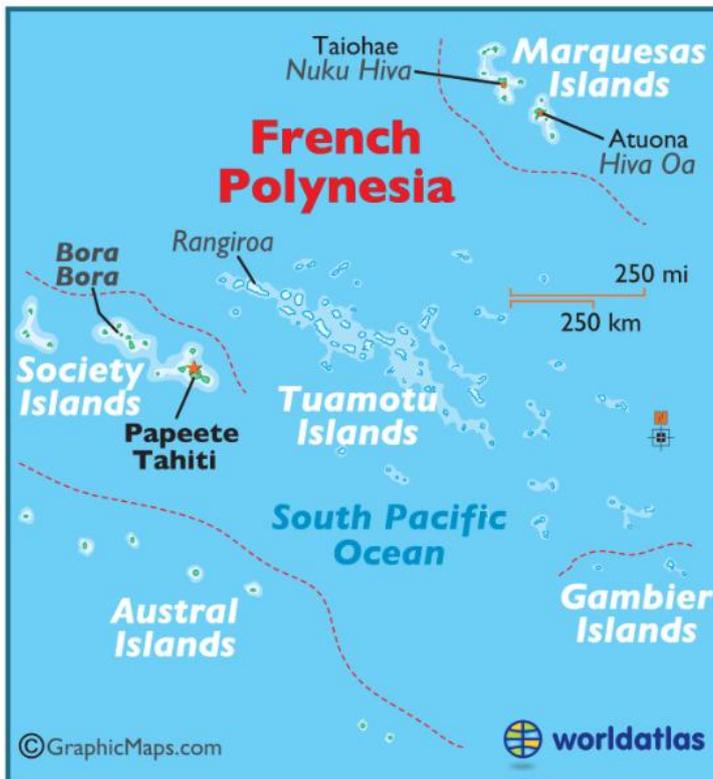


Figure 8: Map of French Polynesia (GraphicMaps.com, 2018)

Ma’ohi Nui, is the traditional Polynesian name for French Polynesia, commonly known as Tahiti, although the French Polynesian Group is made up of five islands group including the Marquesas Islands, Society Islands, Tuamotu Islands, Austral Islands and Gambier Islands (see Figure 8).

In view of size, French Polynesia is the largest member state of the Polynesian

Leaders Group, but its size is restricted

by being “an overseas territory of France with substantial internal autonomy” according to the report by the Australian Government. This substantial autonomy is limited only to managing its own regional affairs, henceforth the foreign relations is conducted through the French Government.

In 2011, when French Polynesia became a founding member of the PLG, spearheaded by the then-French Polynesian President Oscar Temaru, an avid supporter of the overseas territory’s push for independence, the PLG obtained the full support of the French Polynesia in its drive

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for regional connectivity and integration on various issues of transport, culture, energy, ICT, climate change and trade and investment. Furthermore, when French Polynesia became a full membership of the Pacific Islands Forum, in 2017, this was an important milestone to the French territory’s garner for support for independence.

BOX 2.1.8: French Polynesia – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST		
FRENCH POLYNESIA		France (key) Italy Denmark Spain Netherland Finland	Korea (Republic) China Japan	USA	Israel	PIF PLG PIDF Australia New Zealand	
		HIGH COMMISSIONS		EMBASSIES			

Source: Government of French Polynesia, 2018

French Polynesia maintains diplomatic relations with various sovereign countries; however, these relations are managed by the French Government. However, the dominance of the French influence and language is the Polynesian state’s affairs, has made the relations with Pacific neighbours a challenge.

2.1.9 Wallis & Futuna

“Thanking French Polynesia for backing Wallis & Futuna to join the Polynesian Leaders Group – working together to adopt a common stance in dealing with France and Europe”

H.E. Mr. David Verge, President of the Territorial Assembly of Wallis & Futuna (*Pacific Islands Report, 2017*)

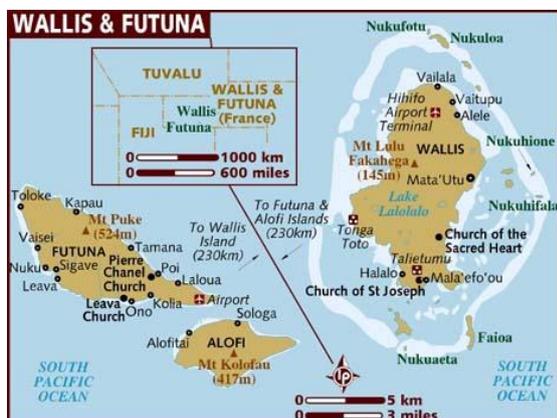


Figure 9: Map of Wallis & Futuna (Lonelyplanet.com, 2018)

Wallis & Futuna is one of three French overseas territories in the Pacific. One Australian Government report stated, that the Wallis & Futuna is a member of various regional organizations such as an observer at the Pacific

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Islands Forum and the Polynesian Leaders Group, save for the nation’s regional contacts “are minimal other than that of the French territories” of French Polynesia and New Caledonia. This statement is largely one of ignorance and Anglo colonialism (Australian Government, no date), with limited knowledge and appreciation of Polynesian heritage and legacy.

Traditionally, Wallis & Futuna are culturally and historically linked with most of Polynesia, especially Tonga and Samoa. Wallis & Futuna was later named after the missionaries and British explorer, when they visited in the 19th Century, however, as far back as the “15th Century, the Tongan presence imposes on ‘Uvea (Wallis) and heads, are directly sent from Tonga” (Territorial Department of Cultural Affairs of Wallis & Futuna, no date).

BOX 2.1.9: Wallis & Futuna – KEY FOREIGN POLICIES & DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS							
COUNTRY	FOREIGN POLICIES	BILATERAL				REGIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
		EUROPE	ASIA	US	MIDEAST		
WALLIS & FUTUNA		France	Singapore			PIF (Observer), PLG Australia New Zealand Tonga New Caledonia	UPU, SPC, SPTO, SPREP,
		HIGH COMMISSIONS		EMBASSIES		CONSULATES	HON. CONSULS
		-		-		-	-

Source: Government of the Territorial Assembly of Wallis & Futuna, 2018

Although Wallis & Futuna enjoys free mobility with French citizenship, the rights to vote, education, “discovered other cultures and ways of life” from the protectorate of New Caledonia and territorial of France, (Territorial Department of Cultural Affairs of Wallis & Futuna, et al), it can be argued that the French integration with the Wallis & Futuna was a successful strategic one, as the “French law allows for co-existence with the Wallis & Futunan customary rights”, for instance, the maintenance of a traditional cultural system, as the monarchs of the islands, and their being “remunerated” under the French law (Australian Government, et al), has caused little “local sentiment for any movement for independence from France”. However, the application and membership of the Territorial Assembly of Wallis & Futuna in the Polynesian

Leaders Group in 2017, has raised flags, about the islands' move towards embracing its regional ties and self-determination, as publicly demonstrated by its Polynesian members who are non-self-governing and associated states. The growing membership of the Polynesian Leaders Group has provided a rude awakening and new chapter in the move towards regional integration of the Wallis & Futuna.

2.2 Other Polynesian countries

For nearly 10 years, the membership of the other Polynesian countries, Aotearoa, Hawaii and Rapanui (Easter Islands) have been long been favoured and encouraged by the members, considering that the Polynesian Leaders Group, will not be complete, without these defining cornerstones islands of the Polynesian Triangle. According to Clause (2) under Membership of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the establishment of the PLG, which will be discussed in more details in Chapter 3; it stated that “a state, territory or indigenous Polynesian population may be invited to become a member or an observer by a consensus decision of the founding members” (Polynesian Leaders Group, 2011). At the time, the MOU was signed by the leaders of the eight founding members of the day, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, American Samoa and French Polynesia (Ma'ohi Niu) on 17 November, 2011 in Apia, Samoa.

In June 2018, its eighth Annual Meetings of the Polynesian Leaders Group held in Funafuti, Tuvalu, the Meeting “welcomed the membership of the Maori Aotearoa, Hawaii and Rapanui”, although the status of these membership has not yet been formally determined with the respective governments of New Zealand, the US and Chile, although there has always been a “strong consensus, that these groups should join” because of their Polynesian heritage, however, no clarity has been provided by the PLG, on representation, whether at the political or

traditional level - which itself is another issue, since these groups has been long diluted, and disconnected from participation in political leadership, save for the traits of history and culture inter-connectedness which identifies them as Polynesian (Samoa Observer, 2018).

The MOU (*See Annex 1*), an attempt to revitalize regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian sub-region, was signed in faith, with the goals to “protect and promote the traditions, cultures and economic interests of Polynesian Peoples in the States and Territories of the Pacific” (Polynesian Leaders Group, et al). Politically, the emphasis of traditions and cultures was a smart smokescreen, by the leaders, conscious of the fact, that clearly majority of the members are territories and their foreign policy agenda has to be submitted either through the New Zealand Foreign Affairs, the French Consul; the Chilean Government and/or the US State Department. Concurrently, the Polynesian integration will be more powerful if steered well to address the issues of the group and not to fulfil the political agenda of one. The power and value of traditional knowledge, history and cultural ties cannot be and should not be underestimated, considering that the PLG has become the largest sub-regional group organization in the South Pacific, with twelve members in alliance.

The PLG is a unique platform for members to collaborate and to address pertinent regional issues that are of common concerns to the Polynesian people. It must be equipped with the vision to extrinsically branch out to pursue other strong regional partnerships with the ASEAN, for instance, or ambitiously at the international level, apply for observer status, at the UN, as a political regional organization, to garner maximum support and wider recognition.

2.2.1 Aotearoa Maori

“We own the water- In the eyes of our people, Pakeha law was set up to minimise our mana and maximise their own.”

H.M. King Tuheitia, Maori King – (NZ Herald, 2012)

Today the Aotearoa Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, or *tangata whenua* (folks of the land – similar to the Tongan term, *tangata 'i fonua*), has become the ethnic minorities in New Zealand. Centuries of infiltration and integration since colonial rule, have contributed to the challenges faced by participation of the Maori people in politics, business and foreign affairs, although the pride of the Maori, is nationally welcomed as being ‘Kiwi’ (a New Zealander) and globally recognized through the New Zealand’s national rugby team, the All Blacks’ performing of the war dance ‘haka’.

Despite the fact that the reigning Head of State, is a Governor General, and a representative of the Queen of England, the Maori integration and cooperation with the Pacific Islands, continues to be strengthened through the promotion of arts, language, culture and history in an Annual Polyfest Event (Polynesian Festival), an annual Government Pacific Mission Tour by the Prime Minister (to Niue, Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga), and the strong bonds between the tribal Maori Kingtanga and the Royal Families of Tonga and Samoa.

The membership of the Aotearoa Maori in the PLG, is a key ingredient to rekindling longstanding relationships with the Polynesian members, in particular, Tonga and Maori businesses have recently made investments in “forestry and timber” (Nuku’alofa Times, 2016).

2.2.2 Hawaii

“It was necessary to confiscate all plantations and drive foreigners from the islands” –

Queen Liliuokalani, last Hawaiian monarch (1863)

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Hawaii, the once-independent Polynesian Kingdom, despite being annexed as part of United States of America, the role that Hawaii plays in the integration and regional cooperation of the Polynesian states, as its northern apex of the Polynesian Triangle remains a critical asset to the Polynesian Leaders Group states. Governed by US Foreign Policies, “to promote the economic interests of the American people and reaffirm the exceptional role of the US in maritime security and peace in the Pacific” (US State Department, no date), it can be argued that the fruit of Hawaii’s sacrifice, has reaped benefits for the rest of the Pacific Islands today.

The indigenous culture and people of Hawaii are becoming foreigners (ethnic) in their own land, conjuring the famous words delivered by the last reigning Hawaiian monarch, Queen Liliu’okalani, during an attempt to drive out imperial oppressors and maintain self-rule, but with adverse effects. For nearly half a century, the US-Hawaii association, has sought redemption with the establishment of an East-West Centre, an institution dedicated to “foster better relations among the peoples of the US, Asia, and the Pacific islands through programs of cooperative study, training, and research” (East-West Centre, no date).

Furthermore, the Pacific Islands benefits from the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), under the institution and on a triennial basis coordinates the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), an unique platform for the Pacific Islands to meet with the US President, to discuss issues of common concerns to the region. In 2016, the 10th PICL meeting, was chaired by Papua New Guinea under the theme, to “Enhance sustainability in our Pacific Islands with collective action for our shared future” (Government of Papua New Guinea, 2016), which was significant to addressing issues of “illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing, maritime security and climate change challenges” (Government of Tonga, 2016).

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Hawaii is also significant in the sense, that it facilitates closer “Pacific Islands-US engagements with the region, on education, trade and security. The interests of non-traditional partners in the Pacific, such as China and Japan, Russia has prompted for the US to revitalize its relationships with the Pacific through the Volunteers programme, and the RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific). The US wields its power through the leadership of the largest “cooperative security alliance relationships that are critical to ensuring safety of sea and ocean – with Australia, NZ and Tonga from the Pacific)” (RIMPAC, 2014)

2.2.3 Rapanui

“The fight for Rapa Nui, an island and culture on the brink of extinction and ecological collapse – is a choice between self-autonomy and eating pastures if it cut ties with Chile...”

The Fight for Rapa Nui, (Aljazeera, 2016)

The grand architectural and monolithic structures of the Moai statues of Rapanui and the Ha’amonga ‘a Maui Trilithon of Tonga, amongst others, provides concrete evidence of the



RAPANUI: Moai human statues, Ahu Tongariki in Easter Island

(Source: Rivi, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0)



TONGA: Ha’amonga ‘a Maui Trilithon, at Niutoua, Tongatapu

(Source: Holger Behr, Wikimedia Commons, 1990)



TAHITI: Tiki (sacred stone statue) Marquesas archipelago

(Source: Kevin Ohara, 2004)

interconnectedness distant past between the Polynesian cultures, languages and portrayal of remarkable strength, advanced engineering and skillsmanship of those days. Rapanui is the smallest remote Polynesian indigenous tribe, in the Eastern apex of the Polynesian Triangle, and its relation with Chile, has not been symbiotic, since the small, remote, uninhabitable

island's elevated status as an UNESCO World Heritage protected site, with eco-tourism prospects, because of the mystique uniqueness of the island's giant human statues, the Moai. The movement by the Polynesian Leaders Group to extend an open membership to Rapa Nui, and to provide collective support at the regional to international level, is the very empowerment that the Rapa Nui, requires for its survival.

It can be argued that there are two underlying foreign policy objectives of the Rapa Nui; first, to recognize self-autonomy and human rights to protection of its land and culture; and secondly; to recognize the rights of the indigenous people and to reconnect with the Polynesian Triangle. According to a statement by the Speaker of the Rapa Nui Parliament, Leviante Araki, in response to growing tensions between the Rapa Nui and the Chilean Government, the Rapa Nui people "could ask to become part of Polynesia, which is closer, given that Chile has not fulfilled its obligations" (Legrand, 2013).

2.2.4 Fiji

Fiji is noteworthy of mention in this study, although it is largely of Melanesian group. There are two significance roles that Fiji plays in this sense, politically, culturally and economically. At the outset, Fiji has longstanding history and traditional links with most of the Polynesian Group, particularly, Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu and that parts of Fiji is Polynesian (the Lau Group), with the population sharing Tongan traits and ancestors, at the same time, the ongoing tussle between Fiji (Minerva Reef) and Tonga (Telekitonga and Telekitokelau) is more than geo-political. In the 1970s, the "Pacific Islands Forum, recognized Tonga's claims to the Reef, although Fiji kept destroying Tonga's flags and lights on the reef, and the relationship over this

matter remains sensitive and delicate, after a proposal was made by Tonga to exchange the claim to the reef with Tonga's ownership of the Lau Group in Fiji" (Jenkins, 2014).

