The Essence of Diplomacy

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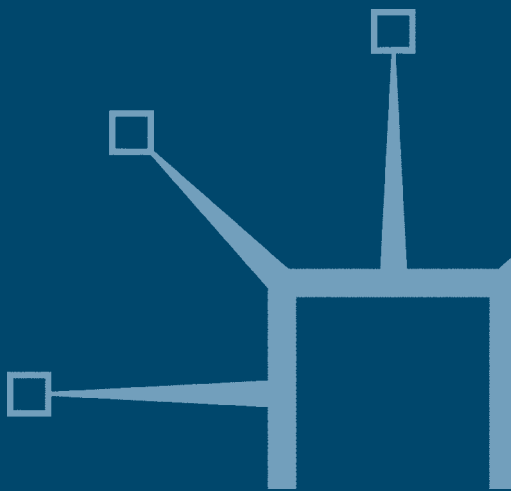
Essence of Diplomacy

Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall



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Essence of Diplomacy

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Acknowledgments

This book is the result of the collaborative efforts of two co-authors with similar yet differing backgrounds in international relations. Jönsson, the senior co-author, has long experience of research in the fields of international negotiation and cooperation. Hall, in his dissertation and postdoctoral publications, has drawn on historical sociology and International Relations theory. As we hope to demonstrate, these perspectives can be complementary and cross-fertilizing when theorizing diplomacy.

We arrived at the idea of a joint research project on diplomacy via different routes. In 1996, Jönsson was invited by Raymond Cohen to participate in a conference at Bellagio, Italy, on diplomacy in the Ancient Near East, as manifested in the so-called Amarna Letters. The stimulating discussions at the conference, which brought together experts in ancient history and specialists in contemporary diplomacy and international negotiations, served as an eye-opener, as far as the timeless features of diplomacy are concerned. In connection with his assignment to write a chapter on diplomacy and international negotiation for the *Handbook of International Relations* (published in 2002), Jönsson delved deeper into the literature on diplomacy and found it wanting in terms of theory building. Hall, having reviewed research within the historical sociology of international relations, found the inadequate treatment of international institutions a missing link in this rich and fertile field.

Our joint project was initiated in 2001, thanks to a generous grant from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. We are extremely grateful to the Foundation and its staff for their unrelenting support of, and trust in, our undertaking. In the course of our project we have incurred many debts. We want to acknowledge the useful feedback we have received from students, at Lund University, at Fudan University, Shanghai, at Rutgers University, Newark, and at a joint Lund–University of California summer school in 2004, who were exposed to, and encouraged to discuss, our ideas. Several colleagues at home and abroad have commented on our drafts at seminars and conferences. While unable to name all, we want to extend our gratitude to Yale Ferguson, Richard Langhorne, Maria Strömvik and Torsten Örn for their particularly helpful input and constructive criticism.

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Chapter 4 in this book is a substantially revised and expanded version of our article "Communication: An Essential Aspect of Diplomacy", published in *International Studies Perspective*, 4 (2003). We are indebted to the International Studies Association for granting permission to reproduce the text. We also want to thank Paul Sharp and Donna Lee, the co-editors of the Palgrave Studies in Diplomacy series, for their unfailing support and encouragement in bringing our manuscript to publication, as well as the staff at Palgrave Macmillan for their advice and support in the production of the book.

Our co-authored volume is the fruit of an intense exchange of ideas over several years. We share responsibility for the book in its entirety, including remaining errors. In our text, we hope to be able to convey to the reader some of the joy we have experienced in working on this project together.

Preface

It seems very difficult to theorize about diplomacy. Those of a historical bent will suggest that there is nothing new to say in these terms, while practitioners may doubt the utility of theorizing in general. As a result, and as Jönnson and Hall note, the study of diplomacy has been marginalized within International Relations (IR). Given diplomacy's importance to what goes on, in the world, and an understanding of it, this marginalization has been a surprising, bordering on scandalous, state of affairs.

Scholars of International Relations, therefore, owe a great debt to Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall. In providing us with Essence of Diplomacy, they have produced a path-breaking work which employs the best of the sociological theory which is at long-last percolating into mainstream academic IR to demonstrate diplomacy's importance. So long as the human condition is governed by pluralist, rather than solidarist, conceptions of who we are and how we live, then relations between separate groups will remain. These relations must involve communication, representation and reproduction. The modalities of these three elements may change over time and by place. In themselves, however, they are the essential elements of diplomacy and point to the way in which diplomacy, itself, is an essential element in international relations.

After this book, practitioners and historians will no longer be able to ignore the benefits, at least, of international theorizing, and IR scholars will no longer be able to ignore diplomacy's centrality to nearly everything in which they are interested. Indeed, a rich research agenda of empirical studies is now needed to explore the full implications of Jönsson and Hall's argument.

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Introduction

Diplomacy has been characterized as "the master-institution"[1] or, more prosaically, as "the engine room" of international relations.[2] Yet diplomacy has received surprisingly little attention among political scientists specializing in international relations. Indeed, diplomacy has been "particularly resistant to theory."[3]

> Diplomacy "exists" within international theory, but is rarely analysed or extensively explored. In addition, the conceptual wealth of the literature on diplomacy is quite limited and, to a great degree, divorced from the development of political theory.[4]

Theoreticians have viewed the literature on diplomacy as "redundant and anecdotal."[5] Abba Eban speaks of "an intrinsic antagonism" separating theoreticians from practitioners, and argues that there are few fields "in which the tension between theory and practice is more acute than in diplomacy."[6] There is a simple reason for this:

> No area of world politics has reflected a greater gap between experience and theory than diplomatic statecraft. The reason is that those who explicitly study such statecraft have not been theoretically oriented, while those who emphasize theory have not focused upon diplomacy.[7]

Moreover, in the Cold War era, during which theorizing in international relations (IR) flourished, the threat of force, rather than diplomacy, was seen as the essential foundation of a viable foreign policy.[8] "Cheap talk" was contrasted with decisive action using military hardware.[9]

It has been argued that IR theory and diplomacy alike suffer from this lack of linkage between theory and practice. Diplomacy has been called

"the missing link" in the study of international relations.[10] Eban argues that "one of the handicaps of diplomacy is that … it is not yet plugged in to any recognized science."[11] John Burton expands on that idea:

> Diplomacy is a profession, and like the medical and other professions, it has a status that reflects the ignorance of those outside it of the knowledge and skills required to practice it. … Other professions have an input from science: professional diplomacy has traditionally been learned by practicing the art, by apprenticeship. There has been no new input from any science.[12]

Another feature of the literature on diplomacy contributes to diminishing its usefulness for theory-building: it is seldom based on value-free and detached observations but is frequently emotion-laden and opinionated. Diplomacy is either perceived as something good to be defended or something evil to be pilloried. There is a gulf between Ernest Satow's classic characterization of diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states,"[13] and eighteenth-century French writer Le Trosne's description of diplomacy as "an obscure art which hides itself in the folds of deceit, which fears to let itself be seen and believes that it can exist only in the darkness of mystery."[14] The secret diplomacy that was generally perceived to be a factor in the outbreak of The First World War was condemned in even harsher terms: "what we now know as diplomacy is nothing more than a convicted fraud, a swindler of mankind, and a traitorous assassin of the morality and progress of the human race."[15]

A more recent value-laden discussion concerns the alleged decline of diplomacy, the notion that diplomacy is not only politically harmful but also "technologically redundant."[16] The decline or crisis of diplomacy has become "a well rehearsed proposition."[17] Diplomacy is sometimes suggested as a candidate for the endangered species list,[18] and Zbigniew Brzezinski's quip in 1970 to the effect that if foreign ministries and embassies "did not already exist, they surely would not have to be invented," is frequently quoted.[19] Other observers, on the other hand, argue that "contemporary diplomacy shows every sign of adapting vigorously to new conditions and participants."[20]

The purpose of this book is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Theorizing diplomacy, we want to raise the fundamental question: What are some essential dimensions, or timeless features, of diplomacy? In other words, we put more emphasis on continuity than

change; or, more accurately, we want to uncover those timeless parameters, within which change occurs in a long-term historical perspective. In the process, we want to make IR theory relevant to diplomacy, and diplomacy relevant to IR theory. While exploring a number of essential dimensions, we have no pretensions to develop a full-fledged theory of diplomacy; our endeavor is perhaps best characterized as pre-theoretical groundwork.

To avoid misunderstandings, two points of departure in our theorizing effort need to be emphasized from the very outset. First, contrary to many observers and commentators, we do not see diplomacy as an institution of the modern state system, originating in fifteenth-century Italy. In our view, diplomacy is a perennial international institution that "expresses a human condition that precedes and transcends the experience of living in the sovereign, territorial states of the past few hundred years."[21] In other words, we regard diplomacy as a timeless, existential phenomenon and want to explore whether its varying forms throughout history may be subsumed under some generic, essential categories.

Second, when we claim that diplomacy has been resistant to theory, we need to make one important reservation. Negotiation is generally regarded as the key instrument of, and sometimes even equated with, diplomacy. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, defines diplomacy as "the conduct of international relations by negotiation." And the study of international negotiation has since the 1960s developed into a vital and productive subfield of IR research with advanced efforts at generalizations and theory-building.[22] Our theorizing effort, with its principal focus on diplomacy as an institution rather than diplomatic method, will not contribute to this rich body of literature. Yet we will draw on insights from negotiation theory in our discussion of communication as an essential dimension of diplomacy in Chapter 4.

"There is nothing as practical as a good theory" is an often-used quote, attributed to the German psychologist Kurt Lewin. In fact, all human perception is theory-driven, insofar as we all process information through preexisting "knowledge structures" or preconceptions. The main difference between scientific and intuitive theories is that the former are explicit and open to scrutiny, whereas the latter are implicit and lie below the level of awareness. The title of our book is an intended paraphrase of the well-known modern classic *Essence of Decision*, in which Graham Allison demonstrated that our conceptual models or lenses serve like floodlights that illuminate one part of the stage but, by the same token, leave other parts in the shade or in the dark. Moreover,

Allison argued, using a different metaphor, "conceptual models not only fix the mesh of the nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action; they also direct him to cast his nets in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish he is after."[23]

We share Allison's view of theories as instruments for processing the raw material of knowledge – selecting, categorizing, ordering, simplifying and integrating – that sensitize us to certain aspects of a problem and some sets of data, while blinding or desensitizing us to others. The principal difference between Allison's study of the Cuban missile crisis and our effort at theorizing diplomacy is that he contrasted three more or less established models of political decision-making, whereas we lack a commonly accepted set of conceptual lenses to apply to diplomacy.

It should be noted that the title of our book, like Allison's, lacks the definite article. We do not claim to uncover "the" essence of diplomacy. Nor do we belong to any kind of essentialist school of thought, maintaining that "some objects – no matter how described – have essences; that is, they have, essentially or necessarily, certain properties, without which they could not exist or be the things they are."[24] Rather, we want to propose a number of essential or constitutive dimensions of diplomacy, within which historically contingent change may occur. Just as Allison explored three alternative conceptual models (rational actor, organizational process and governmental politics), so we end up with three essential dimensions of diplomacy: communication, representation and reproduction of international society. However, the similarity in the number of conceptual building blocks is the result of coincidence rather than design. And, unlike Allison's, our three conceptual tools are constitutive rather than explanatory.

Our book is organized as follows. As a backdrop to our own contribution to theory-building, we will, in Chapter 1, give a brief characterization of the extant literature on diplomacy and address the question of why diplomacy has been marginalized in IR theory. On the basis of this background sketch, we formulate our own theoretical, conceptual and methodological points of departure in Chapter 2. More specifically, we develop our view of diplomacy as an international institution, propose that diplomacy can be analyzed as the mediation of universalism and particularism, and introduce the three essential dimensions of diplomacy that will be elaborated in subsequent individual chapters. In Chapter 3, we discuss processes of institutionalization and ritualization, as applied to diplomacy. Distinguishing three different levels of institutionalization, we examine institutionalization-cum-ritualization processes at the

symbolic and cognitive level; reciprocity, precedence and diplomatic immunity at the level of rules; and diplomatic ranks at the level of organization.

Chapter 4 is devoted to communication, the first of the three essential, timeless dimensions of diplomacy. After discussing the significance of language to diplomacy, we outline the basic aspects of diplomatic communication: the gathering and transmission of information as well as negotiations, processes of back-and-forth communication. We identify two important options in the diplomatic repertoire – verbal vs. non-verbal communication, and private vs. public communication – and focus on technological developments as vehicles of change in diplomatic communication.

Chapter 5 deals with diplomatic representation, drawing on analyses of representation in various other contexts. The chapter is organized around the basic distinction between representation as behavior ("acting for others") and as status ("standing for others"). As far as behavior is concerned, the question is whether diplomats as representatives have an "imperative mandate" or a "free mandate," whether they are bound by instructions or are free to act as they see fit in pursuit of their principals' interests. Standing for others implies either the embodiment of the diplomats' principals or symbolic representation.

In Chapter 6 we analyze the role of diplomacy in reproducing a certain type of international society, exercised primarily through the instrument of diplomatic recognition. Contrasting the exclusive recognition practices of the Ancient Near East with the inclusive recognition practices of Ancient Greece, we look at the mixed pattern of the Middle Ages and the modern exclusive recognition pattern, issuing in a homogeneous society of sovereign states.

Finally, in Chapter 7, we raise the question of what happens to diplomacy in times of flux, when new types of polities challenge existing ones, around which diplomatic norms, rules and practices have been built, and when a different combination of universalism and particularism becomes a possibility. We examine three eras of more or less successful transformations in the nature of polities: the panhellenist project of Philip II of Macedonia and Alexander the Great as an alternative to the Greek city-states, the medieval struggle between religious and secular loci of authority, and the recent emergence of the European Union as an international actor.

Our book is addressed to students of international relations and specialists on diplomacy alike. We realize that some of the sections discussing IR theory may alienate diplomacy experts, at the same time

as readers from the IR community may find the multitude of examples redundant, once our main points have been made. In either case, we recommend selective reading. We hope that our main arguments will come across without unrestrained attention to our careful anchoring in IR theory, in the first case, and our effort to adduce examples from many different historical eras, in the latter case.