Second significance of Fiji's importance to the Polynesian Leaders Group and to the region as a whole, is its growing influence in the political and economic agenda as an established economic and trade hub in the South Pacific. On the foreign policy front, is the only South Pacific Island that host most of the international diplomatic mission, beside Wellington (New Zealand) and Canberra (Australia), being the base for the US, British and French Embassies in the region. This is Tonga is expected the return of the British High Commission to Nuku'alofa, after a brief close down since 2005.

On the regional front, Fiji hosts the longest serving political intergovernmental organization, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in its capital, and the recent initiative by Fiji to establish an independent 'all Pacific without Australia and New Zealand' intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder organization, the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), this has made Fiji, more important to the PICs.

2.3 Relations with Australia and New Zealand

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

"The Pacific is turning into a contestable space and it can be argued that many Pacific nations have 'reset' their foreign policy positions a number of years ago and perhaps New Zealand and Australia are just now catching up."

Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of Cook Islands (*Dateline Pacific, RNZ, 2018*)

Australia and New Zealand are longstanding, traditional partners to the Pacific Islands, and as founding members and funders for the largest, oldest political intergovernmental organization, the Pacific Islands Forum, both countries have been influential in the trade, economy, security and socio-economic development of the region. The analysis of the “diversifying foreign policies interest of each Polynesian nation requires a re-design of the engagements of each with both traditional and non-traditional development partners” (Government of Fiji, 2015)

Nevertheless, New Zealand and Australia has provided both positive and limited opportunities for the Pacific Islands to expand their multilateral and bilateral cooperation with non-traditional partners. For instance, in trade and investment, the PACER Plus (Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations) is a NZ-Australian joint trade agreement with the Pacific for enabling trade, export and employment opportunities; while in regional security, the RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands) has facilitated peace and security for the people in the Solomon Islands). Other joint agreements are to being lobbied in the Pacific Islands Forum, for the Pacific Islands to work closely with Australia and New Zealand exclusively, such as the Biketawa Plus, a regional security agreement, which can be argued as another example of the “bulldozing ways in which ANZ conduct regional affairs”, “undermine genuine PIC issues due to their geo-political interests” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Fiji, 2015).

Moreover, there is an “increasing discomfort over continuing interference in domestic affairs”, for instance, the Australian Minister for International Development “undiplomatically” berated China’s aid in the Pacific Islands as “white elephants and useless buildings that no one can maintain” (SCMP, 2018). On the regional front, the consensus to put Taiwan as an observer

with China as a dialogue forum partner causes political instability to the members’ engagements with the PIF.

In Chapter 3, the study of the evolving regional foreign policies will seek to better understand the position of Australia and New Zealand with the Pacific Islands. In 2018, when New Zealand, announced the reset to its foreign policy directives – “shift the dial”, with emphasis on “New Zealand embarking on a new, re-energized Pacific strategy”, under two strategies, first; re-visit “back to school diplomacy” with “friendship”, “understanding”, “mutual benefit”, “collective ambition”, “sustainability”, “changing NZ influence”, and a “budgetary increase for assistance”, the wave of enthusiasm of many Pacific Islands had already surpassed towards engaging non-traditional partnerships, who were willing to listen and provide the assistance that they need, in a region with dynamic, unstable, evolving regional architecture , and changing priorities towards uncertain globalized challenges.

2.3.1 Relations with Asia

2.3.1.1 China vs Taiwan

“Its a win-win situation for China to work with traditional partners in the development of the region – as inspired by President Xi Ping’s common destiny values – I believe, as a community, Tonga and its partners – can achieve the desired future we want”

His Excellency, Mr. Wang Baodong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the Kingdom of Tonga (Briefing session, Prime Minister’s Office, July 2018).

China and Taiwan are both important to each other as they are to the Pacific Islands, and the competition between each other at the Pacific Islands Forum, made them more prominent in the region.

There is still some remnant of Taiwan influence, especially bilateral relations maintained by Melanesian and Micronesian countries as in *Box 2.4*, whilst majority of Polynesia are adhering to a One China Policy. What's more interesting is beside New Zealand and Tuvalu recognizing Taiwan as a separate entity from China, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat itself, granted Taiwan observer status at the Forum, ensuing the augmentation of competition between Taiwan with China, who is a Post Forum Dialogue Partner of the PIF member countries.

It can be argued that this move to accept Taiwan at the regional level is a deliberate decoy to mask the fact that the PIF do not welcome China wholeheartedly in the Pacific. According to a recent consultation workshop with the PIF Secretariat and members, one of the problems identified is the China, as a major threat to the region. Furthermore, it poses an issue for members struggling to adhere to sovereign diplomatic relations with China, especially that the PIF Secretariat welcomes Taiwan/ROC Forum Dialogues at the margins of the Leaders' Meetings (Forumsec, 2012).

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The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat continues to circulate to PIF members, Taiwan-funded scholarships, trainings and visa waiver schemes, where countries like Tonga and Samoa are restricted in their choice as PIF member state to participate in any Taiwan activities or opportunities because of their sovereign position and relations with the People’s Republic of China, even if these countries are participating as PIF members, this poses a question of trust

and loyalty to its One China Policy. As sovereign states, PIF countries have the luxury of pursuing economic and social cooperation with Taiwan, whichever setting they feel comfortable in, as smaller islands states, and in the future, perhaps, yet to be determined, expand to maintaining a ‘One-China’ policy, as other independent countries have done.

BOX 2.4: Pacific Islands Relations with China vs. Taiwan and top 5 Asian countries

PACIFIC ISLANDS	China (PRC)	Taiwan (ROC)	Japan	India	S/Korea	Thailand	Singapore
POLYNESIA							
American Samoa							
Cook Islands							
French Polynesia							
Niue							
Samoa							
Tokelau							
Tonga							
Tuvalu							
Wallis & Futuna							
New Zealand							
MELANESIA							
Fiji							
Vanuatu							
Solomon Islands							
MICRONESIA							
Nauru							
Palau							
Kiribati							
Marshall Islands							

Source: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2012

A question of the China vs. Taiwan policy is imminent, as the anticipated 49th Pacific Islands Forum Meetings, hosted by Nauru, a Taiwan-supporter, will lead the Forum Meetings this year in Yaren, Nauru, from 3-9, September, 2018, with the Taiwan-China issue on the agenda.

As a leading donor partner, China is of great significant to the Polynesian states, and the prospect of the Belt and Road Initiative will further expand the future cooperation with China.

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The relationship with China, is halved the duration that the PIF have bilateral relations with Australia and New Zealand, yet, China has done more in those terms, “with assisting the development of the PIF countries, in sectors of trade, infrastructure, politics (sub-regional sister cities), education, healthcare, agriculture, fishing, tourism and people-to-people links encouraged by visa waiver agreements” (Government of Tonga, 2018), contrary to metropolitan neighbouring partners New Zealand and Australia, the PIF countries need visa for entry, which limited opportunities for cohesive cooperation.

2.3.1.2 Japan, India and South-East Asia

In the Pacific, for half a century, Japan’s engagements with the Pacific Islands have been strengthened by its Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) (see Figure 11), following its Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders’ Meeting (PALM8), in Tokyo and Fukushima, this year (Embassy of Japan, 2018)

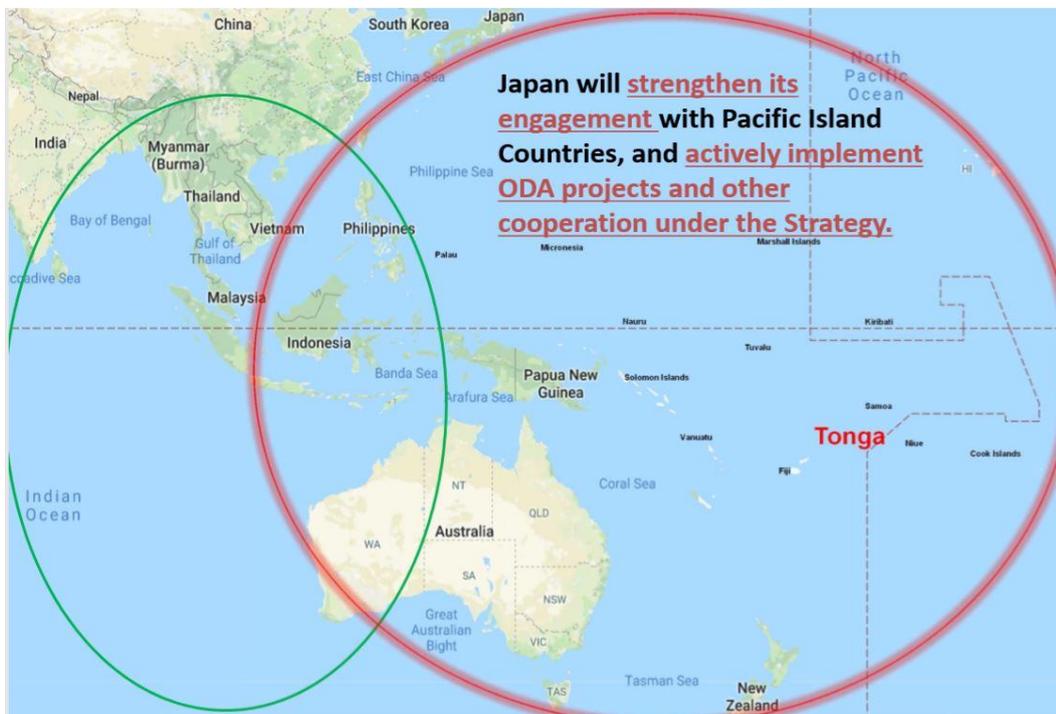


Figure 11: Free Open Indo-Pacific relations (Government of Japan, 2018)

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This strategy is guided by the three pillars, to promote rule of law; pursuit economic prosperity and commit to peace. In Tonga, for instance, examples of projects to pursue economic prosperity, included the infrastructural development of the domestic wharf, wind power generation and a warning System for disaster risk reduction (Embassy of Japan, 2018).

The PALM Meetings is Japan's effective multilateral platform to pursue its interests with the Pacific Islands, including lobbying for the support of its candidacy in UN meetings and bodies.

Thailand, Korea and India are following the trend set by Japan to host annual meetings with PIF members, on platforms such as the Thai-PIF, Korea-PIF and India-PIF Summits.

Thailand:

The relations between Thailand and Pacific Islands have spanned for nearly twenty years. Thailand, as a "PIF dialogue partner since 2004, and long-standing development partner providing assistance in human resources development and expertise best practices, promoting Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) in area of sustainable development such as agriculture" (Government of Thailand, 2017). In 2014, the 1st Thailand-PIF Meetings commenced to strengthen the between Thailand and its PIF members, a unique platform where they can share experience and learn best practices (Government of Thailand, et al). Tonga for instance, shares special relations with Thailand, through the people-to-people links and longstanding friendship between the two Royal Families.

India:

India, who is also a long-standing development partner and dialogue partner of the Forum, has established the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation Summit (FIPIC) in 2014, "as a

platform for 14 PIC to strengthen their cooperation, resulting in the setting up of an Adaptation Fund; Indian Visa upon arrival scheme; setup of trade offices and deputation of ITEC experts and training for diplomats” amongst other cooperation program (Government of Tonga, 2014).

UAE:

Many countries in Polynesia, including Tonga have established close cooperation with the United Arabs Emirates, pursuing development assistance in the renewable energy and transport sectors. The prospects for cooperation has been enabled with Tonga, for instance, setting up mission, and establishing visa waiver agreements with the UAE in March 2018 (Government of Tonga).

2.4 Reconnecting with Europe

The rekindle of traditional and new relations with the European countries has become more important, over the years, for the EU, UK, France and Germany to revitalize their ties with the Pacific, with new players such as Romania, Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Georgia, and the Russian Federation pursuing bilateral cooperation with the PIF countries.

2.5 The UN in the Pacific

While many of the Polynesian countries are members of the UN, the presence of the UN in the Pacific has become more prominent over the years, through its regional offices and programmes in coordination with the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS), working towards achieving sustainable development goals, under the guiding frameworks of the Samoa Pathway, where the SDG goals are localized to reflect national objectives and priorities.

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This extension of the UN to regional meetings and programs through its UN agencies has encouraged active engagement with the UN at various levels, in addition to the Heads of Governments and States, state of address at the annual UN General Assembly meetings in New York.

2.6 Road to Digital Diplomacy

Mastering statecraft to pursue the foreign policies objectives of a nation, should not be limited only to a wealth of international relations knowledge, diplomatic skills, but possesses the ability to determine, what of those relations that matters, and how to engage actively with it, with resources and tools available, at affordable, secure and instantaneous cost-effective means. In a globalized world, the emergence of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the access to the Internet and social media, has drastic impact to the traditional conduct of diplomatic activities, from the practice of close door meetings and observance of protocols, to the era of transparency, accountability, freedom of expression and human rights, being factored into the modern day diplomacy. It was inevitable, that “nations and their diplomats had to adopt new strategies, and began using online tools in order to remain relevant in the digital age (Archetti, 2012;Bátora and Neumann, 2002).

Thus prioritising connectivity, in the digital age, as the essence that facilitates the availability of information for decision making, communications, interaction and data recording by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Head of Government Offices, becomes a huge undertaking in itself. Digital Diplomacy must be factored into the foreign policy objectives, in order to determine, what are the appropriate tools and platforms, what issues to pursue through digital diplomacy and what development areas that can be pursued at bilateral and multilateral levels online and what are the costs, benefits and security issues involved.

Without doubt, “diplomacy in the twenty-first century must grapple with both the potential and the limits of technology in foreign policy, and respond to the disruptions that it causes in

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international relations” (Ross, 2011).

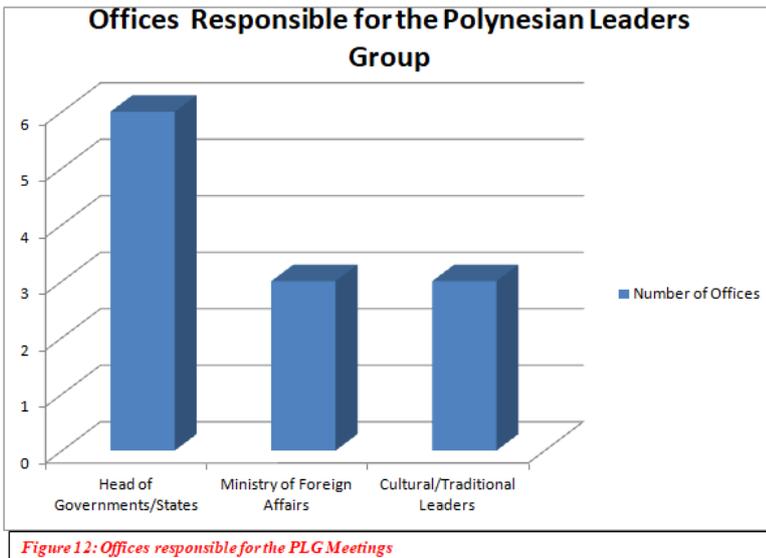
2.7 The Digital Diplomacy Survey

After examining the foreign policies objectives of each PLG state, an online survey was circulated as part of the study, to gather the perspectives of each member state on the concept of digital diplomacy. It also explored the background and infrastructure, the use of these connective technologies to facilitate diplomatic activities beyond consular work; the cultivation of networks and contacts between the MFAs, Heads of Governments and States Offices, as state actors in diplomacy.