1
The Study of Diplomacy

The lack of theoretical interest in diplomacy, alluded to in the Introduction, does not imply any dearth of literature on the subject. On the contrary, there is an abundance of narratives of various kinds dealing with diplomacy. Before setting out on our own theorizing effort, we therefore need to give a brief account of the existing literature and ask ourselves what can be learned from it. The second question we address in this chapter concerns the causes of the relative lack of theorizing of diplomacy and its marginalization in IR theory.

Extant studies

The bulk of the vast literature on diplomacy has been written either by practitioners or diplomatic historians. Neither category of authors has been particularly interested in theory-building. Practitioners have tended to be anecdotal rather than systematic, and diplomatic historians idiographic rather than nomothetic.[1] "The defining characteristic of historians may not be their dedication to the past in general, but their immersion in a *particular* past."[2] Similarly, practitioners have drawn on their own *particular* experiences. Neither practitioners nor diplomatic historians have been prone to regard different historical experiences and insights as comparable or detached from their "temporal moorings."[3]

Practitioners' insights

In works written by diplomats or scholars-cum-practitioners there is a clear *prescriptive* bent. What characterizes the good diplomat? How should diplomacy best be conducted? These are questions occupying authors from antiquity to today. The Ancient Indian treatise on statesmanship, *Arthasastra*, written by Kautilya in the fourth century BC, offers

detailed advice concerning the conduct of diplomacy.[4] In 1436 Bernard du Rosier, provost of Toulouse, wrote the first European textbook of diplomatic practice, entitled *Short Treatise About Ambassadors*.[5] The development of a diplomatic system based on resident ambassadors in Renaissance Italy saw the production of hundreds of similar works over the next few centuries. For instance, in 1620 the Spanish scholar, courtier and diplomat Don Juan Antonio De Vera published *El Embajador*. It was translated into French (where its title became *Le parfait ambassadeur*) and Italian, and was read thoroughly by most aspiring diplomats throughout the next century.[6] In *L'Ambassadeur et ses fonctions*, the Dutch diplomat and purveyor of political intelligence Abraham de Wicquefort criticized De Vera. First published in 1681, it was translated into English in 1716 as *The Embassador and His Functions*.[7] François de Callières published his *De la manière de négocier avec les souverains* in 1716. Along with Wicquefort's book, it became one of the standard references on diplomatic practice throughout the eighteenth century.[8] Callières' book was hailed as "a mine of political wisdom" in Ernest Satow's *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, which was first published in 1917 and has since appeared in several revised editions. Harold Nicolson's *Diplomacy* (1939) and *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (1954) join Satow's encyclopedic work as modern-day classics.[9]

In this long tradition of prescriptive tracts one can find similar but rather vacuous advice; "the striking thing is how little over the centuries the recommendations have changed."[10] Garrett Mattingly, writing in the 1950s, comments on the continuity from Bernard du Rosier to his own time:

> Translated from the clichés of the fifteenth century to those of the twentieth, what Rosier has to say might have been said by Andrew D. White, or Jules Jusserand or Harold Nicolson. Students in foreign service schools in Rome and Paris, London and Washington are reading in their textbooks much of the same generalities at this moment.[11]

In short, what these practitioners have written does not amount to anything we might label diplomatic theory, even if this is the term that is often used when referring to their works.[12] In addition to the prescriptive bent of this literature, modern-day ambassadorial memoirs tend to emphasize and exaggerate the profound changes that their authors claim to have experienced in their time of service, while overlooking elements of continuity. "The world perceived by a diplomat at the end of his career is bound to seem a very different place from that

which he knew, or thought he knew, when as an attaché or junior clerk he transcribed and translated the correspondence of his elders."[13]

In sum, diplomats have been prolific writers. Many have had scholarly ambitions and credentials. Diplomats have reflected on their own practice to an extent that few other professions can match. Much of this literature is in the form of memoirs. These, together with the succession of diplomatic manuals, while often prescriptive and value-laden, contain a wealth of useful information in need of systematization. To link this literature with IR theory is one of the tasks we undertake in this book.

Diplomatic history

Diplomatic history is an old subdiscipline. Having amassed a wealth of information about specific eras or incidents from antiquity onwards, diplomatic historians have failed to forge any strong links with IR theorists. Although diplomatic history and international relations have been characterized as "brothers under the skin,"[14] academic parochialism as well as stereotypical and caricatured readings of one another's subfield have hampered interdisciplinary cross-fertilization. Witness, for example, the lament of one diplomatic historian:

> Those with a strong theoretical bent consigned historians to the role of the hewers-of-wood and the drawers-of-water in their world of international relations theory. The historians were to toil in the archives, constructing detailed case studies on which social scientists were to raise grand explanatory structures that would account for enduring patterns in international relations and that would command the respect of policymakers.[15]

Whereas IR theorists have considered their historian colleagues atheoretical, diplomatic historians have accused IR theorists of being "illusionists rather than scientists because they rig the course before they roll the ball."[16] Obviously, both sides share the blame for the lack of cross-fertilization.

> Political scientists often accuse their historian colleagues of simply "scratching around" and lacking any rigorous methodology at all, failing to be concerned with contemporary problems, and being "mere chroniclers" of an "embalmed past." Historians, not to be outdone, frequently criticize the theorists for erecting artificial models *ex nihilo*, creating smoke screens of jargon, and becoming infatuated with computer paraphernalia instead of human beings. The conflicting

> opinions and rancor in this dispute only encourages scholars to emphasize their differences rather than their similarities and thus to go their separate ways in isolation.[17]

Yet the need for a cross-disciplinary dialogue is obvious. We agree with Jack Levy's conclusion that historians and political scientists need to learn from each other:

> The worst abuse of each discipline is to ignore the other. History is too important to leave to the historians, and theory is too important to leave to the theorists.[18]

Just as specialists on diplomacy do not figure centrally in IR, so traditional diplomatic historians are becoming marginalized within the history discipline: "the study of diplomatic history has been doubly marginalized in the discipline of history – first by the movement toward the study of different issues, especially issues involving the dispossessed rather than elites, and second by the epistemological shift that has made the careful amassing of documentary evidence, one of the hallmarks of diplomatic history, less and less consequential."[19]

Sharing both an interest in a common subject matter and the experience of marginalization, students of diplomacy, regardless of disciplinary background, ought to draw on each other's accomplishments. While avoiding stereotypical views of diplomatic historians as "hewers-of-wood and drawers-of-water," we will build on their work. As our story, unlike those of diplomatic historians, will not be told chronologically, we might at this juncture delineate the major epochs of diplomacy, chronicled by diplomatic historians, that will constitute our empirical foundation.

The first historical records of organized polities exchanging envoys date back to the third millennium BC, to the cuneiform civilizations of Mesopotamia. The excavated diplomatic archive of the king of Mari on the Euphrates contains letters from other rulers in the early second millennium BC,[20] and diplomatic records of the Egyptian and Hittite empires include correspondence and treaties among kings. The Amarna Letters, a remarkable cache of diplomatic documents found at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt in 1887, reveal intensive and sophisticated relations among the polities of the Ancient Near East in the fourteenth-century BC.[21] The Hittite treaties of the thirteenth-century BC constitute another valuable source.[22] The Ancient Near East, in short, is the earliest well-documented epoch of diplomacy.

During the first millennium BC, China, India and the Greek city-states developed complex patterns of communication and diplomatic practices. They all displayed a pattern of a number of roughly equal independent polities and a shared linguistic and cultural infrastructure.[23] In contrast to the Greek city-states, however, both the Indian and Chinese systems looked back to an idealized empire uniting all the fragmented territories.[24]

In view of its organization and longevity, the Roman Empire contributed surprisingly little to the development of diplomacy; "in seeking to impose their will, rather than to negotiate on a basis of reciprocity, the Romans did not develop a diplomatic method, valuable enough to figure among the many gifts that they bequeathed to posterity."[25] It is symptomatic that no major works on diplomatic method have survived from the Roman period, whereas there are many about military matters.[26] "Rome did not use diplomacy, as Byzantium was to do, as a means of maintaining its supremacy, but as a means of transacting often very humdrum business, and this may be why it was the methods of managing long-distance legal or commercial business principally within the Empire which were to constitute its more important legacy."[27]

Byzantine diplomacy had a more lasting impact. In its efforts to avoid war, Byzantium used a broad range of methods, including bribery, flattery, intelligence-gathering, misinformation and ceremonial manifestations of its superiority. By repeatedly saving the empire from invasion and by attracting many pagan peoples into the orbit of Graeco–Roman civilization and Christendom, Byzantine diplomacy was extremely successful. As a result of the close relationship between Byzantium and Venice, Byzantine diplomatic traditions were passed on to the West.[28]

Renaissance Italy is generally considered the birthplace of the modern system of diplomacy. The most important innovation was the introduction of permanent embassies and resident ambassadors. In the sixteenth century, the diplomatic techniques and ideas that emerged in northern Italy – with medieval as well as Byzantine origins – spread across the conflict-prone European continent, as sovereigns found the use of complex diplomacy essential to their statecraft.[29]

"Classic" diplomacy was advanced by the French in particular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was characterized by elaborate ceremonial, secrecy and gradual professionalization. The concern about gathering and protecting information in combination with the established practice of conducting negotiations in secret tended to foster excessive secretiveness. In the wake of the First World War, the secretiveness of the "classic" or "old" diplomacy came under heavy criticism, and the

entire diplomatic system was held responsible for the failure to prevent the outbreak of war. Demands for a "new" diplomacy became widespread, as epitomized in US President Woodrow Wilson's call for "open covenants, openly arrived at." Since then the "newness" and possible "decline" of modern diplomacy have been prominent themes among observers.[30]

Building blocks

To these two categories of works on diplomacy – practitioners' insights and diplomatic history – may be added a third: anthropological and ethnological studies of diplomacy among less differentiated societies. Ragnar Numelin's inquiry into "the general human and social groundwork of diplomatic relations" is an ambitious early effort in this category by a diplomat-cum-scholar.[31] More recent works deal with such specific topics as diplomacy among American Indians[32] and in precolonial Africa.[33] Generally more descriptive than analytical or theoretical, contributions to this genre tend to be of only marginal value to our undertaking.

Of course, we also need to add the relatively few, yet quite valuable systematic studies of diplomacy that do exist within the field of international relations.[34] We will discuss some of them in Chapter 2, and draw on them throughout our undertaking.

In sum, there is a voluminous but treacherous literature on diplomacy. It is this goldmine or minefield – depending on which aspect you want to emphasize – we will enter in search of essential aspects of diplomacy. The work of practitioners is helpful in bringing "specific, firsthand experience to bear on what has been viewed as a remote, nebulous, hard-to-describe process."[35] We will also heed Smith Simpson's call for "politico-historical studies pointing out the similarities and differences between past and current diplomatic situations," which he sees as "one of the resources urgently needed for a realistic understanding of diplomacy."[36] Moreover, in our efforts to theorize an under-theorized field, we will draw on insights from other fields that we believe to be applicable to diplomacy. We will borrow ideas and concepts from the theoretical literature on representation, ritual, communication and, not least, institutions and institutionalization.

Why is diplomacy marginalized in international relations?

The relatively few specialized academic studies of diplomacy that exist have tended to be "marginal to and almost disconnected from" the rest

of IR scholarship.[37] The root of the marginalization of diplomacy in IR theory can be found in the *bottom-up conceptualization of political space*, in which anything "international" emanates from autonomous states. In the words of Janice Thomson

> international relations theory views global politics from the bottom up. That is, we begin with the story, as told by social contractarians, of how domestic "society" was created out of the state of nature, and then theorize about what happens when these separate, self-contained "societies" interact with each other.[38]

When these self-contained societies met, according to the IR canon, a process of selection for a particular type of political formation – the sovereign state – commenced, and political space became divided into two spheres: one hierarchical and one anarchical. Hierarchical political space is characterized by functional differentiation and specialization, and is populated by well-defined institutions and organizations, creating a substantial degree of order. Anarchical political space, by contrast, is characterized by struggle and the imperatives of self-help. In addressing these imperatives states have, fundamentally, two tools: warfare and diplomacy. It is important to note that warfare and diplomacy, in this account, are tools. They are not phenomena constitutive of the international system. Indeed, anarchical political space is void of any order, except certain mechanisms and "imperatives" emanating from the anarchical structure (balance of power, self-help). It is, in a sense, a between-space, utterly lacking autonomy from its constitutive units. This fundamental logic informs system-level theories as well, such as neorealism and world-system theory.

Moreover, most IR theories tend to be *substantialist* rather than *relationalist*. Relational thinking is not new – it can be traced back to Heraclitus – but it gained influence only with the rise of new approaches in the sciences, in particular Einstein's theory of relativity. While sociology exhibits a significant body of relational research,[39] the IR community has yet to draw on this tradition in earnest.[40] While IR scholars have been preoccupied with questions of "material versus ideal," "structure versus agency," "individual versus society," or other dualisms, the key question, according to Mustafa Emirbayer, is rather "the choice between substantialism and relationalism."[41]

Substantialism comes in two major versions: self-action theories and interaction theories.[42] They have in common the premise that it is substances, or things, that constitute the units of social inquiry. In the

self-action version – fundamental to liberal political theory and reflected, for instance, in methodological individualism – acting subjects, whose interests and/or identities are pre-given, generate their own actions in confrontation with an environment. What kind of logic or rationality they follow is a second-order issue; what matters is that they act autonomously. Reified entities, such as states, societies, classes, ethnicities and cultures, can be self-propelled agents as well in the substantialist tradition.

On the face of it, the interaction version of substantialism may resemble relationalism. Action takes place among entities, rather than being generated by them. Here, however, actors are "fixed entities with variable attributes" and look rather like "billiard balls."[43] Thus, it is the various attributes – variables – that do the acting. A change in a variable will lead to a different outcome, but the entity in possession of the variable will not have changed essentially. While the interaction version of substantialism creates an illusion of agency, "entities are reduced to locations in which or between which variables can interact."[44] With substantialism, then, the units in differentiated political space become things or substances. And since there is no substance between units, this theoretical political space cannot contain things, only mechanisms or, in positivism, nothing at all. Diplomacy, therefore, must be an attribute of states in this perspective.

Relationalism takes a radically different point of departure: "Relational subjects are not related to each other in the weak sense of being only empirically contiguous; they are ontologically related such that an identity can only be deciphered by virtue of its 'place' in relationship to other identities in its web."[45] This is the underlying premise of much recent work in historical sociology. Thus, Anthony Giddens argues that international relations "are not connections set up between pre-established states, which could maintain their sovereign power without them: they are the basis upon which the nation-state exists at all."[46] Similarly, according to Charles Tilly, "individuals, groups, and social systems are contingent, changing social products of interaction."[47] And Michael Mann regards societies as "constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power."[48]

Relationalism is compatible, and usually coupled, with processualism,[49] which views "relations between terms and units as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances."[50] Indeed, Norbert Elias, who is regarded as a pioneer in bringing relationalism and processualism into the social sciences, made every effort to avoid reification in his research. Thus, he

would speak of "rationalization," "modernization," "bureaucratization" and so on, rather than rationality, modernity and bureaucracy.[51]

A relational and processual approach reinforces the top-down view of political space as essentially one, rendering "modes of differentiation … the pivot in the epochal study of rule."[52] Diplomacy, in this perspective, is about processes and relationships that contribute to the differentiation of political space. As such, it seems in need of an active verb form along the same line as Elias's reformulations. Yet no such word as "diplomatize" exists in any lexicon.

With this distinction between substantialism and relationalism in mind, let us now turn to three theoretical traditions that are commonly singled out as the chief variants of mainstream IR – realism, liberalism and structuralism – and see to what extent, and how, they deal with diplomacy.

Realism and diplomacy

The fundamental tenet of classic realism is that international relations are a thing apart, differentiated from domestic politics by the absence of authority. International political processes can therefore be characterized as struggles with two available mechanisms: war and diplomacy. According to Hans Morgenthau, for instance,

> the conduct of a nation's foreign affairs by its diplomats is for national power in peace what military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war. It is the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly.[53]

Morgenthau devoted two chapters and a crucial section of his *Politics Among Nations* to diplomacy. These constitute, in a sympathetic interpretation, a pre-theory of diplomacy. In this pre-theory diplomacy has four tasks: to define its goals with a view to the power available for the pursuit of these goals; to assess the goals and powers of other nations; to determine the level of compatibility of these different goals and pursue the goals with the appropriate means.[54] Diplomacy is the only defense against war – which is not seen as an anomaly – since to fail in any of these four tasks may mean to "jeopardize the success of foreign policy and with it the peace of the world."[55]

For Morgenthau, then, diplomacy is not constitutive of international relations. Its theoretical status is that of an asset – like a strong fleet or

nuclear capacity. It is something an actor possesses, as it were. The other side of this, of course, is that an actor must also be able to do without diplomacy. In this book we will argue against this view of diplomacy. As it is not seen as constitutive of international relations, diplomacy gets limited attention in Morgenthau's realism. Thus, it does not figure among his six principles of realism; it is merely a technique, alongside war, for dealing with the consequences of the second principle – that international politics is about "interest defined in terms of power."[56]

Nor do other realists elaborate diplomacy. Raymond Aron, for instance, claims:

> The commerce of nations is continuous; diplomacy and war are only complementary modalities, one or the other dominating in turn, without one ever entirely giving way to the other except in the extreme case either of absolute hostility, or of absolute friendship or total federation.[57]

He does not develop this point further. Aron might possibly be interpreted as suggesting that diplomacy and war are constitutive of international relations. In other words, while Morgenthau viewed war and diplomacy as alternative means in the struggle that is international relations, Aron seems to argue that this struggle takes two different expressions, neither excluding the other.

Robert Gilpin, in his *War and Change in World Politics*, states clearly his substantialist approach, as well as his view on diplomacy:

> the process of international political change is generally an evolutionary process in which continual adjustments are made to accommodate the shifting interests and power relations of groups and states. This gradual evolution of the international system is characterized by bargaining, coercive diplomacy, and warfare over specific and relatively narrowly defined interests.[58]

This argument, which may represent classical realism more generally, shows clearly why realism has not theorized diplomacy. Groups and states remain, but there may be changes in specific interests and power positions. Various tools are available in the pursuit or defense of these interests, and international change is a reflection of the deployment of these tools. What needs to be theorized is not the tools but those who are in possession of the tools – states (and indeed, realism has spent considerable energy on theorizing the state). If Gilpin does not provide

a foundation upon which to theorize diplomacy, a relationist rewriting of his quote might read something like this: "Processes of bargaining, diplomacy, and warfare resulted in the crystallization of relations into temporary polities formed around specific interests generated by these processes. The dynamism of the processes entailed shifting interests and power that, in turn, changed relations and their crystallizations."

Neorealism, with its fondness for systemic-level theorizing, might be expected to pay more attention to diplomacy. Yet, it has only marginalized diplomacy further. To an even greater extent than classic realism, neorealism emphasizes the duality of political space, the vacuous "between-space," and the invariable essence of the state. In many ways, neorealism is exemplary of the interactionist version of substantialism. Units are like billiard balls, but some attributes or variables (relative power) vary. These variations motivate and explain behavior (war, balancing and bandwagoning) as well as system-level outcomes (polarity). Although Kenneth Waltz, the father of neorealism, does acknowledge the power of socialization – which could be interpreted as a relationalist opening – he does not conceive of any socializing agents beyond the state. Socialization and competition, the two ways in which structures affect agents in neorealism, are seen to work through a demonstration effect.[59] In other words, units interpret the environment they find themselves in and choose appropriate behavior, or do not survive. The "socializer," then, is the unit itself and not a processual relation. Again, there is no need to theorize diplomacy.

Liberalism and diplomacy

In view of its emphasis on cooperation and peaceful relations, liberalism would seem likelier to have developed a theory of diplomacy. Instead, however, liberals tend to proceed from methodological individualism and conceptualize international relations as the sum total of state or actor behavior. State behavior, in turn, is seen to be shaped by state–society relations.[60] Hence, liberals have come to analyze international politics in terms of preferences of various groups, and the institutionalization of patterns of preferences. Diplomacy, therefore, "takes place within a context of international rules, institutions, and practices, which affect the incentives of the actors."[61] Again, diplomacy does not belong to the core matter of international relations, but is merely a tool for acting on incentives, and is therefore not a prioritized object of theoretical development.

The fact that liberalism is premised on a cobweb, rather than a billiard ball, metaphor of international relations, emphasizing the interdependence of states, does not alter its basic ontological and epistemological

assumptions, or its research focus. If anything, the cobweb model of international relations marginalizes diplomacy even further than variants of realisms by assuming a complex structure, involving a number of different units with particular and competing interests. The crucial focus for liberals, therefore, becomes the game surrounding these interests. Also as an empirical phenomenon, diplomacy is thus removed from the field of interest. For instance, Joseph Nye notes that one of the benefits of international regimes is that they "facilitate diplomacy by helping great powers keep multiple and varied interests from getting in each other's way."[62] Richard Rosecrance juxtaposes two types of international systems: the territorial system and the trading system. The two systems function according to different logics, but diplomacy is of interest in neither since both systems – as in all bottom-up theory – are determined by the character and interests of the constituent states.[63]

A good illustration of liberalism's relative lack of interest in diplomacy is the literature on democratic peace. While liberal explanations for democratic peace differ greatly among themselves, they all follow the same logic of regarding democracy as a state attribute explaining peace, either because of factors internal to each democratic state, or because of the way democracies relate to each other – in terms of trust, expectations, shared norms, economic interdependence and so on. Diplomacy, consequently, becomes a mere channel of communication, and the liberal research focus is directed at more crucial explanatory factors.

Structuralism and diplomacy

The third of the three traditionally dominant IR theories – structuralism or Marxism – is premised on relationalism to a greater extent. Political space is conceptualized as relations among centers of accumulation and production, and it is these relations that determine the characteristics and dynamics of the units. Three schools of thought figure prominently in structuralist or Marxist studies of international relations: World System Theory,[64] Gramscian IR[65] and New Marxism.[66] Not surprisingly, diplomacy is not even a significant modality in international relations as conceptualized by World System Theory or New Marxism, since politics cannot be anything but an epiphenomenon to relations of production[67] or accumulation.[68]

> Any theory of international relations therefore needs to begin by grasping the historical uniqueness of both sovereignty and anarchy as social forms arising out of the distinctive configuration of social relations which Marx called the capitalist mode of production and

> reproduction of social life. Only then will it be able to see its object for what it is: a set of social relations between people.[69]

While the major part of this argument is sympathetic to a theoretical development of diplomacy, the designation of the "capitalist mode of production and reproduction of social life" as the prime mover – indeed the only mover – forecloses the issue.

It is somewhat surprising that Gramscian IR has given diplomacy such short shrift. A crucial component in Gramscian IR theory is that hegemony is dependent on a certain degree of consensus, or consent, among non-hegemonic states.[70] However, it is not diplomacy that fosters this consent, but the commonality of interest within a transnational capitalist class. The sociological study of the machinations between and within classes is thus substituted for the political study of diplomacy among political formations.

In short, the problem with Marxism – as far as the theoretical development of diplomacy is concerned – is the lack of autonomous political space, either unitary or bifurcated. Space, instead, is economic or socioeconomic.

The turn to history and the return of diplomacy? The English school, constructivism and postmodernism

Many IR scholars, like other social scientists, have increasingly turned to history in order to generate new theory. Scholars who belong to theoretical traditions that take history seriously tend to problematize political space, employ relationalist and processualist perspectives explicitly or implicitly, and include diplomacy in their *theoretical* agendas. The dividing issue between the IR approaches discussed above and those included in this section is

> whether theory is to start from given states (as choice-making individuals) and see what systemic patterns and specific arrangements can be explained from features of their set-up and possibly internal characteristics, or to study how these units are produced by something that can variably be called practices, discourses, institutions or structuration.[71]

The English school (ES), constructivism and postmodernism can be seen as "conceptual jailbreaks"[72] from traditional IR: they avoid the

conceptual baggage of substantialism and, more or less successfully, proceed from relationalist and/or processualist premises.

There is today a revived interest in the English school (ES), and a number of monographs, anthologies and articles discuss its various aspects.[73] Several recent papers deal with diplomacy, as treated by individual ES scholars.[74] In his useful overview of ES studies of diplomacy, Iver Neumann argues that the first generation of ES scholars – Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield, in particular – did place diplomacy at the center of international relations, producing taxonomic and historical studies of diplomacy. These studies, however, did not focus on diplomacy as a practice or diplomacy as an integrated part of social life, but aimed at formulating a philosophy of history.[75]

The second generation of ES scholars, represented by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, by and large disregarded Wight's and Butterfield's writings on diplomacy. Bull[76] listed diplomacy as one of five central institutions of international relations – no longer the "master-institution," as in Wight's formulation – and introduced notions of a diplomatic culture and diplomacy symbolizing the existence of an international society. However, Bull never fully developed the idea of a diplomatic culture, and, by conceiving of diplomacy as symbolic, made it reflective of, and epiphenomenal to, international order rather than constitutive of international society.[77]

Adam Watson focused much more on diplomacy as a practice. Proceeding from the premises that diplomacy is communication, that sovereignty is not a precondition for diplomacy, and that it is the institution of diplomacy that is interesting rather than its different manifestations, Watson began to "sociologise what is much too often treated by International Relation scholars as a theoretical given."[78] Curiously enough, Watson wrote one book each on diplomacy and international society without any sustained overlap or cross-fertilization.[79] Yet, it is obvious that diplomacy plays a crucial but not fully articulated part in his sociology of international society.

Adam Watson characterized world history as a pendulum movement between absolute empire and absolute independence, with mixed forms of international systems lying in between. Watson claimed that the two extremes are historically rare or nonexistent, but that there is a continuous propensity for each. International society is characterized as a "set of rules and institutions," a "superstructure, consciously put in place to modify the mechanical workings of the system."[80] Arguably, Watson here posits diplomacy as, at least, co-constitutive of international society. While still proceeding from a bottom-up approach, he opens up for

constitutive effects of rules and institutions, insofar as they are the premise upon which states or other political units exist with some permanence. Unobstructed, the mechanical pressures would result in constant flux, in Watson's formulation. This is an important argument, to which we will return at several points in this book.

The third generation of ES scholars is represented by James Der Derian and Christian Reus-Smit in Neumann's review. Curiously, both these scholars have found it necessary to depart from their ES roots and instead work within a post-structuralist or constructivist frame, respectively.

Der Derian proffers, at least, three crucial arguments. First, in line with Watson, he proposes that diplomacy functions as the mediation between estranged peoples. Peoples, or polities, become estranged, when a particular system is transformed and new social formations arise. Der Derian gives two examples: "when the *mutual* estrangement *of* states *from* Western Christendom gives rise to an international diplomatic system; and when the Third World's revolt against Western 'Lordship' precipitates the transformation of diplomacy into a truly global system"[81] (italics in original).

Diplomacy mediates the conflict that arises when hitherto integrated peoples find themselves removed from one another and from that which previously integrated them, be it Christianity, humanity, or empire/imperialism:

> Like the bridges of medieval cities, the diplomatic culture begins as a neutral link between alien quarters, but with the disintegration and diffusion of a common Latin power, it becomes a cluttered yet protected enclave, a discursive space where representatives of sovereign states can avoid the national tolls of the embryonic international society while attempting to mediate its systemic alienation.[82]

Der Derian's second argument – in which Watson's influence is again detectable – is that it is not the concrete structure of the diplomatic system that defines it, but rather "the conflicting relations which maintain, reproduce, and sometime transform it."[83] Thus, it is not resident ambassadors, conferences or other concrete manifestations that are of primary importance, but relations among polities. Der Derian's first two arguments combined suggest a top-down view of international relations, in which any given international system is (co)constituted by a diplomacy that both distinguishes between polities and binds them together in the process of mediating their relation of estrangement. Here, the need for a verb form of the noun "diplomacy" becomes obvious.