BOX 2.7.1 –PLG Point of Contact	
PLG MEMBER	OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
American Samoa	<i>Office of the Governor</i>
French Polynesia	<i>Office of the President</i>
Cook Islands	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
Niue	<i>Office of the Premier</i>
Samoa	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
Tokelau	<i>Office of the 'Ulu 'o Tokelau</i>
Tonga	<i>Office of the Prime Minister</i>
Tuvalu	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
Wallis & Futuna	<i>Office of the Territorial President</i>
Hawaii	<i>Traditional/Cultural</i>
Maori Iwi	<i>Traditional/Cultural</i>
Rapa Nui	<i>Traditional/Cultural</i>

The survey questionnaire (*Appendix 2*) was administered to all nine members of the Polynesian Leaders Group, through email distribution, embedded links to website and social media, where a remarkable response was received by all countries, except Samoa, on their perspectives on the use of digital diplomacy in the work of the member countries and the regional organization. It became critical to note that the PLG was an intergovernmental organization, with strong political convictions from the leaders, in their position as Polynesian Heads, and not necessarily aligned with the foreign policies agenda of their respective government agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the official platform for negotiation and representing state-to-state relations, was engaged to the extent of facilitating the diplomatic courtesies and protocols for

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the leaders’ meeting, whilst a majority of the leaders’ directly engaged through their Offices (Box 2.7.1 and Figure 12), as the point of contact for facilitating the PLG Meetings.

General Views of Digital Diplomacy

Overall, from the survey, there was a general consensus on the adoption of Digital Diplomacy as statecraft, tool for conducting the diplomatic relations between each PLG member states and between each member and their diplomatic partners at the international level.

The general perspectives on the role, benefit, use and the application of digital diplomacy in the work of the PLG in two perspectives; namely at the bilateral (20%) and at the regional

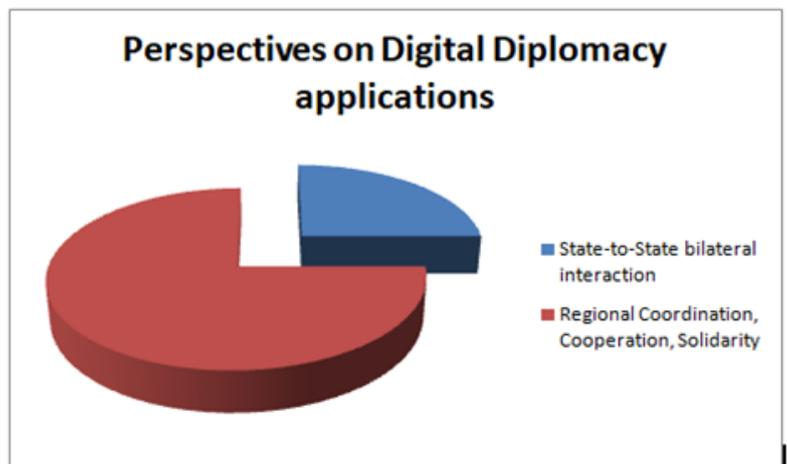


Figure 13: General Perspectives on the platform for application of Digital Diplomacy

level (80%) agreed to its instrumental in promoting solidarity, coordination and active engagements by the members on issues of common concerns.

CHAPTER 3: REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

“The powers seemed incapable of realizing that the winds of change had at last reached the South Pacific...we peoples of the territories no longer going to tolerate the domination [of the Pacific Forum] by the metropolitan powers – we were sick of having little to say and no authority, regardless of what we said- the final decision was always in the hands of the metropolitan powers”.

Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Fiji President, Lae Rebellion, 1965
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Fiji).

3.1. Regionalism is a state of mind of the region

In the 1970s, when the founding members of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Tonga and Western Samoa met, to establish the then-South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC), the enthusiasm for regional cooperation and integration on economic and development was at a record high.

Since then as more members joined the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the leaders demanded to establish a more political institution that is responding to the regional priorities and policies directives of the Pacific Islands, whilst the socio-economic and technical development cooperation is assigned to the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP Agencies), a branch of the Pacific Islands



Forum that deals with the technical implementation of the PIF’s regional agenda, (Box 3.1a), specifically on issues of fisheries, energy, health, education, tourism, environment and other technical cooperation and advisory to the Leaders’ Forum. Over the years, there have been arguments that the PIF has also created standing bodies of the Ministerial Meetings for Trade and Economic Ministers (FEMM), Education Ministers (FEDM), and Forum Foreign Ministers

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Meetings (FFMM) which at Ministerial level, are providing directives on implementation to the CROP agencies, and most often other issues such as fisheries, security and trade are implemented by the Forum Leaders themselves, prompting for review of the role of the CROP agencies (PIF Secretariat, no date) after the implementation of the Pacific Plan was completed in 2015.

The PIF has survived over four decades of restructure, expansion of its engagements at various levels (with dialogue partners at the international level; with the multi-stakeholder partners at civil societies and private sector level; and with the regional partners), and what is apparent nearly half a century after, the intrinsic make-up and goal of the PIF to serve the Pacific Islands has been more complicated, diverse, and the new guiding principle of regionalism and Blue Pacific, is as vast and unknown as the agendas and priorities on the table for that are meaningful to the survival of the small Pacific Islands economies and security, that it serves.

For many years, the “institutional developments of the PIF and in Pacific Islands regionalism have been dramatic” (Tarte, 2014), with the organization undergoing various administrative name changes (1970 –SPEC; 1971- South Pacific Forum, 1999- Pacific Islands Forum); application and memberships of non-Pacific Islands such as Australian neighbor territories of Timor Leste, the long pending full membership of associate member Tokelau (a non-self governing associated territory of New Zealand) compared to the French territories of New Caledonia and French Polynesia obtaining full membership in 2017 which in adversely affect the financial contribution of other small islands states, as the two developed economies will now form a large budget contribution and control of the Forum agenda, beside Australia and New Zealand; the inclusivity forum dialogues with non-state actors; to the various changes of the Forum agenda, from the Pacific Plan to the Framework of Regionalism and Blue Pacific,

has no doubt prompted for establishment of the other regional architectures, seeking a clear vision and direction, equal participation of its members. Tarte (et al) argued that “driven by the discontent of a growing number of island states with the established regional order, defined by prevailing institutions, power and ideas, and by a desire to assert greater control over their own futures”, the two founding members of the PIF itself, Samoa and Fiji, has initiated the PLG (2011) and the PIDF (2013), within two years of each other, to take new directions on the regional agenda.

The study supports this argument, since the uncertainty of the PIF directives and framework, and unanimous decisions, has not given reflection of the imminent concerns of the members. The ongoing issues with the suppression of the members’ relationships with non-traditional partners, such as China, and imposing Taiwan relations on an already unsteady bilateral and regional diplomatic front, has made most One China Policy members uneasy.

The persistent forcing of exclusivity of trade agreements by New Zealand and Australia (PACER Plus) in the Forum, as well re-iterating the support of the decade and a half old Biketawa Plus (Security agreements), is to be treated with caution. Pacific members must retain independent flexibility to explore other alternatives trade and security framework, free of the dichotomy interests of Australia and New Zealand. In Box 3.1, it illustrates the State of Regionalism in nearly fifty years in the Pacific, to be evolving, multiplying,

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BOX 3.1: State of Regionalism and evolving architectures in the Pacific Islands							
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	YEAR	TYPE	MEMBERS	SECRETARIAT	CONTRIBUTIONS	AGENDA	PARTICIPATION
REGIONAL POLITICAL							
Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)*	1972	Regional	18 (All of PLG, MSG, MCE)	Yes	Yes	Framework for Pacific Regionalism: Climate Change ICT / Security / Fisheries Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States CSO, Private Sectors FD Partners CROP Agencies
SUB-REGIONAL POLITICAL/ECONOMIC/CULTURAL							
Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG)	2011	Regional	11 (June 2018- Hawaii, Tokelau, Maori added)	Setup 2017	Not yet	Cultural, tradition, regional connectivity, economic cooperation Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polynesian Leaders only
Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)	1983	Regional	5	Yes	Yes	Economic cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melanesian Leaders only
Micronesian Chief Executives (MCE)	1995	Regional	5	Yes	Yes	Climate Change Regional priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micronesian Heads only
Smaller Islands States (SIS)	1992	Regional	8 (3 PLG, 5 MCE)	Yes	Yes	Climate Change SIS Unique vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIS States only
SPECIFIC-FOCUS MULTISTAKEHOLDER REGIONAL							
Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)	2013	Regional/global		Yes	Not yet	Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States / IOs CSO/Private Sectors
UN-REGIONAL							
PACIFIC Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS)	2014	global		UN NY	Yes	Climate Change Human rights Democracy UN values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All PIF Members/UN Ambassadors UN Agencies
COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS							
Pacific Commonwealth Countries**	1931 members joined after independence	global	11	Yes	Yes	Democracy / rule of law, Human rights, good governance, social/economic development.	53 Countries from Asia, Europe, Pacific, Caribbean, Africa
<small>(Source: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2018) (Source: **Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018)</small>							

overlapping, duplicated in agenda and priorities, although it brings global attention and financing to the region. However, the measurement of its impact on the improving the development and protection of the Pacific Islands, remains stagnant, as more financing is towards funding these regional architecture, that are becoming diverse and apparently more disconnected than ever before, in pursuing their own policy interests.

According to the Pacific Islands Forum, regionalism is

“The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complementing national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and enhancing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole.” (Pacific Islands Forum Leaders (2014))

In its simplicity, the establishment of the PLG and the PIDF in the 21st Century is no doubt not a breakaway from the Forum. This was the point made by Prime Minister of Samoa Tuilaepa

Malielegaoi and the Premier of Niue Toke Talagi in an interview told the Pacific Islands Report, i.e. that the Polynesian Leaders Group would “remain on the periphery of the Forum, but knowing that the survival of their culture and languages will not be a priority of the Forum, it would be a mistake to remain complacent, but take the matters to action,” (Pacific Islands Report, 2011). The establishment of the two new regional infrastructures, independent of each other, puts into question a reset to, what it means to be regionalism, and its relativity to cooperation and integration at the regional level. After all, the prime goal is to achieve sustainable development among its members.

The new regional architecture of the PIDF has a vision to form a “united, distinctive and sustainable Pacific Society”, excluding Australia and New Zealand, with a more focussed mission to pursue “Green-Blue Pacific Economies through inclusive strategies, multi-stakeholder governance and genuine partnerships” (PIDF, 2018). Fiji initiated the PIDF, and at the same time, it is seeking the support of the “sub-regional bodies (the PLG, MSG and MCE)-recognized by the PIDF as building blocks to support the PIDF” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Fiji), 2015). Interestingly, this is a much-awaited event for regional cooperation and integration of the PLG and the PIDF, where Samoa is not a member. It may take some time to achieve this ambition – as both bodies are relatively new and are focusing on the interests of its regional architecture, re-establishing it, redefining its strategic priorities and competing for regional and global support and funding opportunities.

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“The idea of a Polynesian confederation dates back to the 1880s – at the height of imperialism in the Pacific - King Kamehameha of Hawaii, King Pomare of Tahiti, Malietoa Laupepa of Samoa and King George Tupou II of Tonga agreed to set up a confederation of Polynesian states at the time. Envoys from Hawaii were received here in Apia and Tahiti and agreements were signed. However, the fall of the Hawaiian kingdom soon after collapsed that initiative.

A Polynesian sub-group within the periphery of the Pacific Islands Forum was again mooted in the mid-1970s, led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara of Fiji, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili the Second, the Queen of Maori and the King of Tonga. But after several meetings, the initiative was not followed through.

So in essence, we – the Polynesian Leaders Group - are simply manifesting that dream, that idea, into a reality our forefathers envisioned long ago”

Hon. Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa (Pacific Islands Report, 2011)

3.2. Using Digital Diplomacy as a PLG statecraft

In 2011, eight leaders signed the Memorandum of Understanding to establish the PLG recognizing the importance of “identity and heritage as Polynesian countries and people”, and to “seek a sustainable future that promotes and protects the Polynesian cultures, traditions, languages but also encourage mutual support in areas such as transport, energy, environmental conservation, climate change, education, health, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, trade and investment” (Memorandum of Understanding, 2011).

According to a famous paper on “American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age”, the author, CVM Crabb argued that “foreign policy comprises two elements – the national objectives to be achieved and the means to achieve these objectives” (Crabb, 1972), Today, in the Information Age, the soft power of the information, becomes critical to leaders, in their pursue of foreign policy objectives, and in the explosive age of digital diplomacy, leaders, at present, have the

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resources and means that they did not grasp decades ago, to harness, utilize, distribute, share, communicate those information, overcome by distant and time; and make informed decision, on socio-economic to legal reforms. Or they can make timely decisions and respond to a climate-induced disaster or alert on security risk from transnational crimes. As discussed in Chapter 2, the PLG Governments share common but varying degrees of foreign policies interests at the national level. As an organization, the leaders have a duty to promote and protect the traditions, cultures and economic interests of Polynesia. With digital diplomacy, the PLG can tailor these tools to achieve those goals, with focus on “eight policy areas for digital diplomacy” (Hanson, 2012). The mission is to bring forth regional cooperation and integration in trade and investment, economic cooperation, addressing disaster coordination and transnational issues and regional connectivity.

Digital Diplomacy in this sense will refer to the use of five main digital tools and platforms using the Internet, to pursue foreign policy objectives and diplomacy, namely:

- (1) communication and content management tools (Email, Website);
- (2) knowledge management tools (Wiki, Blogs);
- (3) media sharing tools (YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, GoogleDocs);
- (4) social media (Facebook, Twitter);
- (5) networking tools (Whats App, Viber, LinkedIn, Webinar, Instagram);

A study of the PLG organizations and their views on using digital diplomacy as a statecraft to implement this vision of a stronger Leaders’ initiative in the age of modern Information Communications Technologies and the Internet has revealed that in the previous meetings of the Leaders, “regional connectivity, transport and ICT” were amongst the key priorities of the PLG in launching its initiatives, that seeks to strengthen the foundation and underlying goals of

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the Group. In embracing digital diplomacy, e-governments and e-commerce opportunities for its members, in response to globalization and the emerging digital age, the PLG must take advantage of this statecraft and localize it to its respective national policy interests and commitment, in order to have the competitive edge at the PLG, to maintain momentum and confidence on the underlying solidarity of the PLG, protecting the interests of the Group and advancing it at every level of regional and international summits, to secure its position in the political regional debate and global decision making.