Missing from Der Derian's study is an explicit discussion of the implications of this view for the conceptualization of political space. However, his third argument gives a clue: diplomacy is "embedded in the social at large, and so something is lost if it is abstracted from that placement."[84] In other words, the practice of diplomacy is integrated with other social practices and takes place in the same political or sociopolitical space. By implication, diplomacy is defined not only by great events and great men but also, and perhaps more, by the " 'petty' *rituals* and *ceremonies* of power"[85] (italics in original). Our endeavor derives considerable inspiration from Der Derian's arguments, as we will explicate in the following chapter.

Christian Reus-Smit, the other representative of the third generation of ES scholars in Neumann's overview, sets out to explain why different international societies adopt different fundamental institutions. Fundamental institutions he defines as "elementary rules of practice that states formulate to solve the coordination and collaboration problems associated with existence under anarchy."[86] Although his focus is not diplomacy *per se*, Reus-Smit largely identifies fundamental institutions with forms of diplomacy. In his four cases these are interstate arbitration in Ancient Greece, oratorical diplomacy in Renaissance Italy, natural international law and "old diplomacy" in absolutist Europe and contractual international law and multilateralism in the modern society of states.[87] Reus-Smit's chief contribution is to offer a "reading of how diplomacy is embedded in social practice, for if diplomacy and international society flows from a general system or morals and justice, then it cannot be understood without reference to the social surroundings from which it grows and of which it is a part."[88]

All in all, we concur with Neumann's assessment that the studies by Der Derian and Reus-Smit are "setting a new standard for what diplomatic studies should be supposed to accomplish."[89] In his own writings on diplomacy, Neumann insists that diplomacy is a social practice that cannot be abstracted from the social world. Like all social practices, diplomacy is a nested phenomenon and must be studied as such.[90]

Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have seen that the abundance and variety of literature on diplomacy does not preclude a dearth of theorizing. Neither practitioners nor diplomatic historians have put a premium on theory, while major IR theorists have tended to neglect diplomacy or see it as a

secondary phenomenon. The English school constitutes a significant exception and provides a point of departure for our endeavor.

We share the ES view of diplomacy as an international institution, as we will amplify in Chapter 2. The link between diplomacy and international society is another ES notion we will develop further. From later, postmodern representatives we learn that diplomacy is integrated with, and embedded in, other social practices. Moreover, we have concluded from our overview of the major IR traditions that we need to move away from substantialist toward relational and processual perspectives. With these lessons in mind, we will outline our own theoretical building blocks in Chapter 2.

2
Analytical Framework

As the title of the book suggests, we are looking for *essence*, that is, common denominators characterizing diplomacy across time and space. In postmodern and post-structuralist as well as in positivist literatures, the search for essences is seen as misguided and, for some, politically oppressive. In the various post-positivist approaches difference is celebrated and attempts at categorizing, let alone putting phenomena in the same category, cannot be but an expression of the categorizers' political views. In the "science" camp, the object of inquiry is to make distinctions, identify and explain variations, and to establish typologies.

Paradoxically, we have some sympathy for both of these intellectual positions. Before identifying variations, one needs to have a sense of what these are variations of. There are several kinds of dog, or music, but it still makes sense to talk of the species dog, or the artistic expression music. IR theory, together with history, while having produced a number of fine studies on diplomacy and kinds of diplomacy, has yet to give a theoretical account of what diplomacy is. While looking for the most abstract common denominator, this study searches for no elusive historical law – or even regularity – in terms of causality, mechanisms, form or substance. Rather, we see diplomacy as constitutive of any international society, and we are searching for essential parameters of diplomacy as constitutive. In contemporary parlance, then, this is an inquiry into the ontology of diplomacy.

As we argued in the Chapter 1, we want to get away from the bottom-up and substantialist approaches of mainstream IR. Thus, we launch our inquiry from a top-down, relationalist/processual vantage point and draw on insights from the English school. In short, we proceed from a notion of global political space whose differentiation is a system-driven process. Diplomacy, in this perspective, is about dynamic relations that

help differentiate political space. We have lamented the fact that no dynamic term, based on a verb, can be derived from the word "diplomacy," but we will pay special attention to such processes as the reproduction of particular international societies and the institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy.

More specifically, in this chapter, we will develop three analytical points of departure, on which the rest of the book is premised. First, we view diplomacy as an *institution*. Moreover, we suggest that diplomacy should be seen as an institution of international societies rather than individual states or other entities. Second, to allow for a transhistorical perspective, we conceive of diplomacy as an institution structuring relations among *polities* rather than states, and claim that *historical sociology* offers a useful theoretical platform. Third, we propose that, at the highest level of abstraction, diplomacy can be analyzed as the mediation of *universalism* and *particularism*, and that this dualism finds different expressions in different historical contexts.

In the last section of this chapter we will introduce the building blocks of our pre-theory of diplomacy, which also organize subsequent chapters. More specifically, we distinguish communication, representation and the reproduction of international society as three essential dimensions of diplomacy. In line with our processual approach, we will point to two dynamical aspects: the institutionalization of diplomacy, and diplomacy in times of changing polities and identities.

Diplomacy as an institution

Diplomacy, we posit, should be seen as an institution, understood broadly as a relatively stable collection of social practices consisting of easily recognized *roles* coupled with underlying *norms* and a set of *rules* or conventions defining appropriate behavior for, and governing relations among, occupants of these roles.[1] These norms and rules "prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations."[2] Institutions may or may not involve organizations, or groups of individuals who pursue a set of collective purposes. Organizations are entities that normally possess physical locations, offices, personnel, equipment and budgets.[3] According to this distinction, the market is an institution, while the firm is an organization. Marriage is an institution, the family its organizational manifestation. By the same token, diplomacy is an institution and foreign ministries are organizations.

This distinction is not always upheld, and the terms "institution" and "organization" are frequently used interchangeably. However, diplomacy

illustrates the importance of keeping the two terms apart. Whereas diplomacy as an institution, as we have seen, has quite a long history, the organization we today associate with diplomacy, the foreign ministry with its diplomatic corps, is of recent origin. Only in 1626 did Richelieu institute the first foreign ministry in the modern sense, and England established its Foreign Office as late as 1782.[4] Generally speaking, organizations, in contrast to institutions, are specifically located in time and space. Hence, we conceive of diplomacy as an institution at the level of international society as a whole, foreign ministries as organizations at the level of individual states.

The key concepts in our understanding of institutions are "norms," "rules" and "roles." Norms "represent the customary, implicit end of the authoritative social regulation of behaviour," and rules "the more specific, explicit end."[5] Rules, prescribing appropriate behavior in particular settings, may be more or less precise, formal and authoritative. In any case, they provide a framework of shared expectations that facilitates purposive and predictable action among the occupants of certain roles, in our case diplomatic agents.[6] Thus, the institution of diplomacy has supplied norms, rules and conventions for individuals assuming diplomatic roles throughout the ages, even in the absence of such organizational frameworks as chanceries or foreign ministries.

What kind of institution?

Diplomacy is an institution representing a response to "a common problem of living separately and wanting to do so, while having to conduct relations with others."[7] Exchange – be it of goods, people, information or services – seems to be central to the origins of diplomacy.[8] Whenever and wherever there are polities with distinct identities, who see the need to establish exchange relations of some kind and realize their interdependence, diplomatic rules and roles are likely to emerge. This can be seen as an instance of the common notion that institutions reduce transaction costs.

The fundamental idea behind the notion of transaction costs is that the execution of an economic transaction involves not only production costs, but also costs for arranging and enforcing a contract. The process of drafting, planning and negotiating a contract is costly, as is the process of solving contractual disputes. Institutions, then, fulfil the function of reducing transaction costs. While developed in relation to economic phenomena, the notion of transaction costs is neither by nature nor by definition restricted to economic demands. In the political realm as well, international institutions, including diplomacy, "perform the valuable

function of reducing the costs of legitimate transactions, while increasing the costs of illegitimate ones, and of reducing uncertainty."[9]

Students of institutions throughout the ages have made a distinction between "evolved" and "designed" institutions. It dates back to the debate among Ancient Greeks over "nature" and "convention." Institutions, according to this distinction, are either constructed by humans to suit their needs or arise spontaneously, sometimes as the unintended consequences of self-interested human action.[10] This distinction need not be understood in either-or terms: institutions may be the result of the inextricable interplay of the two different processes of development. Diplomacy is a case in point. Diplomatic norms, rules and roles represent a mix of spontaneous and designed elements. The common wisdom is that the spontaneous elements were more apparent in the early development of the institution, and human design more prevalent in recent history; but the interplay presumably figured from the very outset.

> We do not know when human societies first felt the need to communicate with each other, but it is safe to assume that they did so from the very earliest times. We know that diplomatic status existed very early and it is both evident and instructive why it should have been so. If it has been decided that it may be better to hear the message than to eat the messenger, then there have to be rules about who a legitimate messenger is, and there have to be sanctions which will ensure his uneatability. The earliest diplomats were a response to a felt need for a mechanism to convey messages between societies safely and reliably.[11]

Another distinction can be made between "primary" and "secondary" institutions. Primary international institutions are durable and recognized practices that are constitutive of both polities and international society, whereas secondary institutions regulate practices among polities once legitimate actors are established, the basic rules are in place, and the game of international relations is underway. Diplomacy can be seen as a primary institution, and the various issue-based regulative arrangements analyzed by regime theorists can be said to represent secondary institutions. This is in line with Reus-Smit's[12] treatment of diplomacy, noted in the Chapter 1, as a "fundamental" institution, from which issue-specific regimes can be derived. However, the distinction between primary and secondary institutions is not always easy to uphold, and different authors suggest varying lists of primary international institutions.[13]

Kalevi Holsti makes a related distinction between "foundational" and "procedural" institutions, where foundational ones define and give privileged status to certain actors and procedural ones regulate interactions and transactions between actors. He places diplomacy among the procedural rather than foundational institutions, which include sovereignty and territoriality.[14]

Our conclusion from this conceptual and classificatory confusion is that diplomacy represents a hybrid institution, insofar that it encompasses foundational as well as procedural elements and includes traits of primary as well as secondary institutions. The foundational or constitutive aspects of diplomacy have to do with its role in the reproduction of international society and the recognition of legitimate polities; at the same time, the institution of diplomacy throughout the ages has provided more or less detailed rules of appropriate procedures in the intercourse between these polities.

Diplomatic norms and rules

Ultimately, diplomacy rests on a norm of coexistence, allowing polities "to live and let live." In the words of Garrett Mattingly, "unless people realize that they have to live together, indefinitely, in spite of their differences, diplomats have no place to stand."[15] Acceptance of coexistence reflects the realization on the part of polities that they are mutually dependent to a significant degree. Interdependence may be, and is most often, asymmetrical. Yet coexistence implies, if not equality, at least equal rights to participate in international intercourse.

Whereas the specific rules of the institution of diplomacy have varied over time, *reciprocity* appears to be a core normative theme running through all diplomatic practice.[16] Reciprocity implies that exchanges should be of roughly equivalent values.[17] In other words, reciprocity is meant to produce "balanced" exchanges.[18] Moreover, reciprocity entails contingency, insofar as actions are conditional on responses from others. Reciprocal behavior returns good for good, ill for ill.[19] The norm of reciprocity lends an amount of predictability to diplomatic relations. While not offering exact predictability, it makes it possible for polities to know the general range of possible outcomes of their exchanges.[20]

The distinction between *specific* and *diffuse* reciprocity is pertinent in this connection. Specific reciprocity refers to "situations in which specified partners exchange items of equivalent value in a strictly delimited sequence," whereas in situations of diffuse reciprocity "the definition of equivalence is less precise … and the sequence of events is less narrowly bounded."[21] Diffuse reciprocity implies that the parties do not insist

on immediate and exactly equivalent reciprocation of each and every concession, on an appropriate "quid" for every "quo."

Buyers and sellers of houses or cars practice specific reciprocity; families or groups of close friends rely on diffuse reciprocity. Reciprocity in diplomatic relations falls in between, or oscillates between the two poles. The difference between the two types of reciprocity has to do with trust. Whereas the kind of trust that binds families together is most often lacking in the relations between polities, the institution of diplomacy lends a modicum of trust that distinguishes these relations from, say, those between buyers and sellers.

In fact, if we posit *contingency* and *equivalence* as the two basic dimensions of social exchange characterizing reciprocity, we can identify mixed reciprocity patterns. A highly contingent action is a fairly immediate response to an action taken by another, whereas a less contingent action may take place after a longer period of time or even in advance of the other's action. Equivalence refers to a comparison of the perceived values of goods given and received. Contingency and equivalence vary continuously, but if we – for analytical purposes – treat them dichotomously, we end up with four types of reciprocity (see Figure 1).[22]

The practice of expelling foreign diplomats for espionage may illustrate specific reciprocity. States today recognize that when they expel diplomats from a foreign country, that government is likely to respond in kind by immediately expelling an equivalent number of their own diplomats. The anticipation of specific reciprocity therefore often deters states from uncooperative behavior.

Compliance with the norms and rules guiding diplomatic exchange can be seen as an instance of diffuse reciprocity. Specific repayment is not expected from such behavior, and mutual benefits are assumed to even out over the long term. During the Concert of Europe era, for example, statesmen made more concessions to others than was specifically

		Contingency	
		Immediate	Less Immediate
Equivalence	Precise	Specific reciprocity	Mixed pattern
	Imprecise	Mixed pattern	Diffuse reciprocity

Figure 1 Patterns of reciprocity

required. Similar patterns of diffuse reciprocity can be observed in the European Union of today.