In this chapter, a look at the leaders’ current engagements in the use of digital tools is useful. It is a precursor and testament to a healthy start to fully explore the potentials and challenges of digital diplomacy at the highest level (discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). It is a way forward to investing in this statecraft and fully exploiting it for a strong, interconnected and integrated Polynesia. At the outset, a research study was being conducted in the PLG members, to understand the status and current background to the members’ use of digital tools for conducting its diplomatic activities with bilateral and

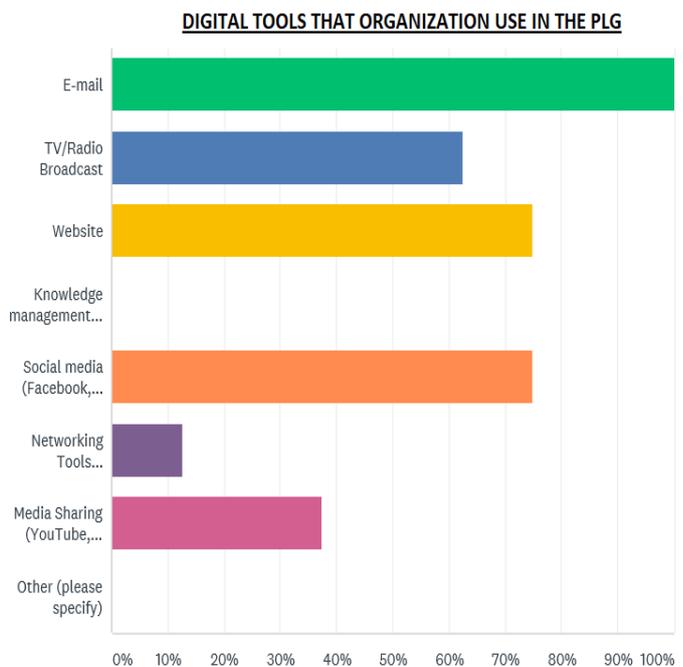


Figure 14: Digital tools used by organizations (MFA, Heads of Governments/States) of the PLG

Answer Choices	(%)	(No. Responses)
Email	100.00%	8
TV/Radio Broadcast	62.50%	5
Website	75.00%	6
Knowledge management tools (Wiki, blogs)	0.00%	0
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)	75.00%	6
Networking Tools (LinkedIn, Instagram, Viber, Whats app, Webinars)	12.50%	1
Media Sharing (YouTube, Flickr, PinInterest, GoogleDocs)	37.50%	3
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
RESPONSES		8

multilateral partners (Box 3.3 and Figure 14), reveals, to date, that:

- **Email** ranks as the highest digital platform (100% of all members use email);
- This is followed by the use of **Websites** (75% of the PLG) by 6 of its members (American Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tokelau and French Polynesia) and similar to the use of **Social Media** which accounts for 75% of the PLG members, (French Polynesia, Tokelau, Cook Islands, American Samoa, Tonga and Niue) to promote its online presence;
- The use of **TV/Radio Broadcast** (62.5%), is evident in 5 member countries (Tuvalu, Niue, Cook Islands, American Samoa and Tonga);
- The use of **Media Sharing Tools** such as YouTube, FlickrR, PinInterest, GoogleDocs is being adopted by 37.5% of the PLG members (Niue, French Polynesian and American Samoa) with 3 countries using it;
- One country (Niue) which is 12.5% of the PLG is officially using **Networking Tools** such as Linked In, Instagram, Viber, Whats App, and Webinars, as digital tools for conducting their diplomatic activities.

3.2.1. Going online at the highest Level

As of January 2018, nine leaders of the PLG continues to work together towards the common goal of promoting one particular area, amongst others, that is very relevant to this study, which is regional connectivity in infrastructural and transport development and the use of the information and communications technologies to address the regional and global challenges for sustainable development in the Polynesian Triangle, which sets the scene for the foreign policy objectives of the Polynesian Leaders Group. Now, the statecraft to achieve this may lies in the use of Digital Diplomacy.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

BOX 3.2.1: TOP MOST FOLLOWED LEADERS IN FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER 2017		
FACEBOOK *	INSTAGRAM **	TWITTER ***
1 INDIA-Prime Minister Narendra Modi	1 INDIA - PM Modi	1 US President Donald Trump
2 USA-President Donald Trump	2 USA - President Donald Trump	2 VATICAN - Pope Francis
3-JORDAN -Queen Rani	3 VATICAN- Pope Francis	3 INDIA - Prime Minister Modi
4- TURKEY - President Recep Tayp Erdogan	4 USA - The White House	4 INDIA - Prime Minister's Office
5-CAMBODIA - Prime Minister Hun Sen	5 INDONESIA - President Joko Widodo	5 US - POTUS
(Source: CBSNEWS.COM, 2018)*		(Source: Twiplomacy.com, 2018) **/**

Following the trends taken by leaders worldwide (Box 3.2.1), the Polynesian Leaders, to some extent have already undergone their digital diplomacy journey as shown in (Box 3.2.1.1 – Box 3.2.1.9).

BOX 3.2.1a: TOP TWITTER ACCOUNTS IN OCEANIA			
Australia	New Zealand	Fiji	Marshall Is
Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull	PM Jacinda Ardern	President Jioji Konorote	President Hilda Heine
The PMO	Govt.nz Team	Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama	Office of the President
PM & C	DPM/FM Winston Peters	Fiji Government	Foreign Minister John Silk
Foreign Minister Julie Bishop	MFAT	Fiji Foreign Affairs	
DFAT			
(Source: Twiplomacy.com, 2018)			

It is worth mentioning, that in the region, Australia and New Zealand (Box 3.2.1a) are leading players in conducting Digital Diplomacy, some lessons learned that the PLG can invest and improve on.

It is important to emphasize, that the digital diplomacy is conducted not only through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the Office of the President or the Prime Minister, plays a prominent role. The Leaders’ themselves are at the forefront of digital diplomacy – and experience and mind-set changer to embrace new technologies will be a game changer for the Group as an organization.

3.2.1.1.American Samoa

AMERICAN	POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
		GOVERNOR H.E.	Website	https://www.americansamoa.gov/
			Twitter	
			LinkedIn	

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	Lolo Matalasi MOLIGA	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/amsamgov/
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolo_Matalasi_Moliga

American Samoa has a website for the Governor and Government, including a Facebook page, although the meetings and work of the Governor H.E. Moliga is published in these platforms, information to the Governor’s use of social media for announcing policy directives or conducting public diplomacy is either restricted to public access or unavailable.

3.2.1.2. Cook Islands

POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
COOK ISLANDS	 PRIME MINISTER H.E. Henry PUNA	Website	http://www.ck/govt.htm
		Twitter	@CookIslandsGov
		LinkedIn	
		Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/henry.puna.79 https://www.facebook.com/pmoffice.gov.ck/ https://www.facebook.com/mfaicookislands
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Puna

The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands is an active public figure on the regional and international front, promoting issues of climate change, the self-determination of the Cook Islands to the foreign policies objectives of the Cook Islands as a recognized OECD developed state. Prime Minister Puna hosts a personal twitter account, and an official account managed by the Cook Islands Government, that promotes the protection of culture and heritage, which promoted the Island’s candidacy for the UNESCO Council, when the Cook Islands was lobby to become a Natural Cultural Heritage Site in the Pacific.

3.2.1.3. French Polynesia

POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
FRENCH		Website	http://www.presidence.pf/

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FRANCE	PRESIDENT	Twitter	@EdouardFritch
	H.E. Edouard FRITCH	LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/in/edouard-fritch-16174343
		Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/edouardfritch.depute
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edouard_Fritch

The President of French Polynesia, as a full member of the Pacific Islands Forum, and an important leading member of the Polynesian Leaders Group, has supported the promotion of indigenous people of Tahiti, although, the language of delivery for the President’s online presence is mostly in French. Two critical aspects that the Republic of French Polynesia garners support for is the regional connectivity and airline to charter for the Polynesian states. President Fritch, a businessman, understands well the importance of image, reputation and marketing, and the President’s experience in the use of social media and digital tools as a personal and official capacity to promote issues can be instrumental to the PLG’s regional connectivity programs.

3.2.1.4. Niue

POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
NIUE	 PREMIER H.E. Toke TALAGI	Website	http://niuepremierofficial.com/
		Twitter	Toke Talagi @tufukia
		LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/in/hon-toke-palagi-58904913
		Facebook	
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toke_Talagi

Premier Toke Talagi, is one of the original founding members of the PLG who saw the initiation of the Group. As a retired diplomat, Premier Talagi, and former Chairman of the PLG, the Premier can guide the PLG’s strategies for conducting digital diplomacy, observance of appropriate protocols and elements of etiquette. Since the preservation of culture and traditions are key components to the Group, Premier Talagi, can use both traditional diplomacy and modern diplomacy to guide the PLG digital diplomacy journey. Starters plan may include

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devising a regional foreign policy of the PLG for its engagements in the wider region and global front.

3.2.1.5.Samoa

POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
SAMOA	 <p>PRIME MINISTER Hon. Tuilaepa MALIELEGAOI</p>	Website	http://www.samoagovt.ws/ http://www.mfat.gov.ws/
		Twitter	@samoagovt Tuilaepa @samoapm
		LinkedIn	
		Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/samoagovt https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ministry-of-Foreign-Affairs-Trade-Government-of-Samoa/1381551602077456
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuilaepa_Aiono_Sailele_Malielegaoi

Samoa’s Prime Minister, as inaugural chairman, founding member and host of many regional Leaders’ Meetings and main strength behind the PLG, Samoa’s engagement in digital diplomacy is well laid out in Samoa’s providing the infrastructure for regional connectivity through the promotion of the Manatua Submarine Consortium Cable to invite all Polynesian States to connect to, aiming for a One Polynesia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Samoa, has a well-established website, and links to its diplomatic network, which is exemplar to the conduct of digital diplomacy, providing lessons learnt to its work as the interim Permanent Secretariat to the PLG.

3.2.1.6.Tokelau

POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
TOKELAU	 <p>‘ULU ‘O TOKELAU Hon. Siopili PEREZ</p>	Website	https://www.tokelau.org.nz/
		Twitter	@TokelauGovt
		LinkedIn	
		Facebook	
		Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siopili_Perez https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_Government_of_Tokelau

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Tokelau, is an important member of the PLG, and have made progress in using social media to promote issues of imminent concerns to its survival such as climate change and self-determination

3.2.1.7.Tonga

TONGA	POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
		PRIME MINISTER Hon. Samuela 'Akilisi POHIVA	Website	www.pmo.gov.to http://www.gov.to/
			Twitter	@tongaportal)
			LinkedIn	
			Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/akilisi.pohiva
			Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/'Akilisi_Pōhiva

Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pohiva, as an advocate of prodemocracy, transparency, good governance and accountability. He can bring best practice into the application of statecraft, at national level to the regional level. In Tonga, the social media writes more about the Prime Minister than any other issues. Harnessing this information is critical to public diplomacy, which is a primary need of the people. Tonga, as an independent state, has a submarine cable that has improved internet access, infrastructure and speed since 2012. Digital diplomacy is an area that requires attention, especially through the main actors in diplomacy, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Prime Minister’s Office and other line agencies are engaging the full potential of this medium, to promote deal with the challenges of governance.

3.2.1.8.Tuvalu

TUVALU	POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
		PRIME MINISTER	Website	
			Twitter	@PMofTuvalu
			LinkedIn	

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

		Hon. Enele SOPOAGA	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Office-of-the-Prime-Minister-Government-of-Tuvalu/172225176187580
			Wikipedia	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enele_Sopoaga

Prime Minister Sopoaga of Tuvalu, is a valuable member to the PLG, who is an active advocacy of Climate Change and for the future of Tuvalu as a vulnerable island state. The Prime Minister made this commitment personal through exploiting Twitter, under the handler @PMofTuvalu, where the Prime Minister seeks to amplify the voice of Tuvalu to a wider audience on issues of oceans management, and environmental policies.

3.2.1.9. Wallis & Futuna

WALLIS & FUTUNA	POLYNESIAN LEADER		Digital Tool/ Social Media	Virtual Presence:
		PRESIDENT OF THE TERRITORIAL ASSEMBLY H.E. David VERGE	Website	https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/wallisfutuna/election-du-president-assemblee-territoriale-renouvellement-du-bureau-ont-lieu-ce-lundi-27-novembre-536081.html
			Twitter	@wfla1ere https://twitter.com/wfla1ere
			LinkedIn	https://wf.linkedin.com/in/david-verge-859b4651
			Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=territorial%20assembly%20of%20wallis%20and%20futuna https://www.facebook.com/wfla1ere
			Wikipedia	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Vergé

The territory of Wallis & Futuna, benefits from the French Republic, in that the provision of the Information and Communications Technologies is hosted by the French Government. The voice of the small islands is amplified online through social media and the Internet.

3.2.2 Potentials for Digital Diplomacy in the work of the PLG Secretariat

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the annual meetings of the PLG are held in conjunction with the Meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ Meetings in September, to enable a majority of the members attend, nonetheless, the meetings are called at the discretion of the presiding Chair, with the consent and availability of the Members. For the

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past seven years, the secretariat functions were provided by the PLG Chair, with rotation of duties to the new Chair and organization. This frequent change of Secretariat and contacts, every year from 2011-2018 was a constant challenge to the host country and presiding Chair, yet, on occasions it offers opportunities for the incoming secretariat to engage with the PLG members.

BOX 3.2: THEMATICAL AGENDAS AND SCHEDULES OF MEETINGS OF THE POLYNESIAN LEADERS GROUP

No.	DATE	LOCATION	SECRETARIAT	CHAIR	THEME
1 st	17/11/11	Apia, SAMOA	Samoa	Samoa	Establishment of the PLG – MOU signed
2 nd	08/12	Rarotonga, COOK ISLANDS	Cook Islands	Cook Islands	Education, transport, trade and investment to environmental conservation and climate change mitigation
3 rd	30/08/13	Auckland, NZ	French Polynesia	French Polynesia	
4 th	26/07/14	Auckland, NZ	Niue	Niue	Getting geared for the UN SIDS Conference - Climate change, energy, sustainable development
5 th	15-16/07/2015	Bora Bora, Taputapuatea, Tahiti (PLG Conference on Climate Change)	Tahiti	Tahiti	The Polynesian PACT Polynesia Against Climate Change Threats (Taputapuatea Declaration)
	5/09/15	Auckland, NZ	Tokelau	Tokelau	
6 th	28/06/16-01/07/16	Tikehau-Bora Bora, Tahiti	Tokelau	Tokelau	Connecting Polynesia: for Economic Development and Climate Resilience
	6/09/16	Pohnpei, FSM	Tokelau/Cook Islands	Cook Islands	
7 th	4/09/17	Apia, SAMOA	Tonga	Tonga	Sustainable Polynesia: Empowering Polynesia through regional innovation, infrastructural cooperation and resilience
8 th	28-29/06/18	Funafuti, TUVALU	Tuvalu	Tuvalu	The Polynesian Connection: Taina Fakapolenisia (Amatuku Declaration on Climate Change and Oceans)

In addition, key challenges include:

- Maintaining stability with frequent changes of PLG Secretariat;
- No communication strategy for the members;

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

- Limitations of the medium for communication (email) to timely provision of advice/support to member countries;
- Relocation of secretariat to venues, not of the host chair;
- No set standard for Secretariat duties, reporting structure and work procedures is in place;

The key opportunities for rotation of secretariat duties enables the:

- Cultivation and builds stronger professional network of PLG members;
- Incumbent Secretariat received capacity development in working and sharing experience with other PLG Officials;
- Establish cost-effective medium of communications

In 2017, Samoa has bid for the hosting of the Permanent Secretariat, where leaders in the 2018 meeting reaffirmed their decision for Samoa to host the PLG Secretariat and to “provide an operational interim PLG Secretariat for the initial two years, as well as, the need to establish long-financial arrangement to assist with the operations of the Secretariat” (Government of Tuvalu, 2018).

Moreover, the establishment of a Permanent Office for the PLG Secretariat prompts for various recommendations on how to support the Secretariat and its administrative role. These recommendations include the:

- Use of digital diplomacy, by using ICT tools and the internet as a collaborative platform for the PLG Members to share, update, inform and discuss issues and agendas, calendars of meetings and projects for the PLG.

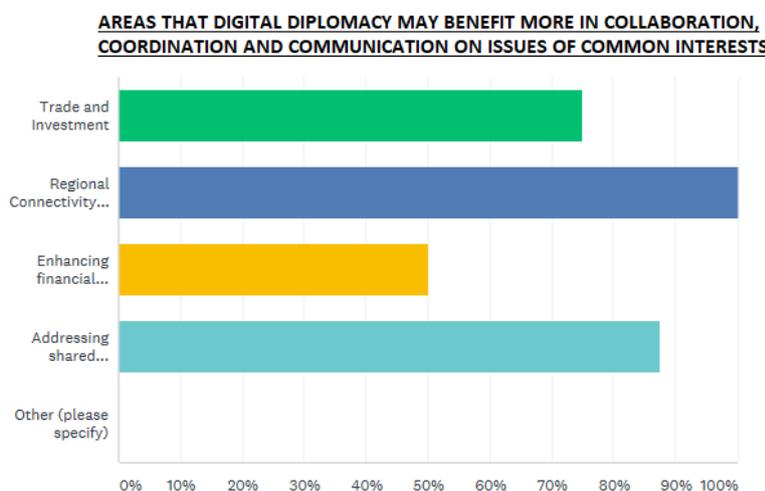
Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

- The creation of a Secretariat portal website or Polypedia Wiki, for the exclusive use and access of its members.
- Concurrently, support from prospective partners and observers (CROP Agencies, New Zealand and the UNDP) can support the initiative with funding.

3.3. Taking Regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI) to the PLG

Inspired by the success of the ESCAP’s application of regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI), an initiative to address the complex regional architecture of the Asia-Pacific, and to “eliminate poverty and achieve inclusive and sustainable development”, was endorsed through ESCAP resolution 68/10 (ESCAP, 2010). The application of that same policy or approach in the Polynesian Leaders Group, is critical to address four PLG objectives, that is:

- (1) promote traditions and culture;
- (2) encourage economic cooperation, trade and investment;
- (3) facilitate regional connectivity;
- (4) provide means for addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks, such as climate change and drug trafficking;



According to a study conducted to determine which of the four areas is of highest importance to the regional cooperation of the PLG, in Figure 15, the study reveals that the PLG considers:

Figure 15: Areas that Digital Diplomacy will be most effective

- **Regional Connectivity in energy, transport and ICT (100%)** to be the most important area that digital digital can make a difference in regional cooperation, according to all 8 participating countries (Tonga, Cook Islands, American Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Wallis & Futuna and French Polynesia);
- **Addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks (climate change, security)**, ranks second importance (87.5%), as agreed to by Niue, Wallis & Futuna, Tokelau, American Samoa, French Polynesia and Tonga;
- **Trade and Investment** ranked third (at 75%), according to the Cook Islands, American Samoa, Wallis & Futuna, Tokelau, Tuvalu and French Polynesia;
- **Enhancing financial cooperation and public private partnerships** was ranked least important (at 50%) by French Polynesia, Tokelau, Tuvalu and American Samoa

3.3.1. RECI on traditions and culture

Culture, traditions, language and history is the essence of being Polynesian. While some parts of Polynesia are metropolitan and territories such as French Polynesia, American Samoa and Wallis & Futuna; while independent states are becoming democratic governments, the preservation of culture and traditions, must be given priority and recognition. The use of knowledge management platforms to share, promote and harness the preservation of culture, language and traditional knowledge becomes crucial.

3.3.2. RECI on economic cooperation, trade and investment

The PLG's use of e-commerce and a portal commerce website, to market and to trade with the PLG members, can be of benefit to the members, where they have the flexibility of connecting and shopping online. Trade is an area of unlocked potential, where digital diplomacy can utilize

the networks between the members to exchange ideas, proposals and products for trade and investment.

3.3.3. RECI on regional connectivity

Samoa is lobbying for the PLG members to sign the Manatua Consortium, a cable service for the Polynesian Group, to support a vision for a ‘One Polynesia’ where telecommunication services, internet and broadcasts can be accessed and enjoyed by its members.

The collaboration of the members on the proposal for a Polynesian Airline, and Air services and agreement, to divert the hub of the Pacific from Fiji and New Zealand, due to expensive costs of flights and irregularities of flights. The regional airline, with the assistance of French Polynesia and Samoa, can connect the members from Tahiti to Samoa and the other Polynesian states more easily and cooperation on a Polynesian Airline, by the members will revive a long-gone tradition of One Polynesia and Polynesian Airlines.

3.3.4. RECI on shared vulnerabilities and risks

Formulation of policies by the Group to “harness the power of connective technologies in disaster response situations” is a critical regional collaborative effort. For instance, when Cyclone Ian, struck Tonga, it affected Samoa and Fiji afterwards, and for the PLG to collaborate in setting up disaster response and alert systems to assist the member countries, during natural disasters, that affects the Polynesian Triangle, is a remarkable achievement, in the right direction towards sustainability.

The Pacific, today, are not spared transnational crimes due to increased connectivity and accessibility. Assisting member countries in issuing warnings of any drug trafficking incidents,

fugitives or deportees, which are growing concerns in the Pacific Islands, is one way such technologies can make a difference in the far, wide Pacific.

The PLG's use of social media to promote public diplomacy, bringing awareness and information to the public of each member countries, can minimize the spread or threat of transnational problems.

The PLG through their respective consulates and Missions can coordinate communication strategies and response for informing the public, issuing travel advisory or citizen assistance through the PLG, when required using networking tools and media sharing applications, these methods can provide instantaneous, direct communications to the target audience in times of national or regional crisis;

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL WILL & OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

“The term digital diplomacy is redundant – it is just diplomacy, period.”

John Kerry, Secretary of State,
The State Department, (United States Government, 2013)

4.1 Is Digital Diplomacy for the PLG?

According to the Lowy Interpreter, “digital diplomacy, if used properly, can be a persuasive and timely supplement to the traditional diplomacy, in advancing online, a country’s foreign policy goals to a wider audience” (Lowy Interpreter, 2015), In other words, the argument here is that digital diplomacy is about engaging with the audience, whilst traditional diplomacy is about avoiding the audience. Since the diplomatic process, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic network, digital diplomacy on the other hand, is not exclusive to the Foreign Ministry, but open to all actors in foreign policy. Some argued that, this 21st Century flexibility and online freedom should not be left unattended, as “there's no easy way to evaluate digital-diplomatic success -- or to set targets for success, compared with the traditional forms of diplomacy that involve results-focused bargaining and negotiation” (Fung, 2012).

This may be true. One should always remember that digital diplomacy is a tool, a method, an enhancer of the diplomatic process; launched to promote a government (not a diplomatic) function and to achieve the public service goals of improving service delivery, responsiveness, transparency and accountability. Digital Diplomacy is more about advancing diplomatic interests steered by the political agenda of the day. It is statecraft, to convince the foreign and diasporas audience that the government is listening and responding, and willing to make a

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

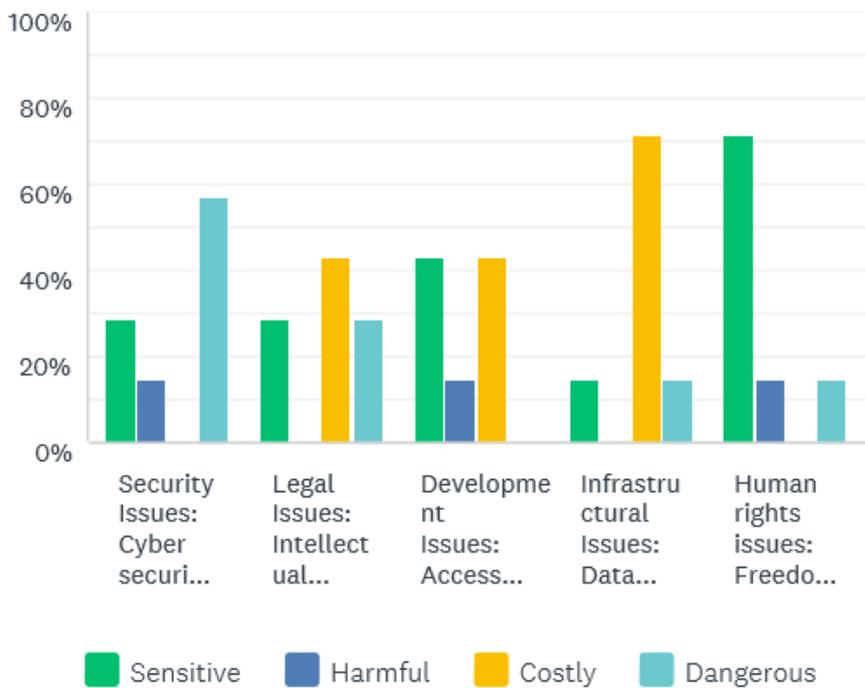
difference in the international agenda, where communications is faster and more plural with Digital Diplomacy. One important element to note here is that, the use of social media, for instance to deploy digital diplomacy must be equipped to support arguments and explain the rationale to the policies that it advocates, not just to distribute and to inform.

Moreover, as the agenda is becoming more “domesticated as more forms of diplomacy are developing in response to complex policy agendas comprising a mix of environmental threats, global pandemics, cybercrime and the instabilities presented by fragile states” (Hocking and Melissen, 2015). The vulnerabilities of the PLG to the impact of external forces in economic, security, and political, that threats their survival and independence, orchestrates the foreign policies objectives that it seeks to advocate and amplify their voice on. That being said, it is the political agenda of the leaders represented at the Polynesian Leaders Group, which determines the level of engagements and ultimate adoption of digital diplomacy.

BOX 4.1: Protect and promote the Traditions, Cultures and Economic Interests of Polynesian Peoples in the States and Territories of the Pacific
<p><i>“Recognizing the fundamental importance of retaining our identity and heritage as Polynesian countries and people;</i></p> <p><i>Aware of the inevitable and relentless exposure of our countries and peoples to globalization and the imperatives of modern economic development;</i></p> <p><i>Concerned that the impact of external forces would erode the foundations of Polynesian island cultures, traditions and languages;</i></p> <p><i>Bearing in mind, the contribution of modernization and economic development and growth in improving living standards and for security;</i></p> <p><i>Observing the principles of sovereignty equality and independence amongst nations;</i></p> <p><i>Seek a future for Polynesian peoples and countries where:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>(1) Cultures, traditions, and languages are valued, honored and protected; and;</i><i>(2) Sustainable economic prosperity is achieved, democratic values are observed and human rights promoted and defended”</i> <p>(Memorandum of Understanding, Polynesian Leaders Group, 11 November, 2011)</p>

The discussion of the opportunities presented by digital diplomacy to support the very values that the Polynesian Leaders Group stands for (Box 4.1) is the purpose of this chapter.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.



To ‘break the ice’ about the PLG members’ reservation towards digital diplomacy, a survey was being administered to determine what

digital tools (social media platforms, content management systems, media sharing tools, networking tools and knowledge management systems), is considered to be appropriate/inappropriate; formal/informal; secure/insecure.

The findings revealed interesting results, that,:

- Decisions on what digital tools to use varies from one country to the other;
- What one country considers to be an appropriate or formal tool, is considered inappropriate or informal by the other, depending on the nature of the work the organization does;

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- The top digital tools are Email, Webinar/Teleconferencing and Facebook; while the least popular is Google Hangouts.
- In Figure 17, it details each countries tools of preference with justifications for choice of tool: example, French Polynesia considers the following tools insecure: GoogleDocs, Viber, whilst Tokelau considers these platforms appropriate for the nature of their diplomatic work.

Is Digital Diplomacy for you: Digital Tools and how you feel about them

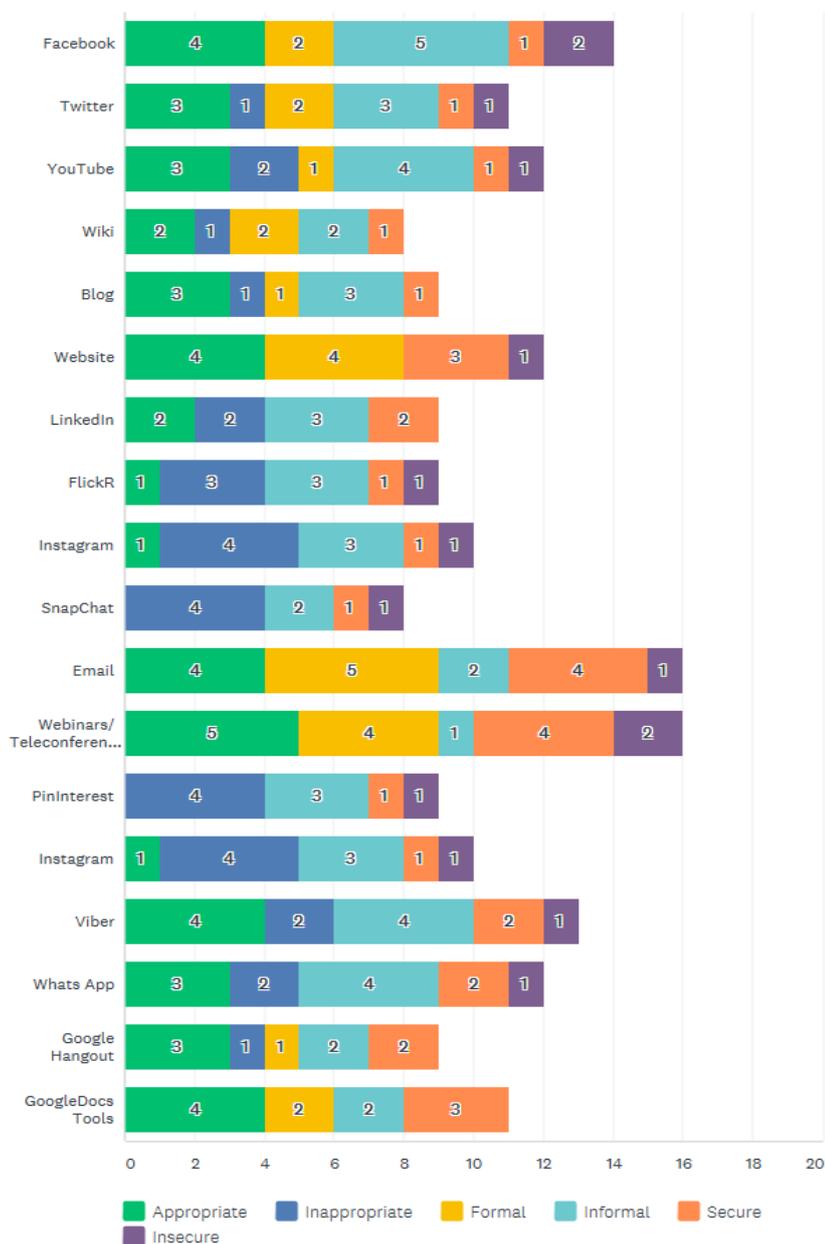


Figure 17: Digital Tools and how you feel about them

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

Digital Tool	APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE	FORMAL	INFORMAL	SECURE	INSECURE
Facebook 	Tonga,		Tokelau	Niue	Wallis&Futuna	Cook Islands
	Cook Islands		Cook Islands	Tuvalu		
	Wallis & Futuna			Wallis&Futuna		
	French Polynesia					
Twitter 	Niue	Wallis&Futuna	Tokelau	Tuvalu	Wallis&Futuna	Cook Islands
	Cook Islands		Cook Islands	Wallis&Futuna		
YouTube 	French Polynesia	Wallis&Futuna		French Polynesia	Wallis&Futuna	French Polynesia
	Tokelau			Tuvalu		
	Cook Islands			Niue		
				Wallis&Futuna		
Wiki 	Wallis&Futuna	Cook Islands	Wallis&Futuna	Tuvalu	Wallis&Futuna	
				Tokelau		
Blog 	French Polynesia	Cook Islands		Tuvalu	Wallis&Futuna	
	Wallis&Futuna			Tokelau		
				Wallis&Futuna		
Website 	French Polynesia		Cook Islands		Tokelau	Cook Islands
	Cook Islands				Niue	
	Tuvalu					
LinkedIn 	Tuvalu	Cook Islands		Tokelau	Niue	
Flickr 	Niue	Tokelau		Tuvalu		
		Cook Islands				
Instagram 	Niue	Cook Islands		Tuvalu		
		Tokelau				
SnapChat 		Cook Islands	Niue	Tuvalu		
		Tokelau				
Email 	French Polynesia		Tuvalu	French Polynesia	Tokelau	French Polynesia
	Cook Islands		Cook Islands	Niue	Cook Islands	Cook Islands
			Niue			
Webinars/ Teleconferencing 	French Polynesia		Tuvalu	French Polynesia	Tokelau	French Polynesia
	Cook Islands		Cook Islands		Cook Islands	Cook Islands
	Niue					
PinInterest 		Cook Islands		Tuvalu		
		Tokelau				
Viber 	French Polynesia	Cook Islands		French Polynesia		French Polynesia
	Tokelau			Tuvalu		
	Niue					
Whats App 	French Polynesia	Cook Islands		French Polynesia		French Polynesia
	Tokelau			Tuvalu		
Google Hangout 	Tokelau	Cook Islands		Tuvalu		
GoogleDocs T 	Tokelau		Cook Islands	Tuvalu		Cook Islands
	Cook Islands					

Figure 18: Ranking of Digital Tools by the Polynesian Leaders Group

4.2. Benefits unique to the PLG

At the political level, recognizing the “*fundamental importance of retaining one’s identity and heritage*” is the Polynesian Leaders Group’s true calling, and responsibility to rescue an eroding society interweaved with history, culture and tradition.