The mixed pattern of reciprocity in the lower-left cell of Figure 1 occurs when actors are concerned about short-term outcomes, but less concerned about the specific value of individual exchanges. Consider, for example, the exchanges between the United States and China prior to the mutual presidential visits in 1997 and 1998. President Clinton was pressured by Congress, which was seeking to impose sanctions against China because of its human-rights violations, to secure a significant human-rights concession from China as a prerequisite for the state visit. Just before Jiang Zemin's arrival in the United States, a prominent Chinese political prisoner was released. While one political prisoner's freedom could not be – and was not – considered "equal" in value to the political and economic benefits China was likely to reap from the summit, the US Administration was apparently sufficiently satisfied with this specific concession to welcome the Chinese President and negotiate a wide range of issues.[23]

The upper-right cell signifies a different mixed pattern, where actors are concerned about the specific value of an individual exchange but focus on longer-term relations. An example may be John Foster Dulles's refusal to shake hands with Zhou Enlai at the 1954 Geneva Conference, which was read by the Chinese as a signal of American rejection and contempt and harmed US–Chinese relations for years to come.[24]

Among the procedural rules of diplomacy, *immunity* has assumed prominence throughout history. The inviolability of diplomatic agents is seen to be a prerequisite for the establishment of stable relations between polities. "Rooted in necessity, immunity was buttressed by religion, sanctioned by custom, and fortified by reciprocity."[25] The sanctity of diplomatic messengers in the ancient world implied inviolability and thus foreshadowed more recent notions of diplomatic immunity.[26]

Traditional codes of hospitality may have contributed to the notion of according diplomatic envoys inviolability. "The ancient Greeks and Romans considered it impious to injure a guest, as did the Celts, the Gauls, and the Teutons."[27] The most perennial and robust foundation of diplomatic immunity seems to be functional necessity: the privileges and immunities that diplomatic envoys have enjoyed throughout the ages have simply been seen as necessary to enable diplomats to perform their functions.[28]

Toward a historical sociology of diplomacy

As should be evident from the above discussion, we see diplomacy as an institution of international societies, not of individual states. In fact, an

important point of departure in our research strategy is to abandon the state-centric perspective that has dominated the study of diplomacy. Instead we conceive of diplomacy as an institution structuring relations among *polities*. A polity can be understood as a political authority, which "has a distinct identity; a capacity to mobilize persons and their resources for political purposes, that is, for value satisfaction; and a degree of institutionalization and hierarchy (leaders and constituents)."[29] Polities, as loci of political authority, are constantly evolving.

In other words, the link between state sovereignty and diplomacy that characterizes contemporary international relations is not inevitable but historically contingent. Following James Rosenau, we suggest that "what makes actors effective in world politics derives not from the sovereignty they posses or the legal privileges thereby accorded them, but rather lies in relational phenomena, in the authority they can command and the compliance they can thereby elicit."[30] In a transhistorical perspective, diplomacy may involve all sorts of polities, be they territorial or not, sovereign or not.

This goes hand in hand with our top-down, rather than bottom-up perspective, according to which political space is global and its differentiation a system-driven process. Furthermore, this differentiation is not seen to result in the creation of two distinct political spaces, as in realism. Rather, "global politics has always been a seamless web."[31] The most important implication of a top-down perspective, for the purposes of this study, is that the international system can be analyzed as a social system and not only as an imaginary state of nature. In other words, the international system can be conceptualized as being constituted by something other than the consequences of interacting self-constituted actors. Indeed, the international system becomes analytically and ontologically prior to the individual units populating it.

In pursuing such a perspective, we can draw on the burgeoning literature on the historical sociology of international relations. Much IR-related historical sociology is either neo-Weberian or neo-Marxist, and, with a few notable exceptions, is focused on the great material processes of war, industrialization and capitalism. More often than not, the *explanandum* has been the development of the modern state and the economic systems attached to it.[32] This, however, "leaves a significant dimension of the global political landscape unacknowledged and unexplained."[33] The neglect of international institutions, in particular, "detracts from the central project of neo-Weberian historical sociology – that of understanding the sovereign state as an historically situated and variable political formation."[34] While there are several historical sociologies of international relations, differing not only in focus and

interest, but also in terms of epistemological and ontological foundations, there are certain similarities that outweigh these differences. Our study will draw on four such similarities.

First, historical sociologists focusing on international relations criticize mainstream IR for being ahistorical and seek to problematize the present.[35] Second, historical sociologists study "the ways in which, in time, actions become institutions and institutions are in turn changed by action."[36] Third, historical sociology treats the "attainment of stability" as, at least, equally puzzling as the "occurrence of change."[37] Here the core similarities among the various historical sociologies of international relations stand out in sharp relief: "beneath the hubbub of the modernism/postmodernism dispute, a deeper contest [is] looming: one between the partisans of modal invariance and the partisans of the flux."[38] Indeed, the shift from a substantialist to a relational ontology dramatically changes research focus: "It becomes necessary to explain reproduction, constancy, and entity-ness, rather than development and change."[39] Despite their differences, varying historical sociologies are joined in their partisanship of flux. Of course, this does not mean that change is not interesting or in need of study. Whereas historical sociologists often study change, they do not view change as anomalous or stability as natural; it is the specificity of change that needs to be understood or explained, not the abstract phenomenon of change.

Finally, historical sociologists ask questions about the differentiation of international political space. On what basis are polities differentiated and individuated?[40] While different answers are suggested, neither the state nor territoriality is taken for granted. Furthermore, adherents of the English school point out that it is necessary not only to investigate the borders, or differentiation, of polities but also those of international societies. In other words, there are always at least two processes of bordering, or bounding, going on: that among units, and that between these units as a whole and an outside.

These four commonalities of the different historical sociologies of international relations, we claim, bridge or sidestep the meta-theoretical debate between reflective post-positivism and the rationalistic mainstream. They also provide methodological advice to our study: avoid ahistoricism, pay attention to processes of institutionalization, look for explanations of stability in natural processes of change, and ask questions about the differentiation and reproduction of international society. Not only do these imperatives provide a basis for theorizing diplomacy but we also hope to demonstrate that diplomacy is a field of study that underscores these lessons and insights from historical sociology.

Thus, while our main purpose is to theorize diplomacy, we also hope to contribute to the growing literature on the historical sociology of international relations. This said, we do not allege to produce a historical sociology of diplomacy, let alone a world history of diplomacy. Let us turn, next, to some key concepts we will use as building blocks in our pre-theory of diplomacy.

Mediating universalism and particularism

So far we have suggested that diplomacy is an institution of international societies; that international societies are differentiated political spaces; and that the differentiation of political space should be studied through the lenses of historical sociology and relationalism. With our third analytical point of departure we want to suggest that the institution of diplomacy is one important process in this differentiation. More specifically, diplomacy is an important process in the mediation of the material and ideational propensities of universalism and particularism. In brief, we will suggest that the differentiation of any given international society, as well as the legitimizing principles this differentiation is pinned upon, can be conceptualized as being poised between extremes of universality and particularity. In this view, each international society becomes in a sense a compromise, and diplomacy is crucial in forging this compromise.

When we speak of the reproduction of international *society* rather than the international *system*, we follow in the footsteps of the English school. An international system is said to exist when polities are in regular contact with each other and "there is interaction between them, sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculation of the other."[41] An international society, on the other hand, emerges when polities in addition are "conscious of certain common interests and common values," on the one hand, and "conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions," on the other.[42] This set of rules provides "a superstructure, consciously put in place to modify the mechanical workings of the system."[43]

The notion of an international society may give unwarranted associations of homogeneity. The distinction between inner and outer circles of societal links, suggested by adherents of the English school, may be a useful corrective. For example, whereas Europe and the Ottoman Empire became linked by the late fifteenth century and their mutual relations reflected a societal dimension, the Ottoman Empire and the European

states formed an international society of a looser kind than that which existed among European states.[44] Barry Buzan, for his part, draws on the well-established sociological distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* societies, between societies built on bonds of common sentiments and experiences, on the one hand, and on contractual and constructed links, on the other.[45] The contemporary international society is characterized by an inner circle with *Gemeinschaft* ties (roughly the OECD area), which has *Gesellschaft* societal links to outer circles of states (often referred to as the Third World).

Moreover, the existence of an international society does not imply peacefulness or the absence of conflict; it only implies that war, when it occurs, is conducted according to a set of regulations. Indeed, an international society can even accept frequent breaches of these regulations, as long as they are conceived of as breaches. For instance, the atrocities committed against native American Indians by European conquistadores, or the African slave trade, do not in themselves show that Europeans and Africans or American Indians did not co-constitute international societies. The fact that these atrocities were sanctioned in European legal, political and religious theory does.

Before proceeding, we would like to specify the role and status of universalism and particularism. Neither of these two concepts represents any historical law, force or master cause. In the relational tradition, universalism and particularism would be treated as un-owned processes. Un-owned processes, as opposed to owned processes, lack subjects, or "doers."[46] Also, there is no implication that either universalism or particularism must dominate at any given point: they are not exclusory processes – quite the opposite. Thus, we would emphasize the messiness of international societies – the unresolved tensions, the conflicts and the coexistence of processes at odds. Finally, universalism does not necessarily mean "everybody" or "everything," nor does particularism mean "one individual." Universalism and particularism only assume meaning in contradistinction to each other; they are relational, not absolute, concepts. They are, as it were, the "ying" and "yang" of international society and, by implication, diplomacy.

Material processes of universality and particularity

Conceptualizing the study of politics as the study of power, traditional IR theory emphasizes the difference between politics in a space where there are claims to ultimate authority, where power translates into hierarchy, on the one hand; and politics in a space where there are no such claims, characterized by anarchy, on the other. The rationale and

justification, and the *differentia specifica*, for the discipline of IR thus became the difference between anarchical and hierarchical politics. In other words, IR as a discipline becomes premised on particularism. However, the absolute distinction between hierarchy and anarchy has become increasingly contested. Moreover, the idea that politics has to be either hierarchical or anarchical is questioned. Historical sociologists, members of the English school and others have formulated alternatives to the view that anarchy and, by implication, particularism is a transhistorical feature of international politics.[47]

Michael Mann argues that historically there are two kinds of power configurations: empires of domination and multi-power-actor civilizations. Each type specialized in certain types of power relations, but ignored or overlooked others. The two sorts of power configurations replaced one another when each found a way to exploit a power resource ignored by the other.[48] Adam Watson further elaborates Mann's historical dialectic, proposing a continuum of forms the international system can assume. The end points of this spectrum are anarchy (absolute independence) and hierarchy (absolute empire). Watson argues that both of these forms are rare in world history, and that, as a rule, systems occupy a position somewhere in between these two end points. The system swings like a pendulum between the two ends, but never remains static. Various strategic and economic forces move the pendulum. Also, as already referred to in Chapter 1, Watson claims that a set of institutions and rules may modify these mechanical swings and create an international society.[49]

One implication of the pendulum metaphor seems to be that the further the pendulum swings toward hierarchy and universalism, the less room there is for diplomacy, based on coexistence, exchange and reciprocity. While concurring with Mann and Watson's notion of constant tension between hierarchy and anarchy, or universalism and particularism, we suggest a less clear-cut picture than either. Both Mann and Watson seem to suggest that world history, at any given point, is on its way toward one of the two extremes and away from the other. We doubt that this is the case. Rather, we hypothesize that there are always multiple forces at work, and they need not be pushing in the same direction. This becomes particularly apparent when ideological propensities are taken into account as well.

Ideational processes of universality and particularity

The tension between universalism and particularism is a recurrent theme in Western political and moral thought. For instance, the Enlightenment produced the belief that the steady growth of human reason would result

in the "moral and political unification of the entire human race."[50] Romantic thinkers soon generated two counter-ideologies that came to intersect: nationalism and historicism.

Philosopher Onora O'Neill makes the distinction between universalism and particularism the organizing theme in her discussion of virtue and justice: "Theories of justice argue for universal rights and obligations; virtues are seen as the time- and context-bound excellences of particular communities or lives."[51] O'Neill traces the ethical debate between universalists and particularists to the ancient Greek philosophers, but the focus of her study is to show the compatibility between an ethics of justice and an ethics of virtue.

While most discussions on the ideational propensities for universalism and particularism depart from, and return to, ethics, the issue is expressed in several other areas of human thought as well. For our purposes, the important point is this: Just as the material propensities for universalism and particularism coexist, so do ideas of universality and particularity; they contest each other, yet they do not necessarily, or very often, dominate each other.

Let us briefly illustrate the intermingling and messiness of material and ideational propensities for universality and particularity with the example of the so-called Westphalian system emerging as a result of the peace agreement after the Thirty Years War.

The Peace of Westphalia organized Europe on the basis of particularism. It represented a new diplomatic arrangement – an order created by states, for states – and replaced most of the legal vestiges of hierarchy, at the pinnacle of which were the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor.[52] In the words of scholars in the ES tradition, a new international society "evolved out of the struggle between the forces tending towards a hegemonial order and those which succeeded in pushing the new Europe towards the independent end of our spectrum."[53]

From our vantage point we believe we can say more. The seventeenth-century resolution was a compromise between several material and ideational propensities, none of which had prevailed as a result of the war. In our terms, it is noteworthy that the Westphalian system was a compromise between the universalistic idea of Christian unity, reformulated as a natural law derived from God, and the particularistic notion of sovereignty. Whereas the Westphalian settlement is traditionally viewed as the death knell for a Christian society of polities, strong vestiges of universalism remained.

First, sovereignty did not imply equality. The notion that all kings were directly ordained by God rather than by the pope, did not at all

mean that all kings were equal. And while the Peace of Westphalia "was largely successful in containing the hegemonic aspirations of the Habsburgs, … it did not anticipate the ambitions of the Bourbon Louis XIV to dominate Europe."[54]

Second, and more importantly, the Christian sovereigns were unquestionably the only legitimate ones. Obviously, if the heathen "Turk" could not be included in the society of sovereign states, nor could the pagans and barbarians of Africa, the Americas or Asia. The Westphalian moment might have been particularistic, but it was a particularism that presupposed a degree of universalism.

Third, universalism expressed itself in jurisprudence and political theory in the form of natural law, as expressed by Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf. Particularism, in short, was not secured in the Peace of Westphalia. Rather, Westphalia indicates that the propensities for universalism and particularism seem to be both ubiquitous and concomitant.