Each member country represents a culture, language, traditions unique to their own, irrespective of their political status. This web of uniqueness must be honored and restored. Many attempts have been made by tribal communities and traditional leaders, to sustain the culture through language schools, hosting Polynesian festivals, where songs and dances are taught, and come alive through performances. Annual beauty pageants of the Miss South Pacific are held annually, to honor Pacific Islands’ beauty. Oral traditions has thrived from generations to generations, and the available, affordable digital tools that captures the essence of the traditions, has unmatched potential. The adaptation of Polynesian culture from films and Hollywood animations, revives the Polynesian pride, however, the culture is often misrepresented in the understanding of the aspired-metropolitan Polynesian.

In that respect, in what ways can Leaders use digital diplomacy as statecraft to achieve this goal?

4.2.1 Improve the living standards and security;

Since the establishment of the Polynesian Leaders Group, consecutive meetings of the Group, has supported efforts to recognize the global threat of Climate Change to the region. The PLG made their own contribution through the PACT (Polynesia Against Climate Change), and the Taputaputea Declaration was to strengthen the PACT and amplify voices about Climate Change, at the COP21 Conference in 2015. In 2016, Tonga deposits its instrument to ratify and support

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

the Paris Agreement, and continued to harness national efforts for climate change mitigation

2011	Memorandum of Understanding	Protect culture, traditions, economic interests
2016	Polynesia Against Climate Threats (PACT)	Climate Change
2016	Taputapuatea Declaration	Climate Change
2017	Ocean Management and Conservation	Year of the Ocean
2018	Amatuku Declaration	Climate Change & Oceans
2018	PLG Charter	

and disaster reduction. The Amatuku Declaration in Tuvalu this year, further revisit priorities in the Taputapuatea Declaration, which was a priority for Tonga, who was struck by a devastating Category 4 Tropical Cyclone in February 2018, causing massive destruction and damage to buildings, homes, root crops, plantations and major livelihoods of the Kingdom.

In June 2018, Tonga hosted the Review of the Samoa Pathway Conference, chaired by the UNOHRLLS, which reiterated the importance of follow-ups and implementations of SDGs.

The Polynesian Leaders continues to put emphasis on Oceans and climate change as two issues pertinent to the livelihood and security of the Polynesian islands,

The PLG shares common challenges to their security and survival at various levels of security, for instance, food security, maritime security, military security, transnational security and cyber security.

This is an area that the PLG can work together in bringing regional cooperation through a network to coordinate, collaborate and communicate on areas of mutual cooperation and assistance. As discussed in earlier chapters, localizing the SDG and mainstreaming agriculture, fisheries, sustainable energy and food security, to improve the living standards and quality of life. Using media sharing tools and knowledge management systems to create awareness, and gather information for informed decisions of the leaders; using Facebook, websites, or SMS

alert to advise on security breach; setting up of disaster warning systems; ensure maritime security through aerial surveillance and monitoring.

4.2.2 Uphold principles of sovereign equality and independence amongst nations

The Polynesian Triangle is made up of independent sovereign states and territories, and the PLG respects each state as a member, irrespective of their independent status. Although, the Group is the support group that the self-governing territories and non-self-governing territories need, to advocate for self-determination, at the regional and international arena. The promotion of solidarity on the equality of independence amongst nations is central to the stability of the PLG.

Improving state to state relations, and promoting nation branding using the Internet, social media and media sharing tools, can contribute to the cause, and promotion of an all independent Polynesia.

4.2.3 Promotion of human rights and rights of the indigenous peoples

The 2030 Sustainable Agenda advocates inclusivity and human rights, in particular, to ‘leave no one behind’ and, the ‘rights of the indigenous peoples’ should not be an exception.

Similar to the Aborigines in Australia, the Native Indians in the United States, the Maori (in New Zealand), the Hawaiians (in Hawaii), the Rapanui (in Easter Islands), the Tahiti Maohi Niu (French Polynesia), are the indigenous people of those countries and region.

The Tokelauans, Niueans and Cook Islanders (Maori Rarotonga), are becoming ethnic minorities in New Zealand, where a majority of these groups have now settled. The Wallis and

Futunan (French-influenced) and the American Samoans (US-influenced) are among indigenous people who are becoming minorities, in their territory.

The example of the Canadian Inuit indigenous people's "redefining their climate change right as their indigenous right" (Rondon, 2014), provides an incentive for the indigenous Polynesian people to "internationalize their indigenous right", by embracing pertinent global issues, that ultimately gave them recognition for their contribution to the global debate. Polynesia is vulnerable to Climate Change, and whether the Maori or the Rapanui, comes forward to advocate for these issues and how it affects their survival as indigenous people, will attract world attention, to the existence of these indigenous people and their rights.

4.3. Strengthening Diplomatic activities through digital diplomacy

4.3.1. Establishing/restoring/rejuvenating diplomatic relations with Polynesian states;

In addition to the longstanding traditional ties, history and culture shared between the Polynesian states, each member state have established diplomatic relations with other Pacific Islands, for instance, Tonga has diplomatic relations with the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tokelau. Digital diplomacy can revitalize bilateral relations through better communications and frequent networking, using LinkedIn, Viber or a Webinars.

4.3.1. Promoting Regional Security Diplomacy

As a region organization, the PLG may choose to be a signatory to the Biketawa Plus, a security agreement with Australia, with attention safeguarding the traditions and culture of the Polynesian people.

4.3.2. Facilitating Economic Diplomacy:

The PLG can use digital diplomacy to engage in free trade agreements with other sub-regional organizations such as the ASEAN or the EU, seeking to develop infrastructures to encourage e-commerce and digital policies to support trade frameworks and incentives.

Most of the PLG states are not WTO member, beside Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu, and promoting economic diplomacy, as an organization, may provide benefits to its non-WTO members.

4.3.3. Promoting, Culture Diplomacy:

The PLG can establish relations with new diplomatic partners and formulate programs to promote culture diplomacy, using short videos documentaries, webinars and social media podcasts to cultural exchange programs and performance. For instance, Japan launch cultural diplomacy with the visits of traditional performers, and thus encourage cooperation on various levels, through people-to-people links and training programs for preserving culture in the digital age.

4.3.4. Strengthening the Political environment for regional integration and cooperation

The PLG is the political framework for the Polynesian Triangle, and the endorsement of the PLG Charter will make the cooperation legal binding, opening doors for a permanent regional architecture that promotes and serves the interest of Polynesia. Opportunities to apply for observer status at the UN, the UNFCCC and other international fora that is pertinent to the survival of Polynesian, will strengthen the PLG political front, nonetheless strengthened integration and cooperation among the Polynesian states.

4.3.5. Promoting Environmental Diplomacy:

The PACT (Polynesians Against Climate Threats) initiative should be expanded to promote proactive regional cooperation, on addressing climate change. In partnerships with relevant CROP agencies and International Organizations, the PACT can be very effective in its promotion of Polynesians Against Climate Threats, ushering in support from the international scene.

4.3.6. Embracing Small state diplomacy:

The PLG is made up of small states, and the PLG must embrace its unique vulnerabilities as small states, to collaborate with other platforms that promote the interests of small states such as the SIDS, FOSS and AOSIS.

In the South East Asian region, Singapore is a model for small state excellence, where smallness is not relevant, when it initiated the Friends of Small States, a coalition of nations working together to promote pertinent issues of climate change, economic interests and small states vulnerabilities to sustainable development. On the other hand, the AOSIS (Alliance of Small Islands States – www.aosis.org), is “made up of UN Permanent Representatives from countries for each of its three regional groupings: AIMS, PSIDS, Caribbean”, (AOSIS, 2015), working together to find solutions to climate change issues.

4.3.7. Promoting Public diplomacy:

The PLG should utilize the potential of the social media (Facebook, Twitter) to promote public diplomacy; especially on three major PLG regional integration priorities:

- (i) building a ‘One Polynesia Connect’, an ICT project to link all of Polynesia;
- (ii) the promotion of a regional Polynesian Airline, and;
- (iii) support of Polynesian Promise, a project to support eco-tourism in Polynesia.

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The launch of Facebook Diplomacy and Twitter Diplomacy on these three major priorities can be instrumental.

The sharing and posting of photos, videos, interviews, tweets, updates and follow-ups on these projects, engaging a live audience, allowing them to experience Polynesia in videos, sounds and images, to grasp a better understanding and awareness of these issues, can seek to:

- mobilize, cement and incept widespread support and ownership of the projects- by both Polynesians and diaspora abroad;
- Facebook Diplomacy can especially, attract possible international organizations, financial institutions, donor partners, investors to contribute to the Polynesians projects.

4.4 Lessons Learned: Malta, Kosovo and New Zealand

The PLG should apply the best practices from the lessons learnt from small states diplomacies of Malta, Kosovo and New Zealand, and their engagement in digital diplomacy.

Malta:

In the Mediterranean Sea and Southern Europe, the example of small state diplomacy is well portrayed in Malta's global engagements through digital diplomacy. The long-distance learning and education programs available online (www.diplomacy.edu) is tailored for diplomats, policy makers, civil servants and relevant stakeholders from the CSO, ICT and legal profession to take courses through the DiploFoundation, and accredited studies at the University of Malta.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

Distance, becomes irrelevant, when Malta's DiploFoundation enrolls students from as far as the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Caribbean and Africa to study diplomacy, online. This is Malta's digital diplomacy statecraft, to not only advance education diplomacy, but to learn from member countries of the region, and expanding its own digital diplomacy journey.

Kosovo:

The example of Kosovo's digital diplomacy (<http://www.digitalkosovo.org/sq/>) is based on promoting an issue pivotal to the nation's status in the diplomatic world, that is, its diplomatic recognition. The same method that the Polynesian Leaders Group can apply to promote its digital presence and exposure at the international community.

What Kosovo has done is to promote its self-determination through the digital diplomacy, by engaging with Kosovos in digital space. It has also confirmed this recognition, by requesting other online presence, websites, and blogs to link to the Kosovo Digital Diplomacy website.

The Kosovo Digital Website has made itself a portal to these sites, which recognize its digital space.

New Zealand:

At the regional level, New Zealand, a metropolitan Pacific Islands and the closest neighbor to the PLG states, does not constitute the vulnerability criteria as a Pacific small island, but it plays an important role as a development partner to the Pacific Islands. In the global arena, New Zealand itself, developed nation, is a small island, compared to the OECD countries.

The New Zealand Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern, an advocate of digital diplomacy, is promoting New Zealand interests online through podcasts and Facebook

diplomacy. The Prime Minister has taken advantage of new digital tools to launch an initiative, called, *Put New Zealand on the map*, [#GetNZonthemap](#), to promote New Zealand and its position in the world.

CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL DIPLOMACIES

5.1. Developing the persona

“...North Korea is run by some very bad people...” (2013)

“Met with President Putin of Russia ...Good discussions on Syria. Hope for his help to resolve, along with China the dangerous North Korea crisis. Progress being made” (Nov 2017)

“Kim Jong Un stated that the Nuclear Button is on his desk...Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, much bigger & more powerful” (2017)

President Donald Trump, US President, @realDonaldTrump Twitter (Extract from Twitter).

When the top diplomat in the US Government President Donald Trump, openly criticizes, on Twitter and the social media, the President of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, sending condescending, threatening words, comparing size of nuclear weapons- the whole world did not think twice, but was reduced to a panic and North Korea was put under a microscope, declared as a global threat on the agenda of many international meetings, and sanctioned by the UN. Without warning in 2018, photos of President Trump and President Kim Jon-un came viral on the Internet, when the two leaders met in Singapore, to hold bilateral meetings on North Korea’s much anticipated “agreement to denuclearize” (Rosenfield, 2018).

Furthermore, the US President’s unruliness narcissistic approach on, issues, towards other world leaders, the economy and foreign policies, often sensitized by the media, has made President Trump, more popular, feared, doubted, hated and respected – all at the same time. After all, leaders, great leaders for that matter, thrive on chaos and controversy - and the attention that the world has given them. In the digital world, these leaders can develop a persona, a character, whoever they portray to be, to advance their foreign policy goals. In other words, contrary to the face to face traditional diplomacy, where it is hard to tell the poker face of a good diplomat; the digital dividedness, of the Internet, has made it even harder to tell if the

person behind the online handler, @realDonaldTrump, is surely the President himself or his Press Secretary or his PA that is tweeting.

The Digital Divide is defined as “an economic and social inequality with regard to access to, use of, or impact of ICT” (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1995). In this sense, it is the divide between reality and perceived reality, and the dangers of social media in diplomacy. After all, states and leaders are actors in diplomacy and as actors; they must play an effective role, to be relevant on the international agenda and debate.

5.1.1. Risks of Social Media

Many scholars consider, Diplomacy has two main aspects, the private and the public (Bloodgood, Masson, 2018) engagement, in the sense that there is a formal aspect to the conduct of diplomacy in bilateral and closed door meetings, and to the informal, conduct of diplomacy, in state and official visits, hosted social functions, events, where leaders get to meet with the people and grasp a better understanding of one’s culture, history and development priorities. With the social media, as a tool of diplomacy, it has the ability to merge the two; by increasing outreach to a maximum audience, and influence understanding between governments and citizens worldwide” (Deruda, 2014). Usually, the danger is in drawing boundaries and distinction between formal and informal, as also when to use social media. For instance, during closed door meetings, diplomats do a selfie and posted on Facebook, a trait of the Pacific Way, or at a social event, leaders are asked to do a selfie with a group of young people. As duty bearers, the leaders have a responsibility to the people, but will have no control over the photos taken and where these photos will end up- in the social media.