Diplomacy, mediation and international society

We suggest that diplomacy plays a crucial role in mediating universalism and particularism, and that diplomacy thereby in a sense *constitutes* and *produces* international society. Each combination of universalism and particularism – whether settled in a treaty or, more commonly, continuously negotiated – represents a differentiation of political space. Each resolution specifies, often implicitly, who "we" are and which competence we have (universalism), and who "I" am and which competence I have (particularism). In our Westphalian example the treaties of Osnabrück and Münster specified, both implicitly and explicitly, that "we" were Christians and that "I" was a King ordained by God. Diplomacy contributes to, as well as reflects, this differentiation of international society. Let us turn, next, to three essential dimensions of diplomacy that capture the mechanisms involved in mediating universalism and particularism.

Building blocks of theory

As mentioned in the Introduction, we distinguish three essential or constitutive dimensions of diplomacy: *communication*, *representation* and *reproduction of international society*. Diplomacy is often characterized as communication between polities. Without communication there can be no diplomacy. Negotiation is generally regarded as the core of, and sometimes equated with, diplomacy. The problem of avoiding misunderstandings and achieving shared meanings has been central to diplomatic communication throughout the ages, as elaborated later in Chapter 4.

Representation is another core dimension of diplomacy, insofar as diplomats are representatives of principals, acting on their behalf and standing as symbols of them and their polities. In Chapter 5 we will take a closer look at the dynamics and problems of the principal–agent relationships characteristic of diplomacy.

Reproduction, finally, refers to the ways in which diplomacy contributes to the creation and continuation of a particular international society. By "reproduction" we mean the processes by which polities, or groups of polities, maintain themselves *as such*. As partisans of flux, we favor a concept that emphasizes the need to explain permanence. Reproduction implies that continuity cannot be taken for granted. Diplomatic recognition and socialization are the core mechanisms through which diplomacy helps constituting – and is, in turn, constituted by – any given differentiation of international space. This will be our concern in Chapter 6, which deals with the role of diplomatic recognition and socialization in reproducing a particular international society, and in Chapter 7, which addresses the question of what happens to diplomacy in times of flux, when new types of polities challenge the existing international society.

Before turning to these three core dimensions of diplomacy, however, we will in Chapter 3 expand on our notion of diplomacy as an international institution. True to our plea for a processual approach, we will discuss the twin dynamics of institutionalization and ritualization.

3
Institutionalization and Ritualization

In the previous chapter we proposed that diplomacy be seen as an international institution, understood in terms of norms, rules and roles. Moreover, we identified coexistence as a fundamental norm of diplomacy, reciprocity as a perennial normative theme, and immunity as an important procedural rule. An institutional perspective implies stability. Yet we have also insisted on the need for a processual approach, depicting ourselves as partisans of flux and calling for dynamic verb forms to characterize diplomacy. In other words, we are interested in the dynamic processes through which actions become institutions and institutions shape actions. In this chapter we will focus on two interrelated dynamic processes, the institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy.

Institutionalization

Institutions, such as diplomacy, do not emerge full-fledged and immutable but evolve through processes of *institutionalization*. This "involves the development of practices and rules in the context of using them and has earned a variety of labels, including structuration and routinization, which refer to the development of codes of meaning, ways of reasoning, and accounts in the context of acting on them."[1] Coordinating and patterning behavior, channeling it in one among all possible directions, institutionalization can be related to the concept of "social space":

> Social spaces are arenas, or recurrent situations, wherein actors orient their actions to one another repeatedly. We call a social space "institutionalized" when there exists a widely shared system of rules

> and procedures to define who actors are, how they make sense of each other's actions, and what types of action are possible. Institutionalization is the process by which a social space emerges and evolves.[2]

Several observers claim that diplomacy did not become institutionalized until the seventeenth century, with the formation of permanent embassies, the emergence of a state system as well as the formulation of a set of ideas about diplomacy and the appearance of diplomatic texts. Earlier contacts between polities are then seen as intermittent and lacking the essential ingredients of an international institution.[3] The criteria for institutionalization, in this view, are quite demanding, including "immunity of the envoy, continuous contact, well qualified if not necessarily professional personnel, bureaucratic direction, provision for mediation, a method for underpinning agreements, and flexibility of form and procedure."[4] We do not share this view, but prefer to distinguish various aspects and degrees of institutionalization. Consequently, we eschew drawing sharp borders between diplomacy as a full-fledged institution and earlier, allegedly noninstitutional, forms.

In line with our previous discussion of the nature of international institutions, we may differentiate three levels of institutionalization: (1) a set of shared symbols and references, (2) a set of mutual expectations, agreed-upon rules, regulations and procedures, and (3) formal organizations.[5]

Institutionalization at the first, cognitive level entails the development of a common language and intersubjective structures of meaning and interpretation of words, actions and symbols. In the last few centuries we find clear evidence of a distinct diplomatic subculture with common patterns of understanding. The early beginning of this can be traced back to Rome in the latter part of the fifteenth century. As Rome emerged as the main listening post and center of diplomacy, the Italian city-states sent their most accomplished diplomats there. In combination with the papal practice of addressing them collectively, this contributed to "the first signs of something like an organized diplomatic corps, developing a rudimentary sense of professional solidarity, exchanging social courtesies, codifying their mutual relationships, and even, in certain emergencies, acting together as a body."[6] In the following centuries, diplomatic life in another great city, Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, contributed to the evolution of a diplomatic corps. Having more neighbors than most other states, the Ottoman Empire received a great number of ambassadors, who felt

a need to unite in self-defense against the depredations of Ottoman officials and who shared information and messenger services.[7]

In the seventeenth, eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century diplomacy was an aristocratic pursuit. The European aristocracies were linked by ties of friendship, blood and marriage and were united by similarities in outlook and education, which created a sense among diplomats of belonging to a single "cosmopolitan fraternity" or "aristocratic international."[8] Then the Austrian ambassador to France felt more at home at the court of Versailles than among his compatriots of humble origin. Amid differences and conflicts between states, diplomats, in the words of a nineteenth-century observer, formed "a society of their own," preserving "a quiet and permanent unity."[9] Even if the diplomatic corps can no longer be characterized as a close-knit "international," present-day diplomats have retained enough professional unity to qualify as a transnational "epistemic community,"[10] sharing beliefs, values and discursive practices. Harold Nicolson notes the tendency among diplomats "to develop a corporate identity independent of their national identity," which he labels "professional freemasonry."[11]

At this first level of shared symbols and references we will take a closer look at the institutionalization of diplomatic protocol, guiding the use of words and acts – from the standardization of phrases in diplomatic language to the practices surrounding the conclusion of treaties. This implies looking for common codes predating the emergence of a distinct diplomatic subculture, in the sense alluded to above.

Institutionalization at the second level implies widening acceptance and refinement of the kind of diplomatic norms and rules discussed above. For instance, institutionalization of the norm of coexistence might involve its extension to "barbarians" in the ancient Greek world, across the Protestant–Catholic divide in Renaissance Europe, and beyond Europe in recent centuries. In terms of refinement, rules of reciprocity can be said to become increasingly institutionalized as they reflect diffuse rather than specific reciprocity. In this chapter, we will trace the institutionalization of family metaphors as a reflection of reciprocity rules, of precedence procedures complicating the norm of coexistence, and of procedural rules of diplomatic immunity.

The third level of institutionalization entails the organization and professionalization of diplomacy. As we have seen, foreign ministries were not established until the seventeenth century. And the professionalization of diplomacy was a slow and fitful process. Only in the latter half of the nineteenth century were most European governments making efforts at tighter control of the recruitment and

promotion of diplomats on the basis of merit rather than social rank, introducing nationality requirements, tests and training programs; and only by the outbreak of the First World War can diplomacy be regarded as a fairly well-established profession.[12] Our focus in this chapter will be the institutionalization of diplomatic ranks in a longer historical perspective.

Ritualization

Before studying these three levels of the institutionalization of diplomacy, we want to explore the nexus of institutionalization and ritualization, as it applies to diplomacy. This warrants a brief reference to the study of ritual. The academic interest in ritual began with a prolonged and influential debate on the origins and eternal essence of religion,[13] but has gradually spread to social scientists, in particular sociologists and anthropologists. Some authors have been at pains to distinguish between religious and secular ritual; others find such a distinction more a hindrance than a help in understanding the role of ritual in social and political life.[14] Whereas ritual theory has not been applied in any systematic way to diplomacy, we posit that the rich literature on ritual – whether from religious studies or social sciences – is of obvious relevance to this field of study.

With the variety of scholarly interest, it is only natural that there is no one definition of ritual. Common denominators of most definitional attempts are the *symbolic* and *repetitive* nature of ritual. Thus, one student of the role of ritual in politics defines ritual as "symbolic behavior that is socially standardized and repetitive" or as "action wrapped in a web of symbolism."[15] From a more sociological standpoint, ritual is a way "to dramatize, enact, materialize, or perform a system of symbols."[16] One scholar with a historical perspective views ritual as "a formalized, collective, institutionalized kind of repetitive action," and argues that rituals are necessary for achieving group cohesion.[17] Thus, rituals are commonly understood as symbolic performances uniting the members of groups of people in a shared pursuit. Rituals speak of, and to, their basic values, creating or confirming a world of meaning shared by members of the group.[18]

In the same way that we have distinguished the static concept of institution from the dynamic concept of institutionalization, we can make a differentiation between ritual and ritualization. A focus on processes of ritualization draws attention to "the way in which certain social actions strategically distinguish themselves in relation to other actions."[19]

Ritualization can be said to represent a movement away from referential toward condensed symbols that are characterized by layers of meaning and multiple, simultaneous referents.[20] Condensation means that individual symbols, whether verbal or iconic, may represent and unify a rich diversity of meanings.[21] In words that can easily be associated with diplomacy, Catherine Bell claims that the ultimate purpose of ritualization is to produce agents with ritual mastery,

> persons who have an instinctive knowledge of these schemes embedded in their bodies, in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex microrelations of power. Such practical knowledge is not an inflexible set of assumptions, beliefs, or body postures; rather, it is the ability to deploy, play, and manipulate basic schemes in ways that appropriate and condition experience effectively. It is a mastery that experiences itself as relatively empowered, not as conditioned or molded.[22]

Formality, fixity, and repetition can be seen as common strategies of ritualization.[23] Processes of ritualization may yield decorum and ceremony, according to Ronald Grimes.[24] Ritual decorum, characterized by courteous formalization and stylization, is created when a society or group decides to use gestures and postures for the purpose of regulating face-to-face interaction. Ceremony, which involves large-group rather than face-to-face interaction, "symbolizes respect for the offices, histories, and causes that are condensed into its gestures, objects, and actions."[25] Again, it is not difficult to associate with diplomacy. Decorum does indeed characterize interaction between diplomats, and state visits as well as international conferences have their share of ceremony.

Institutionalization normally includes elements of ritualization. Rituals are part of the social space into which individual diplomatic agents are socialized. In general terms, ritual "presents office to the individual as the creation and possession of society or a part of society into which he is to be incorporated through the office."[26] Ritualized activities "lie beyond the immediate control or inventiveness of those involved."[27] The development of such ritualized activities, as we shall see, has been an important aspect of the institutionalization of diplomacy.

Ritualization can be related to our basic categories of representation, communication and reproduction. Most observers view ritual as a mode of human communication,[28] and ritualization applies first and foremost to diplomatic communication in its various forms. Yet rituals can also be understood in terms of representation of ideas.[29] During the

Reformation, the old doctrine of presence, according to which rituals were understood as behavior that created presences and enacted states of being, was challenged by the theory of representation, which saw rituals as an aspect of language that communicated meaning.[30] Similarly, the representative role of diplomats assumes such ritualized, symbolic expressions as the ancient herald's or messenger's staff that represented authority[31] or the national flags on ambassadors' official cars today. Ritualization is also related to the reproduction of a social order, as it provides "a 'window' on the cultural dynamics by which people make and remake their worlds."[32] Thus, having your national flag displayed outside the UN headquarters in New York is a ritualized expression of diplomatic recognition, in the same way that the refusal to receive, and travel restrictions imposed on, high Taiwanese officials symbolize nonrecognition.

Yet ritualization is primarily linked with communication. Ritual has been described as a "special form of human communication."[33] In fact, one student of communication argues that "ritual and communication are kin; they are logically related and share family characteristics," and advocates a ritual conception of communication.[34]

It is also noteworthy that an ethologist and a political scientist analyze the ritualization of communication in strikingly similar terms. Sir Julian Huxley from his ethological perspective maintains that ritualization among animals – and by extension among humans – serves to secure more effective communication or signaling and to reduce intragroup damage and to facilitate bonding.[35] On the basis of a study of industry–labor union negotiations, political scientist Murray Edelman[36] characterizes ritualization as a process facilitating both the resolution and escalation of a potentially damaging struggle in a conflicted relationship. The common denominator, which seems equally applicable to diplomacy, is that ritual forms of communication tend to arise "in situations where any misunderstanding, or 'missignaling,' would be catastrophic."[37] The ritualization of diplomacy, as well as everyday life, involves "face-work" – the development of repertoires of face-saving practices, including defensive ones to save one's own face and protective ones to save others' faces.[38]

Let us now turn to an examination of selected aspects of the three levels of institutionalization-cum-ritualization processes, alluded to earlier: the development of protocol at the first, symbolic and cognitive level; reciprocity, precedence and diplomatic immunity at the second level of rules; and diplomatic ranks at the third, organizational level.

Shared symbols and references: diplomatic protocol

A shared language and shared codes of interpretation, as we have seen, are prerequisites for diplomatic communication. The institutionalization of mutually understood phrases and expressions as well as rules governing the external forms of intercourse, include significant elements of ritualization. Protocol, in this wider sense, probably goes as far back as there have been contacts between polities.[39] The term protocol comes from two Greek words meaning "first glue," and originally denoted the first leaf glued on to a manuscript.[40] In a figurative sense, protocol has come to refer to the basic etiquette, or "stage-directions,"[41] for the enactment of diplomacy.

We find examples of ritualized phrases and an acute sense of protocol already in the Amarna Letters. The address and greeting phrases of the tablets constituted symbolic expressions of status. Only if the sender was superior or equal to the addressee did he name himself first. Deviations were noted and given sinister interpretations, as in this exchange:

> And now, as to the tablet that you sent me, why did you put your name over my name? And who now is the one who upsets the good relations between us, and is such conduct the accepted practice? My brother, did you write to me with peace in mind? And if you are my brother, why have you exalted your name … ?[42]

Other ritualized formulations were used to indicate relative status as well. When a new monarch succeeded to the throne there were pledges of, or demands for, "ten times more love" than for the predecessor. For a *demandeur*, who wanted to deflate the size of requested concessions from the more powerful Egypt, it was commonplace to use the phrase "gold is as plentiful as dirt" in Egypt.[43] Various expressions of deference adhered to what scholars of the Ancient Near East call "prostration formulae." Kings or vassals "touched the hem" of the receiver's garment,[44] "fell at their feet," or considered themselves "dirt under their sandals."[45] Another common idiom was "to strike the hand," which was used to express refusals of offers of alliance or breakoff of friendly relations. The phrase appears to refer to the thrusting back of a hand outstretched in friendship or previously clasped in friendship, and indicates that agreements were confirmed by the perennial handshakes.[46]

Similar examples of a fine-tuned language can be found in Byzantine diplomacy. In fact, the sense of protocol pervaded all Byzantine letters

where linguistic nuances express the relative status and relationship of writer and recipient.[47] And by the mid-fifteenth century, "all the principal chanceries of Europe had in their formularies model credentials showing how each of their neighbours should be addressed, and most legal textbooks laid down the general rules to be observed."[48]

Modern diplomatic language is replete with standardized phrases and guarded understatements. For example, a verbal or written communication to the effect that the diplomat's government "cannot remain indifferent to" an international issue, is understood to signal intervention; and the government that expresses "grave concern" over a matter is expected to adopt a strong position.[49] Each era, in short, appears to have had its own set of ritualized phrases that were well understood among diplomatic agents and rulers and enabled them to communicate even unpleasant things with an amount of tact and courtesy.

Moreover, the format of written and oral diplomatic communications has always been subject to strict conventions. Already sixteenth-century BC Hittite treaties follow a set pattern of preamble, historical introduction, provisions, deposition, list of divine witnesses and, finally, curses and blessings.[50] The form of the diplomatic correspondence in the Amarna Letters is similarly standardized. After an address, directed to the scribe who will read the letter, follows a salutation, consisting of a report of the sender's well-being and an expression of good wishes for the addressee. The body of the letter consists of varying combinations of declarations of friendship, discussions of gifts associated with this friendship, proposals of marriage, and list of goods exchanged at the time of marriage.[51]

The heraldic practices described in Homer's *Iliad* indicate the existence of implicit rules of oral presentation in Ancient Greek diplomacy. Explicit rules of oral and written presentation were formulated in the medieval art of composing diplomatic discourses for public delivery, *ars arengandi*.[52] Resident ambassadors in Renaissance Italy prepared two kinds of information for their rulers in addition to their regular dispatches: "reports," which were periodical, carefully prepared statements of the political situation in the host polity; and "relations," which were their final reports on the completion of their mission.[53] Similar interventions are expected from ambassadors to this day. In contemporary official communication a distinction is made between a *note*, a formal letter addressed to the foreign minister, signed by the ambassador, and written in the first person; a *note verbale*, an unsigned letter from the embassy to the Foreign Ministry, written in the third person; and an *aide-mémoire* or memorandum, which records facts already known, or statements already made, and carries no signature.[54]

The ritualized courtesy that we associate with diplomatic communication has oriental roots. "The East had … long been accustomed to a studied courtesy, and it was from its more polished manners that Western Europe was later to acquire those polite forms of intercourse which marked the age of chivalry."[55] The emphasis on ceremonial can also be traced back to Oriental diplomacy.

Eighth-century BC descriptions of the reception of envoys in the multistate system of Ancient China detail the formalities of offering and declining gifts.[56] One study of diplomacy in the Ch'un-ch'iu (Spring and Autumn) period, 722–481 BC, elaborates on the "great amount of ritual in the relations between the states," which "strove to outdo each other in their ceremonies to such an extent that their ability to put on a rich ceremonial front frequently determined their position among their associates."[57] The elaborate rituals served as a reflection of economic strength and, since their rigidity required much discipline, as an indication of the efficiency of the current regime. The extreme formality of diplomatic relations required a lot from the emissaries. For example, they could not attend any ceremonies to which their rank did not entitle them; at banquets in their honor, they had to be able to respond appropriately to toasts, which usually involved the ability to select for the occasion a fitting verse from the well-known songs of the time; and practically all the major events in the life of a ruling family required some sort of diplomatic representation.[58] It is significant that still a millennium later, in the seventh century, China's diplomatic relations were handled by officials at the Court of State Ceremonies.[59]

Byzantine emperors similarly attached extreme importance to ceremonial and the reception of ambassadors. In fact, one emperor, Constantine Porphyogenius wrote a detailed *Book of Ceremonies*, which apparently served as a manual for his successors.[60] Byzantium pursued a "diplomacy of hospitality," a routine of lavish receptions and banquets at the palace with a large number of foreign guests in attendance whose obvious purpose was to create an impression of greatness and world power.[61] A special department, *skrinion barbarôn*, arranged the reception of foreign ambassadors and saw to it that they were suitably impressed.[62] The ceremonies were designed to reflect the orderliness and stability of celestial and imperial power, with a heavy emphasis on the association of the emperor with Christ.[63] The *skrinion barbarôn* eventually developed into a virtual foreign ministry.

The close relationship between Byzantium and Venice provided a channel of transmission of such attention to ceremonial to the Western world. Thus, in Renaissance Venice a record was kept, the

Libro Ceremoniale, of the exact ceremonies performed for each visiting dignitary. This served as a manual for the ritual treatment of future guests.

> For each visitor a raft of ceremonial decisions had to be made: how far into the lagoon must the senators (and how many senators) go to meet the visiting dignitary; should the doge – the Venetian head of government – rise from his seat or come down from his daise in the Collegio in order to greet an ambassador; how valuable should the gold chain be that was the customary gift to foreign representatives; and what were the Venetian officials to wear at the reception?[64]

The elaborate body of rules governing the behavior of participants and the minutest details of ceremonies reduced the possibility that inadvertent acts of diplomats might lead to miscommunication with foreign rulers.[65] Diplomatic envoys had varied ceremonial functions in the late Middle Ages, a period of "a thousand formalities":

> Marriage ceremonies required the presence of ambassadors representing states friendly to those becoming allied through marriage, and a reluctance to send ambassadors or orators to grace a wedding would tend to indicate a coolness toward at least one of the parties. The death of a friendly prince or a member of his family was another of those climactic events surrounded with solemn pageantry and calling for an embassy to share the grief and offer condolences.[66]

"Funeral diplomacy" has been resurrected as a variant of summitry in modern times, but then less for its ceremonial functions and more as an opportunity for valuable contacts between the successors in power and politicians from other countries.[67]

The exchange of gifts as part of the diplomatic ceremonial from antiquity onwards could of course degenerate into bribes, and the line between the two was diffuse – much in the same way that information gathering may convert into spying. While much less elaborate and significant, some ceremonials remain in modern diplomacy. For instance, the reception of a new ambassador is still surrounded by rituals. And state visits have retained time-honored ceremonial forms, including the exchange of gifts and banquets.[68]

The conclusion of treaties seems to have been associated with rituals throughout history. In the Ancient Near East treaties invariably ended with summons to the deities of both parties to act as witnesses to the treaty provisions and explicit threats of divine retribution were envisaged

in case of violation. The number of deities assembled as treaty witnesses was often substantial, in some cases approaching one thousand.[69] Oaths were sworn by the gods of both parties, so that each ruler exposed himself to the punishment of both sets of deities should he fail to comply.

Moreover, the conclusion of treaties was accompanied by sacrifice and other gestures symbolic of the punishment that would follow a breach of the treaty. Several letters refer to the sacrifice of an animal, most often the foal of an ass.[70] For the nomads, the donkey was their sole auxiliary at a time when horses were virtually unknown. Thus the sacrifice of a donkey stressed, by its costly and spectacular nature, the importance of the consecrated event.[71] In connection with swearing the oath, each ruler was said to "touch his throat." Possibly he drew a knife, or perhaps a finger, across his throat, symbolizing the fate of treaty breakers. It is unclear whether the animal sacrifice and "touching the throat" were alternative or complementary ceremonies.[72]

There is a striking similarity with treaty rituals in Ancient China. There, too, an animal – usually a calf or an ox – was sacrificed. The treaty document was bound to the sacrificial animal, whose left ear was cut off. Both the document and the lips of the principals were smeared with blood from the ear. The document, one copy of which was buried with the sacrificial animal while the signatories kept one copy each, contained an oath invoking the wrath of the gods upon anyone who violated the covenant.[73] When the Romans concluded a treaty, officials had the treaty read aloud to the envoys of the other contracting party, pronounced a curse on any violator of its terms, whereupon they cut the throat of a sow with the *lapis silex*, a dagger of immense antiquity.[74] In short, early diplomacy in different parts of the world seems to validate the common view among anthropologists that ritual sacrifice is a substitute for the primal violence that threatens to destroy society.[75]

In Ancient Greece, on the other hand, the conclusion of a treaty was accompanied by a libation to the gods, *spondai*, and was generally affirmed by oaths, *horkoi*. Both terms came to be used figuratively to refer to treaties.[76] The ritual sacrifice had thus taken on a more symbolic form, which has survived until our days in the form of the ritual champagne toasts accompanying the signing of modern treaties.

The practice of uttering religious oaths as part of the ceremony of signing treaty documents is found in early Byzantine diplomacy as well. The Byzantines accepted non-Christian oaths of validation, in a way reminiscent of the Ancient Near East practice of invoking multiple deities as witnesses.[77] Religious appeals, at a time when Gods were considered as real as the material world, had its advantages; "since divine

sanction rather than national consent gave ancient international law its obligatory quality, it was in some respects more feared and binding than modern international law."[78]

In sum, different historical eras have developed a sense of protocol that has enabled diplomats to concentrate on substantive issues without adding unnecessary disagreements about the external forms of intercourse, while at the same time allowing for discrete signaling through deviations from ritualized forms and expressions.

Reciprocity, precedence and diplomatic immunity

If protocol provides shared references and an understanding of appropriate behavior, another level of institutionalization involves the specification and refinement of diplomatic norms and rules. In this section we will take a closer look at symbolic expressions of reciprocity rules, the troubled history of precedence rules, and the evolution of the procedural rule of diplomatic immunity.

Reciprocity

We have identified coexistence and reciprocity as central normative themes running through all diplomatic practice. The other side of the same coin is that in eras when the dominant polities are not prepared to acknowledge equal rights and to negotiate on the basis of reciprocity, diplomacy will not flourish or develop. This applies, in particular, to the all-embracing Roman Empire. "The soul of the diplomatic idea is reciprocity, and this was an unfashionable notion in the domineering environment of Roman politics after victories in war."[79] Nor did reciprocity find real sympathy in medieval Europe, when the Empire and the papacy had inherited the Roman claim to rule the world.[80] Similarly, the intensification of religious strife in Europe in the late sixteenth century nearly wrecked the diplomatic system originating in Renaissance Italy.[81]

In other eras, when the reciprocity principle had been accepted, family metaphors were often used to symbolize equal rights and fair exchanges. In the diplomacy of the Ancient Near East they figured prominently. Kings exchanging diplomatic correspondence called each other "brother," characterized their alliances as "brotherhood," and described relations of "love," "enjoying" and "not afflicting" each other's heart, sharing resources and gratifying each other's desires. Sometimes, due to differences in age, the image of a father–son relationship was invoked instead.[82] Whereas paternity seems to have been an expression of indebtedness and deference, fraternity was associated with alliances and

friendly relations, albeit not necessarily equality.[83] Exchanges, ranging from brides, gifts and wealth to military assistance, were governed by strong norms of reciprocity. Despite the frequent use of family metaphors, *specific* reciprocity – where the participants insist on an appropriate "quid" for every "quo" – rather than *diffuse* reciprocity – where no immediate return is expected – seems to have been the predominant norm. While there are many expressions of expected equivalence of behavior in bilateral relations, variations on the theme "do to me what I have done to you," mostly reflect expectations of specific rather than diffuse reciprocity.

This was obvious in the exchanges of gifts. "My gift does not amount to what I have given you every year," complained the Babylonian king to the Egyptian Pharaoh.[84] The Mittanian king Tushratta voiced similar grievances about his gifts: "in comparison with mine they are not equivalent"; moreover, "my brother has not given to me the equivalent of what he dispatched to my father."[85] While such complaints reflect ingrained expectations of specific reciprocity, one could argue that "gift exchanges which are unbalanced in the short term and thus generate the need for continuing contact are much better suited to the preservation of political relationships than barter exchanges, which are perfectly balanced by definition."[86]

Specific reciprocity was expected in other areas as well, such as the treatment of messengers. Tushratta repeatedly told the Egyptian Pharaoh that he would detain the Pharaoh's messenger, "until my brother lets my messengers go and they come to me."[87] In short, behind the professed brotherly love in the Amarna Letters one can discern a preference for hard-nosed tit-for-tat strategies. The rule of reciprocity generated "an endless process of bargaining in the guise of a competition in generosity."[88]

In the same way that family metaphors were central in Near Eastern diplomacy, notions of extended kinship formed the basis of reciprocity in Ancient Greece. Kinship claims often harked back to the mythical past, and "the Greeks attributed to the Heroic Age a form of internationalism like that of medieval chivalry, participation in a common adventure as in a medieval Crusade."[89] Appeals to kinship created by direct descent from gods or heroes in prehistoric epochs were central to entering into diplomatic relations. Kinship pleas applied to relations not only between Greek city-states but also between Greeks and non-Greeks, such as the Persian Empire. For the propagation of common ancestry across and beyond the Greek world, it was an essential feature of some of the most famous gods and heroes that they were remembered as

promiscuous wanderers. For the panhellenic ambitions of Philip and Alexander, for example, it was important to invoke the myth that a descendant of Heracles founded the royal line of Macedon.[90] These myths of origin and kinship were regarded not as myths but as knowledge. "In the Archaic period, having the same 'Greek' heroes sire genealogies of Indians, Persians, Etruscans, Epirote Molossians, and so on, apparently seemed natural to many, although perhaps not to non-Greek peoples who were supposed to have descended, say, from Heracles."[91]

In short, diplomatic appeals to kinship between polities existed through most of antiquity. In its origins, kinship diplomacy took concepts of the household, the family, and the clan, and applied them to relations between polities. Two historical transformations tended to erode the use of family metaphors in diplomacy: the rise of Rome to the status of a world empire, and the rise of Christianity with its competing vision of kinship based on religion.[92]

Yet family metaphors figure in Byzantine diplomacy as well. The Persian shah was referred to as the emperor's "brother." Unlike Persia, other polities were not considered proper states, and their rulers were mostly labeled "sons" of the emperor. The fraternal relationship with Persia could be reversed in times of conflict, when the shah, too, was addressed as "son."[93]

Friendship metaphors replaced family metaphors to symbolize reciprocity in medieval diplomacy. Resident ambassadors were sent "to win or preserve the friendship of a prince."