Besides, leaders believe in transparency and accountability, to post on Facebook and Twitter, with intentions to “shape attitudes online about a particular issue” (Ricorda, no date), and where leaders are compelled to be less formal and let loose, this resulted in the audience shaping attitudes about the leaders, because it remains a challenge for the audience to drawing distinction between Leaders’ online private and professional personalities.. Accessibility, visibility and exposure will be coupled with the issues of invasion of privacy, prone to judgement and being under the microscope by the world.

The affordability of access to the Internet and to the use of social media today has become a debated human rights issue. A survey of the PLG’s use of social media and the aspect of human rights as an issue revealed that:

- **Fundamental human rights issues** of *Freedom of Expression, Privacy, data protection, mass surveillance* on the Internet;
- 5 Polynesian states (71.43%) agree these issues are sensitive to digital diplomacy (French Polynesia, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands and American Samoa). The reasons why social media is sensitive, is because there is no guiding policy or regulatory frameworks to governed or filter what is being said or debated in the Social media, and some issues are very sensitive in the fact, that it involves the diplomatic relations between two states, for instance, the self-determination of territories, bilateral relations between states, or issues with the rights of the indigenous people;
- 1 Polynesian state (14.29%) believed the human rights aspects of digital diplomacy using social media is considered to have dangerous impact (Wallis & Futuna). Example of dangerous is that it influence opinions with unexpected impacts on security and integrity of relations;

- 1 Polynesian state (14.29%) believed that the human rights aspects of digital diplomacy when using social media is considered to be harmful (Tokelau). The use of social media for digital diplomacy, if the wrong message is conveyed, it can cause retaliation or sanctions to the countries involved;

In the South Pacific, the potential of social media to serve as the tools for propaganda and a tool for inciting violence, verbal abuse and ill feelings towards the Government or public figures, is a challenge as anywhere else in the developed world or in other countries of the Global South. In Samoa, the Prime Minister of Samoa warned of “banning social media for extremist groups using it to cite violence” (RNZ, 2018). In Tonga, social media has served a dual purpose, both for the common good and on the downside as a blot on the country’s nation building image and reputation. For instance, it has become the most effective watchdog towards the Government, but its drawback is that it has torn the country in two: between the views of the friends versus antagonists of prodemocracy. The dangers of the social media today, is that because it is not controlled or legalized, extremists people can spreading rumours, and spreading divisions, as happen elsewhere in the world, Europe, the US and India, to mention a few places.

In Tonga’s case, a constitutional monarchy, there is growing division in the public and Diaspora on those for the monarchy and those for prodemocracy movement, where people with political agenda to destroy either systems, use the social media, especially Facebook, to do dirty politics and defame those they do not like. This is a serious danger of social media, as people abuse freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

5.2. Challenges: Digital Diplomacy Development

To identify the challenges for digital diplomacy in the Polynesian Leaders Group, a discussion of the background of the following areas is made:

- Tools and infrastructure
- Security
- E-readiness;
- Economic Returns
- Actors in diplomacy vs. revamped Diplomats
- Regulatory Framework
- Political Will

5.2.1 Improving Infrastructure for regional connectivity

The signing of an agreement for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Manatua Polynesian cable project shows the Pacific has come of age in harnessing the opportunities provided by telecommunications,”

Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of Cook Islands, (Cook Islands News, 2017)

The tools for digital diplomacy, social media, has been discussed earlier, and its inappropriateness, insecurity or informal setting, to each situation, when conducting digital diplomacy. However, the infrastructure to enable the environment for regional connectivity, a major goal of digital diplomacy in the PLG, will be discussed here as the main infrastructural concerns. According to the 8th Polynesian Leaders Group Communiqué, there are two main infrastructural projects that seek uniformity and cooperation at regional level by the Polynesian states, pertaining to projects in ICT and Aviation:

A. ICT Priorities

Manatua Cable Consortium

In April 2017, four countries (Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, French Polynesia) signed the Manatua Cable Consortium, “a unique ICT project that signifies Polynesian cooperation” (Cook Islands News, 2017), and has a:

“vision of four PLG member governments to set up a submarine cable system aims to connect Samoa to Tahiti, French Polynesia with spur connections to Niue and Cook Islands especially to Rarotonga, Aitutaki, and Borabora. The aim is to connect to the existing Honotua Submarine Cable that runs from French Polynesia to Hawaii” (PLG8, 2018).

The challenge is lobbying for all PLG members to reconnect to One Polynesia Cable Consortium, in the Polynesian Triangle, and convincing Governments to align to one cable network connection.

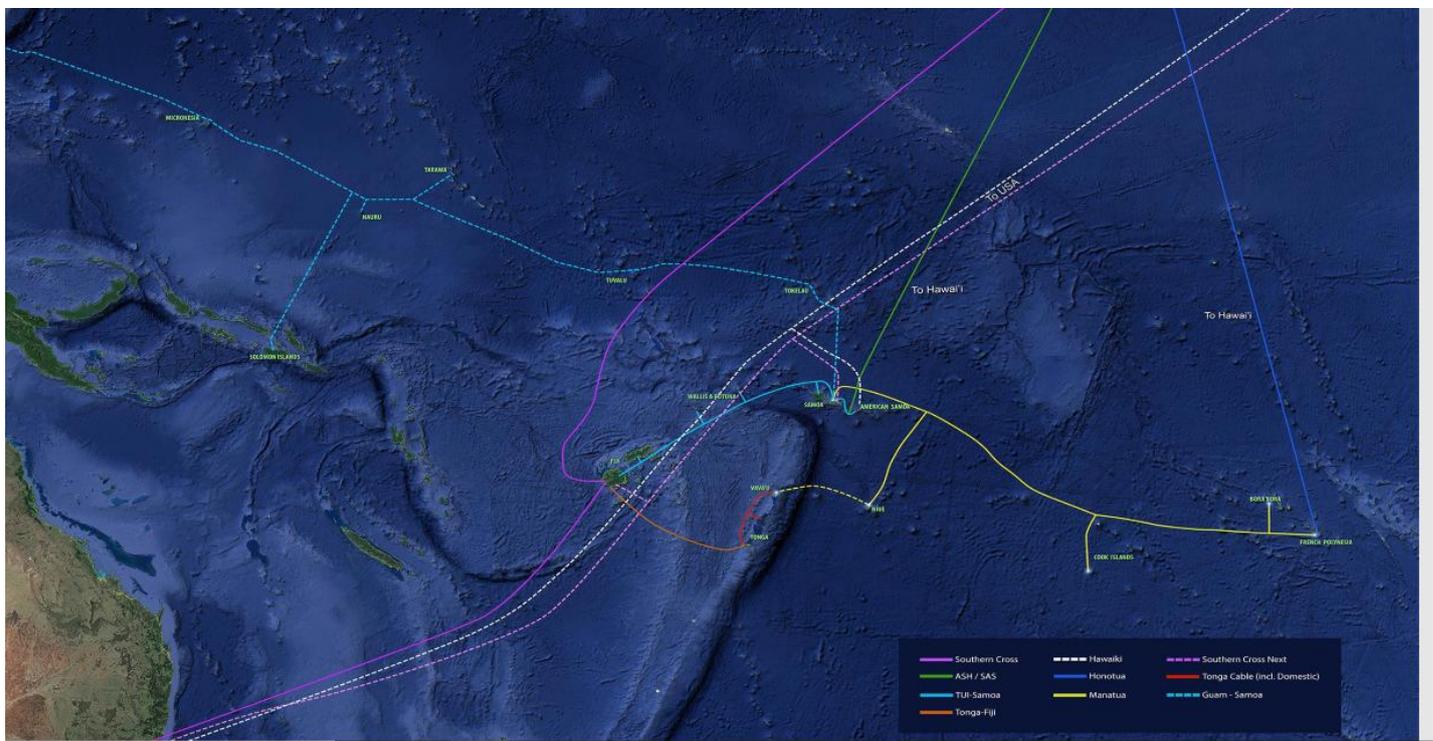


Figure 19: Multi Cable Connections in the Pacific (One Polynesia, 2018)

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

Tonga has a separate Submarine Fibre Optic Cable connection, setup in 2012, that connects it to Fiji, New Zealand, Australia and the American Samoa, Hawaii and the US,

Although the project is seeking to “increase the buying power of the members, stimulating transformational economic access to the digital economy” (One Pacific, 2017), there are various consideration to be made in regards to geopolitical jurisdictions, contracting packages, cost-sharing, governing legal framework and regulations concerns. At the same time, cyber security mechanisms in place, prior to connecting with other countries in the Cable system.

Cable Connections

According to the recent presentation to the PLG Leaders, in 2017, with the Manatua Consortium, seeks to connect all Polynesia in one Cable Connection and Network (PLG Secretariat, 2017). In reality, the vast diversity and distance of the South Pacific from the Pacific Rim countries and from each other, many Cable connections has been laid over the years in to connect various regions within the PLG countries, making the connections “not harmonious but rather disparate” (One Pacific, 2017). For instance, there are challenges with having various Cable Connections, which makes the Pacific more disconnect than connected.

The following Cable connections connect the US with the Pacific with **New Zealand and Australia** as hub points.

- Southern Cross (*links Australia-New Zealand-Fiji-Hawaii*);
- Hawaiiiki Cable (*linking Australia-New Zealand-Hawaii and US*);

The following Cable Network connects **Tonga** to the Southern Cross;

- Tonga Submarine Fibre Optic Cable (*connects Tonga to Fiji*);

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

The following Cable connections initiated by Samoa seek to make **Samoa** the Polynesian Hub of the Pacific (Samoa Observer, 2017);

- Tui-Samoa Cable (*linking American Samoa –Hawaii*);
- Manatua Consortium (*linking Samoa- French Polynesia-Niue-Cook Islands*);

The following Cable connections initiated by French Polynesia seek to make **Tahiti** the Polynesian Hub of the Pacific (Pacific Islands Report, 2009);

- Honotua Cable (*linking Hawaii –French Polynesia*);
- SPIN Cable (*linking French Polynesia-Fiji-Wallis & Futuna – Samoa-American Samoa – Norfolk Islands*);

One ICT Policy Polynesia

The One Polynesia vision is one, which is as ambitious as the vast Pacific Ocean. The idea of having one regional connection for the Polynesian Triangle is as expensive undertaking that requires individual state efforts to connect and work on individual ICT national policies. The collective achievement of each, is aggregated when the challenges at national level is minimized and addressed. For instance, the National ICT Policies of each PLG state must be tailored to link to the One Polynesia ICT Policy, for cohesion and effectiveness, as each PLG member have unique, diverse infrastructures and economies. A few of the PLG states have established a national ICT Policy and Strategies such as; Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands. Tonga is the only non-member state of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime.

E-Readiness

One of the most important challenges to launchings digital diplomacy is the e-readiness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central Heads of Governments Agencies to engage on unchartered frontiers to interact with foreign governments and agencies on issues of common

interests. In the setting of the PLG, the network of secretariats from various point of contacts for the PLG meetings, has thus taken seven years in trial and error, fail and successes in finding an effective medium for communication with each other. The traditional methods of email, has been elevated to skype teleconferencing, although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requires that communications of the Leaders be channelled through properly diplomatic channels of a TPN (Third Party Note) or (Note Verbale). Some of the old forms of diplomacy need to be reviewed, in keeping with technology change and practicality.

Similar to the Government's traditional Savingram and letters, the TPN are becoming selective for use for conveyance of official communications between the states, whilst frequent communications are conducted via email. The limitation of email, the expensive costs of telephone calls, and the issues of each PLG on operation on various cable connections, has made it more expensive to communicate, compared to the setting of the ASEAN or the EU, with trans-boundary roaming communications, and single currency.

As the PLG is more on traditional, cultural and economic interests of the members, the Leaders' have control of the agenda, and can put forth any issues of priority to the Group, and usually, this is channelled between the Offices of the Heads of States/Governments. This flexibility has allowed for the members to interact more often as a network, without any political affiliation or diplomatic conviction.

5.2.2 Regulatory Framework and Economic returns

It is expected that one of the key challenges will be underlying the regulatory framework to guide the work of the PLG under the One Polynesia initiative and Manatua Consortium, once it has enough consensus for adoption. Lessons learnt from the launch of Tonga's Submarine

Cable Project, in 2012, has delivered promises of high-speed Internet, affordable access and minimizing the digital divide gap, however, there were no business plans or strategies to monitor economic returns of investment in the Cable project. The project became monopolized by Government and two ISP carriers, who are just looking to find ways to provide a level playing field for other investors to usher in revenue and income generation for the project.

5.2.3 Security

The question of security is on top of the list of challenges. No set mechanisms or strategies were in place to address issues of: safeguarding children online; ICT policies for responsible use and integrity online; dealing with cyber crime; cyber security and the explosive use of social media, came at a point, when existing decades old, frameworks were slow to catch up. The non-infrastructure issues of such as human rights (freedom of expression, privacy, mass surveillance), the legal issues (limited jurisdiction on the Internet, copyright, intellectual property) and the economic issues (enablers for e-commerce, consumer protections, e-currencies, taxation), were not addressed.

5.2.4 Matching development vs infrastructure, with socio-cultural issues

Perhaps the most important challenges and areas to address and kick-start the PLG's digital diplomacy is on three main areas. First, the infrastructure of the Internet is evolving at an unprecedented rate, from the various forms of computers in mobile technologies, Internet of Things (IoT) and Cloud Computing, which on its own must have the appropriate legal and security mechanisms, as the infrastructure is no longer on desktop computers laptops, tablets but in the era of connected devices. Secondly, taking into consideration, the development issues (access, digital divide, training, skills), of which today, the demographic of Internet users is

every age, young and old, work and the employed, anyone who have access and can afford the newest connected technologies in the market. For the PLG states, one of the most significant challenges is the socio-cultural issues (content policy, respect of cultural diversity), as a region rich in family oriented culture and communities, these issues were not incorporated in the making of these technologies. To conduct digital diplomacy in the PLG, it will have to take extra efforts to integrate these issues into its policies and activities.

B. Aviation and Tourism

The South Pacific is synonymous with tropical Paradise, and Polynesia is the jewel of the paradise. Having said that, the Polynesian Leaders have put the promotion of tradition, culture and tourism as key elements of the Group's underlying goals. According to a study by the South Pacific Tourism Organization, Tourism plays a significant role in Pacific Island economies, amounting to US\$1.4 billion in spending in 2013 (World Bank) which increased to US\$4.3 billion in 2017 (SPTO, 2017). The challenges of limited flights and connections to the Polynesian Islands, and the expensive routes through New Zealand and Fiji, as the major transit hubs to the Polynesian states, has prompt for various Regional Airlines projects.

.Air Tahiti Nui

The French Polynesia Government has submitted various proposals on the Air Tahiti Nui, which is a Polynesian air service to connect Samoa and Tonga and other PLG states through Tahiti, as hub. This project is still under negotiation, because it is still requires enough political will from the members to support the proposal. Samoa, on the other hand, the once-host of the Polynesian Airlines, have other ideas that requires redevelopment of infrastructure, aviation agreements and improvement of tourist operators before the regional airline can be made a priority.

Tonga is making remote efforts to charter connecting flights from its outer island, Vava'u to American Samoa and Samoa as part of its initial steps to regional Polynesian connections, and further expansion once it redevelops its airport infrastructures, services and joint agreements with other Polynesian members.

5.2.5 Actors in Diplomacy vs the revamped Diplomat

Diplomacy in the Pacific is an imported ideology, together with religion and other developments; however, this does not go to say that the Polynesian states have no standards for diplomacy. As a region, the nations are identified by the Pacific Islands Forum as the Pacific Blue.

The Pacific Way, is the simply the way that the Pacific do things. In this regard, diplomacy in the Pacific will be mixed with the cultural values, respect, courtesy, humility and modesty. This is a common trait by all Pacific Islands including the Polynesian Group. In itself, it is a challenge to the conduct of diplomacy, in advancing interests in foreign governments and public. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once hailed as the centre of diplomacy, is overtaken by the other Government agencies in the conduct of diplomacy, due to the expanding agenda on the International arena, such as climate change, economic and trade, investment and human rights. Examples include the Finance Department, point of contact for the World Bank and ADB; Prime Minister's Office as regional coordinator for Leaders' Meetings in the Forum, PLG and PIDF.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

The traditional diplomat must adjust and revamped age-old mindsets of exclusivity to diplomacy and foreign policies, as the technology is changing, so much the users and the audience. The challenges is coordination, collaboration and communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic network, to take an active role in diplomacy, expand their specialty to trade, commerce, ICT, public relations, so that diplomacy utilizes new statecrafts to achieve the state's interests in other competitive countries who are themselves revamping their diplomacies, or will be left behind in the digital age race.

CONCLUSION: Future Considerations and Recommendations

In summary, the Polynesian Leaders Groups was established to fulfill a vision of cooperation, strengthening integration on issues pertinent to the region and to the future of the PLG.

Based on the findings of this study, the Group has strength in numbers, resources and their unique diversity, should serve as its competitive edge. On its quest for integration, every PLG member must bring forth meaningful proposals to the Group, and must not be implemented in isolation but in partnerships. As the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations have been identified for collaborations, with burden sharing and partnerships in the following areas:

- (1) One Polynesia ICT project- For Samoa to lead, in a Steering group (Samoa (chair), Tonga, Cook Islands, French Polynesia);
- (2) Regional Aviation project – For French Polynesia to lead and to give the Polynesian Airlines ensign as the name of the Regional Carrier, in a Working group (French Polynesia (Chair), Members – All members;
- (3) Climate Change Resilience Infrastructure – For Tuvalu to lead, in a Working group (Tuvalu (Chair), Members: All members;
- (4) Polynesian Traditional Culture project - For Tonga to lead, in a Working Group (Tonga (Chair), Members: All members – with a project to establish a Polynesian Village in Tonga;

- (5) **Setting up the Permanent Secretariat** – Hosted by Samoa; *With two considerations-*
(1) To setup a Polynesian Diplomacy Training Centre in Apia to offer trainings and attachments to its PLG members (2) To setup the Polypedia Portal, under the administration of the Permanent Secretariat;

Political will: *Who will rule the Polynesian cyberspace?*

In conclusion, there has to be enough political will and commitment from the PLG governments to connect together through the Manatua Consortium. The challenge will be a question of leadership, cooperation and integration. The PLG must make hard decisions to carry this initiative forward, through phased implementations:

- (1) At the large scale, long-term vision, the Manatua Consortium, may take years for the vision to be received with agreed consensus, to be established, implemented to develop into the ‘One Polynesia Connect’ dream –
- (2) In the short-term, the PLG must commence with start-up, simple affordable, manageable, steps to setup a network and wiki portal website for the members, to connect, collaborate, curate, create and communicate information for the benefit of the members as do the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Pacific Islands Development Forum.
- (3) Inspired by the US State Department’s Digital Diplomacy project, Diplopedia, a proposal for the development of a *Polypedia* project, a network and wiki portal, for the PLG members to put the PLG in cyberspace. *Polypedia* can integrate digital tools, media sharing tools, knowledge management tools and social media to put the

Polynesian Leaders Group on the map, and in the international scene. Over the years, the digital footprint of the PLG, can continue to expand and adopt new technologies to conduct its diplomacies with the wider region and global community. It is imperative that in parallel with quest for One Polynesia in Cyberspace, the PLG must consider Internet Governance in the equation, forming regional Internet Government chapters and participate in the Geneva Internet Governance Forums;

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Appendices

Appendix 1 –Memorandum of Understanding (PLG)

Appendix 2 –Questionnaire 1

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire 2

Appendix 4 – Provisional Agenda: 2018 PLG meeting

APPENDIX 1

(copy of original)

Memorandum of Understanding
to Establish the Polynesian Leaders Group to
protect and promote the Tradition, Cultures and Economic Interest
of Polynesian People in the State and Territories of the Pacific.

The undersigned

Recognizing the fundamental importance of retaining our identity and heritage as Polynesian countries and people;

Aware of the inevitable and relentless exposure of our countries and peoples to globalization and the imperatives of modern economics developments;

Concerned that the impact of external force would erode the foundations of Polynesian island culture, traditions and languages;

Bearing in mind, the contribution of modernization and economic development and growth in improving living standards and for security;

Observing the principals of sovereign equality and independence amongst nations;

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

Seek a future for Polynesian people and countries where;

- (1) Cultures, traditions and languages are valued, honoured and protected; and
- (2) Sustainable economic prosperity is achieved, democratic values are observed and human rights are defended.

Have decided to establish a Polynesian sub-regional group, the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG) to promote and protect Polynesian cultures, traditions, languages and to achieve sustainable development and prosperity through working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation to:

- (1) Encourage sharing of knowledge and experience, in awareness and education to promote and protect cultures, traditions and languages;
- (2) Encourage mutual support of development efforts in areas including but not limited to: transport, energy, environment conservation, climate change, education, health, agriculture and fisheries, tourism, trade and investment;
- (3) Encourage respect for the quality of governance, observant of democratic values and human rights, the rule of law, and support for the right to self-determination;
- (4) Encourage the strengthening of connections with institutions of regional and international cooperation.

Membership

- (1) The founding members of the PLG are Cook Island, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, American Samoa, Tokelau, and Ma'ohi Nui – French Polynesian;
- (2) A state, territory or indigenous Polynesian population may be invited to become a member or an observer by a consensus decision of the founding members;
- (3) A member (or observer) may at any time withdraw or terminate its membership by giving written advice of its intention to the Secretariat of the PLG.

Meetings

- (1) The PLG may hold annual meetings in conjunction with and at the margins of the yearly Pacific Island Forum meeting or at such other time and place if decided by the majority of the members.
- (2) A majority of the members must be present at a PLG meeting to constitute a quorum.
- (3) If a PLG meeting is not quorate, the outcomes of the meeting remain provisional until communication of acceptance by the majority is received by the Secretariat.

Chair

- (1) The chair of the PLG meetings will rotate annually amongst the members with the current chair carrying the chair's duties until the next annual meeting when a new chair takes over.
- (2) Where the next chair is unable to preside in the annual meeting or any other meeting of PLG, his/her representative may take over the chairing of the meeting.

Purposes of the Annual Meetings

- (1) Provide members with an opportunity to address and discuss issues affecting the membership;
- (2) Receive and discuss reports on cooperator activities between members in the course of the year;
- (3) Make decision as necessary on current and future activities;

Secretarial

- (1) The Secretarial, until such time that the PLG members decision to set up a permanent office, rotate with the chair, and the office of chair will provide the Secretariat for the PLG in his/her period of duty;
- (2) The function of the Secretarial include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Facilitating the implementation of decision of the PLG, and
 - (b) Disseminate information to PLG members of cooperation activities or other information that the member may wish to share.

Membership Fees

The PLG members at its annual meeting will determine if and what membership fees may be paid.

Amendments to the MOU

A member may propose an amendment to this MOU for consideration at a PLG meeting and to provide the amendment to the Secretariat of the PLG in time for circulation before the meeting; amendments will be adopted by consensus. No amendment shall be adopted unless by consensus of the members of the PLG.

Signed at Apia, Samoa on the 17th November 2011.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

For Cook Islands	Honourable Henry Puna Prime Minister
For Tonga	Lord Tu'ivakano Prime Minister
For Samoa	Hon. Tu'ilaepa Lufesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi Prime Minister
American Samoa	Honourable. Togiola Tulafono Governor
Tokelau	Faipule Foua Tolao Ulu o Tokelau
For Niue	H.E Ms. O'Love Tauveve Jacobsen For the Premier of Niue
For Tuvalu	H.E. Mr. Aunese Makoi Jacobsen For the Prime Minister of Tuvalu
Ma'ohi Nui – French Polynesian	H.E. Mr. Keitapu Maamaatuaiahutapu For the President of Ma'ohi Nui – French Polynesia

APPENDIX 2

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE 1: *Digital Diplomacy as Foreign Policy Statecraft in the Polynesian Leaders Group*

(Olita Tupou, MA Contemporary Diplomacy, University of Malta: Research Study survey published on Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DXKHNQJ>)

1. Name of Country/responsible government agency for PLG

2. As a member country, what are your views of adopting digital diplomacy as statecraft to strengthen the PLG initiative? Please give reasons.

3. Beside conducting diplomatic activities such as consular work, cultivating network and contacts with member countries, do you consider Digital Diplomacy critical to the nature of the work that your organization does? State reasons why/why not critical?

4. What are your views on Digital Diplomacy, regionalism and achieving greater integration on regional priorities? Do you think Digital Diplomacy can contribute to the PLG's achieving regional cooperation? Please state how.

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

5. What digital tools does your organization use? Tick all examples of methods that your organization uses: (multiple choices – tick check boxes)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email		
<input type="checkbox"/>	TV/Radio Broadcast		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Management tools (Wiki, Blog)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Networking Tools (LinkedIn, Instagram, Viber, Whatsapp, Webinars)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media Sharing (YouTube, FlickrR, Pinterest, GoogleDocs)		
6. Which area(s) do you think Digital Diplomacy will benefit more in the coordination, collaboration and communications on issues of common interest? (multiple choices – tick check boxes)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade and Investment		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Connectivity in energy, transport and ICT		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhancing financial cooperation & public private partnership		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Addressing shared vulnerabilities and risks (Climate Change, Security, etc.)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)		
7. Please rank which area(s) is most important for digital diplomacy to assist your organization in: (multiple choices/matrix and ranking scale)			
	Not important	Somewhat important	Very Important
Promoting public and regional diplomacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination disaster awareness and response agenda	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitating correspondences and circular advice activities, cultivation of networks, contacts between Heads of Government Offices and MFAs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build a centralized regional repository knowledge and information hub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify):	_____		

8. Is digital diplomacy for you: Please tick all digital tool(s) that you consider appropriate/inappropriate, formal or informal to secure or insecure for the nature of work your organization does? (multiple choices/matrix and ranking scale)						
	Appropriate	Inappropriate	Formal	Informal	Secure	Insecure
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>					
YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Wiki	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Blog	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/>					
FlickrR	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>					
SnapChat	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Webinars/ Teleconferencing	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Pinterest	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Viber	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Whatsapp	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Google Hangout	<input type="checkbox"/>					
GoogleDocs Tools	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (please specify):	_____					

9. Please rate the potential risks and challenges to using digital diplomacy for conducting state-to-state and/or regional diplomacy? (Single choice per item /matrix and ranking scale)

	Sensitive	Harmful	Costly	Dangerous
Security issues: Cyber security, Cyber crime, Cyber Stalking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal issues: Intellectual property, rights & limited jurisdiction, copyright	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development issues: Access, Digital Divide, Training, Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Infrastructural issues: Data interoperability & lack of technology standard, Cloud Computing, IoT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human rights issues: Freedom of Expression; privacy and data protection, mass surveillance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic issues: Consumer protection, e- commerce, e- currencies, taxation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-cultural	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

issues: content policy, respect for cultural diversity				
Other (please specify):	_____			

10. Is your organization using Digital Diplomacy and if not, why not? Please select all that applies: <i>(multiple choice tick boxes)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Need training and proper skills to be able to curate, create, critique, communicate and collaborate information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of technical Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Connectivity issues and high costs of Internet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Need political will to endorse digital diplomacy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough economic returns from investment in digital diplomacy
<input type="checkbox"/>	E-readiness is hindered by digital divide and access issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	No enabling environment and regulatory framework to protect
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diplomats: generalists vs. specialists, other Government agencies can conduct diplomatic activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competition from non-state actors: Civil societies, NGOs, private sectors, diversifying of diplomatic agenda
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify): _____

---ENDS OF QUESTIONNAIRE---

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE 2: POLYNESIAN LEADERS AND DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

(Olita Tupou, MA Contemporary Diplomacy, University of Malta: Research Study survey published on
(Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KBZ6XMT>)

1. PLG Country Name:

2. Position of Leadership: *(1 choice only - checkboxes)*

- Prime Minister
- Cabinet Minister
- Director General/Secretary General of a regional organization
- President
- Head of Mission
- Government CEO
- Other (please specify): _____

3. Polypedia, (demo on www.click-tongatoday.net), a proposed solution for a central online information web service portal where PLG members can publish vacancies, advertisements and coordinate PLG meetings and work – similar to the PIF, PIDF and MSG – but this will exist if enough political will – what are your views on this?

4. Do you use any of these social media and digital tools? *(multi-choice responses - checkboxes)*

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viber | <input type="checkbox"/> FlickrR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whatsapp | <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specific) _____ | |

5. If you have a social media account, in Twitter or Facebook, what do you use it for? *(1 choice only)*

- Work
- Personal
- Both Work and Personal
- I don't have a social media account

6. Depending on the nature of your work, what issues do you use social media to address? *(multiple choices – checkboxes)*

- Promote public and regional diplomacy
- Update on events and meetings I attended
- Voice concerns over issues of climate change

7. Do you think social media should be used for digital diplomacy? *(1 choice only)*

- Yes
 - No
- State reason for your choice above: _____

8. As a leader, what are your thoughts on digital diplomacy or using ICT and the social media on the Internet to conduct diplomatic activities?

Digital Diplomacy as a foreign policy statecraft to achieving regional cooperation and integration in the Polynesian Leaders Group.

9. Many leaders around the world have used Social Media for diplomacy, such as Twimplomacy and Selfie Diplomacy, what are your thoughts on this:

10. In order to reach the wider public, should social media be used by leaders to issue an executive decision on issues of national, regional and global interest?

- Yes
- No

Please state reasons why:

-----END OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE-----

APPENDIX 3

(typed copy of original)

PLG EYES ONLY

PLG (18) LS.1

EIGHTH POLYNESIAN LEADERS GROUP SUMMIT

Talimalie II Falekaupule
Fakaifou, Funafuti, TUVALU
Thursday, 28 June 2018

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

9.00am

1. Official Opening

Prayer

Handing over of Chair

Key Opening Address by His Excellency Sir Iakoba Taeia Italeli

Agenda Items

2. Adoption of Provisional Agenda and Working Procedures
3. Appointment of New Members to PLG – Aotearoa New Zealand, Hawaii and Rapanui
4. Draft PLG Charter
5. Update on PLG Secretariat
6. Sustainable Development Goals and PLG
7. Climate Change and Oceans
8. Tourism and Regional Aviation
9. Connectivity, Infrastructure, Innovations, ICT and Transport
10. Appointment of American Samoa as Chair for the 9th PLG Summit, 2019 and deliberation on venue for the 9th PLG Summit.
11. Other Matters

Summit Concludes