> That phrase was a legacy from the earliest stage of the new diplomacy when residents were exchanged only between allies. In some such form as "to conserve and extend the ancient friendship between our two republics," "because of the loyalty and affection with which my father and I have always regarded the city of Florence," "in order that your grace my be a partaker of all our thoughts as a friend and brother should," it remained in use even when the users were habitual enemies on the verge of an open breach.[94]

Today metaphors of family and friendship are reserved for diplomatic rhetoric on festive occasions, whereas hard data on trade balances, foreign investment, currency exchange rates and the like are used as indices of reciprocity. As mentioned earlier, the practice among states of retaliating the expulsion of their diplomats for espionage by expelling an equivalent number of diplomats from the initiating state is a clear-cut case of specific reciprocity. Principles of "give-and-take" also continue to apply to the

exchange of information within the diplomatic community, as we will see in Chapter 4. In short, the few examples given above indicate different ways of expressing reciprocity in symbolic, ritualized ways. At the same time, they illustrate the field of tension between specific and diffuse reciprocity that has characterized diplomatic relations throughout history.

Precedence

Whereas diplomacy has always rested on notions of coexistence and reciprocity, great importance has been attached to the precedence, or order of importance, of individual polities. In the Ancient Near East, a standardized and generally accepted arrangement distinguished between "great kings" and "small kings." Great kings were independent and controlled minor rulers, who were his "servants"; small kings were dependent on a sovereign, their "lord." Great and small kings alike acknowledged their respective positions. Small kings received protection from great kings in exchange for their loyalty. Although unbalanced, the relationship entailed reciprocal favors and interdependence. Though formalized, the evaluation of rank was not ascribed once and for all but could be changed as a result of wars and new power relations.[95]

In the evolving complex network of relationships with Egypt, rivalries and jealousies among great kings over their standing in the Pharaoh's eyes were frequent.[96] The Amarna Letters indicate that the great kings were constantly engaged in "metanegotiations over relationships – over status, ranking, and prestige, both in absolute terms, vis-à-vis Egypt, and in relative terms, vis-à-vis each other *relative* to Egypt."[97] Disputes over precedence are recorded in Ancient China as well,[98] where rulers tried to outdo each other in their ceremonies and "their ability to put on a rich ceremonial front frequently determined their position among their associates."[99] Similarly, the Byzantine emperors used lavish receptions and banquets for visiting diplomats to create the impression of precedence. By inviting representatives of several countries, they ensured that all tokens of respect shown for the emperor by foreign notables were witnessed and duly reported.[100]

In medieval Europe, detailed rules governed the ceremonial entry of diplomats and visiting princes at the city gates. "Exactly where the two parties met each other, that is how far beyond the city gates the reception party traveled, and the value of the gift were calculated according to what became during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a precise index of honors."[101] Mutually accepted procedures were scrupulously observed, and the slightest deviation could be interpreted as a deliberate insult. Sometimes this had absurd consequences.

> The Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, famous for his nasty temper, confounded smooth relations because of his literal adherence to the forms of etiquette. In 1473 at Trèves the Emperor Frederick III met Charles at some distance from the town, an apparent surprise that led to a long discussion about exactly how the entry should take place. Although the emperor wanted to honor Charles by riding side-by-side with him into the city, the duke refused, preferring to observe protocol by riding respectfully behind his superior. As the wrangling wore on, it began to rain, drenching everyone including the emperor who put on a cloak for protection, but Charles refused to cover himself because pride would not allow the obscuring of his jewels. Since their master remained uncovered none of the members of the Burgundian party could put on their cloaks either.[102]

Another way of indicating precedence was used by the popes and the sultans of Constantinople alike: they received resident ambassadors but sent none.[103] The Pope, in fact, claimed the right to decide in what order monarchs should be listed. In a memorandum of 1504 the Pope placed himself first, followed by the Emperor and his heir-apparent. Then followed the kings of France, Spain, Aragon and Portugal.[104] The papal ranking was not universally accepted. In fact, early European diplomacy was "full of endless crises caused by intended or unintended slights occurring between ambassadors or their retinues – usually the latter – and also resulting from attempts by ambassadors to gain a higher status in their treatment by the ruler to whom they were accredited, sometimes by seeking to perform highly personal services."[105]

Especially between France and Spain there were endless struggles for precedence. In 1618 the Spanish ambassador to London, who had befriended James I and had made several moves to enhance the prestige of Spain, refused to attend the Twelfth Night festivities unless his place was higher than that of the French ambassador's. When the outraged French envoy did not receive the unqualified assurance of precedence he demanded, he announced his recall, to be followed by an ultimatum and, possibly, war. In the end, the French government did not go that far, and the Spanish ambassador retained the precedence he had gained.[106]

In 1633, when the King of Denmark celebrated the wedding of his son, a new dispute arose between the French and Spanish ambassadors as to their placement at the reception table. The French diplomat refused to accept various solutions suggested by the Danish ministers and indicated that he would let his Spanish colleague select the place he regarded as the most honorable and then forcibly remove him and take

the place himself. When the Spanish envoy learned of it, he adroitly averted an open clash by absenting himself from the wedding ceremony, on a plea of urgent business elsewhere.[107]

A more elegant solution was found in 1659 when the French and Spanish ambassadors' carriages met in a narrow street in the Hague and each refused to give way to the other. After a three-hour dispute, the envoys devised a mutual face-saving plan. A fence was removed, so that the French carriage had the honor of remaining on the regular pavement while the Spanish carriage could pass on the preferred position at the right.[108]

The most infamous and dramatic incident occurred in London in 1661 on the arrival of a new Swedish ambassador. As was customary then, other foreign envoys sent their gala coaches to add magnificence to the procession. However, the festive moment turned into a fracas, as told by Harold Nicolson:

> The Swedish envoy landed, entered the royal coach which had been sent to meet him, and drove off. The French Ambassador's coachman edged his horses immediately behind the Swedish equipage, an action which was regarded by the coachman of the Spanish Ambassador as a direct insult to the King of Spain. A struggle ensued which (since each coach had been accompanied by some 150 armed men) assumed serious proportions. The French coachman was pulled from his box, two of the horses were hamstrung, and a postilion was killed. Louis XIV thereupon severed diplomatic relations with Spain, and threatened to declare war unless a full apology were given and the Spanish Ambassador in London were punished. The King of Spain, anxious to avoid hostilities, agreed to make the necessary apologies and reparation.[109]

The rivalry between France and Spain over precedence was finally resolved by an agreement in 1761, according to which the French ambassador was always to have precedence at Naples and Parma, where the sovereigns belonged to the Bourbon family, while at all other courts the relative rank was to be determined by the date of arrival of the ambassadors. In case both arrived on the same day, the French ambassador was to have precedence.[110]

Matters of precedence also aggravated encounters between the European powers and China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as China insisted on universal acknowledgment of China's superior civilization. Early attempts by Britain to establish diplomatic

relations with China ended in failure. "British envoys were treated as though they were representatives of a vassal kingdom, and it took two wars before, in 1860, the Chinese accepted a resident mission in Peking and dropped their demand that European diplomats kowtow before the imperial throne."[111]

Conflicts over precedence haunted international conferences as well, entailing long, and not always successful, negotiations concerning the order in which representatives would be seated at the conference table. For instance, the Thirty Years War was prolonged and the Treaty of Westphalia delayed as a result of quarrels over status and precedence, which reflected the competing principles of hierarchy vs. dynastic state equality.[112] The period of eight or nine years of bargaining preceding the Congress of Westphalia included Richelieu's struggle to prevent offers of good offices and mediation from neutral powers from wrecking the Franco-Swedish alliance, the problem of establishing channels of communication between Catholic and Protestant powers, as well as quarrels over status, over the legitimacy of diplomatic agents and over forms of safe-conducts.[113]

Further disputes could arise regarding the order in which representatives would sign agreements and treaties. Treaty signatures were long ordered according to precedence, which invited controversies. Sir Thomas Roe, a seventeenth-century English ambassador at Constantinople, has described his quandary in signing a treaty in view of the ongoing quarrel over precedence between England and France. Precedence was indicated by signing on the left-hand side of the document in the Christian tradition, on the right-hand side according to Turkish custom.

> This being the case, Roe calculated that if he signed on one side, the French ambassador would sign on the other – and claim, depending on Roe's choice, either by appeal to Christian or Turkish style, to have stolen precedence. Accordingly, … the English ambassador "took a compass, and exactly in the middle signed and sealed it according to form."[114]

Gradually, however, a new principle emerged, the *alternat*, according to which each representative signed his own copy of the treaty first. While disputed at first, this principle has been institutionalized to the extent that it is still adhered to today. The *alternat* did not solve problems of precedence altogether, as it did not prescribe the order in which other signatures were to follow.[115]

When the Holy Roman Empire came to an end in 1806 and France, with a republican rather than monarchical form of government, was no longer in a position to reassert its claims to privileged rank, questions of precedence became less acute.[116] The Congress of Vienna in 1815 drew up a convention establishing precedence among diplomatic envoys according to the date they have presented their credentials, disregarding precedence among their principals altogether. Thus, the ambassador who has served longest at a post is considered *doyen* or dean. As spokesman of the diplomatic corps the *doyen* has certain rights and duties as well as an amount of influence.[117]

The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818 established the principle that representatives at conferences sign treaties in alphabetical order.[118] Alphabetization has since become used by most international organizations for avoiding precedence issues in seating representatives. While it may raise issues of language politics, alphabetical order can also be used creatively. Delegations can be seated alphabetically by the state's name in English, as in the UN, or in French, as in the Council of Europe. The EU Council of Ministers seats states in alphabetical order following the state's own language.[119]

Thus, devices were found that deprived the precedence issue of its previous controversy and drama and that have since become firmly institutionalized. Yet even after the Congress of Vienna notions of precedence among states lingered. For example, it was still generally accepted that only great powers could exchange ambassadors, whereas the diplomatic representatives sent or received by smaller powers – or "powers with limited interests," as they were euphemistically called – should have the rank of minister. Hence, at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, only three capitals – Paris, St. Petersburg and Constantinople – were considered worthy of receiving British ambassadors.[120] As late as the summer of 1945, when the Big Three met in Potsdam, additional doors to the meeting room had to be built, so that Churchill, Truman and Stalin could enter simultaneously, thus avoiding any impression of precedence.

While issues of precedence may still arise, they do not carry the same significance and can be resolved creatively and pragmatically. One recent example concerns the funeral of Japan's emperor Hirohito in 1989, with leaders from around the world in attendance.

> The Japanese were delighted when the United States president, George Bush, announced that he would attend. A problem was posed by traditional protocol, which dictates that heads of state be accorded

> precedence by the date on which they assumed their position. As Bush had only just taken office, he would be the most junior in the seating arrangements. Japan, however, wanted to make the most of having the world's most powerful leader present at the funeral of its emperor. The solution hit upon was to treat the funeral as a celebration of Hirohito's life and not as a state event, and it was thus announced that heads of state would be treated in the first instance in the order of countries Hirohito had visited during his life. This resulted in placing the American president at the centre of the front row of attendant heads of state.[121]

If questions of precedence are less prominent today, and are more easily solved, should they arise, consciousness of status and precedence nevertheless persist. For instance, the president of the United States and the prime minister of the United Kingdom are never seen in the back row of group photographs taken at the end of multilateral conferences.[122]

In sum, in the Ancient Near East as well as in medieval Europe we find institutionalized, relatively well-defined rules of precedence. Encounters between the Chinese Middle Kingdom and Europe entailed conflicts of precedence. And from the seventeenth century onwards, the European continent saw continuous struggles over precedence, which eventually triggered efforts to develop "a body of rules governing diplomatic conduct at official functions and other encounters."[123] The last two centuries have seen the development of rules that have neutralized the whole issue of precedence.

Diplomatic immunity

It is reasonable to assume, as Nicolson does, that the principle of diplomatic immunity was the first to become established in prehistoric times. Anthropoid apes and savages must at some stage have realized the advantages of negotiating understandings about the limits of hunting territories. With this must have come the realization that these negotiations could never reach a satisfactory conclusion if emissaries were killed and eaten.[124] The inviolability of messengers seems to be an accepted principle among aboriginal peoples.[125]

While acknowledged in principle, the inviolability of messengers was far from unproblematic in the diplomacy of the Ancient Near East. Messengers, in fact, faced two kinds of perils. First, they might be attacked, robbed and even killed by brigands or nomads during the journey, especially if they had to travel alone through remote areas. Second, messengers were often detained by the receiving rulers in order

to exert pressure on the messenger's principal. The frequency of letters condemning such practices, requesting either intervention to punish violators and compensate for losses or the release of detained messengers, speak to the validity of the norm of immunity despite its frequent violation. In one letter, for instance, the Kassite king urges the Egyptian Pharaoh's intervention:

> My messenger Salmu, whom I sent to you, twice has his caravan been robbed. Firstly, Biryawaza robbed him, and secondly Pamahu, your own governor over a region [that is] your tributary, robbed him. My brother should take up this case. As soon as this messenger of mine speaks to the presence of my brother, Salmu should likewise speak to the presence of my brother. One should give him back his objects and one should compensate him for the losses he suffered.[126]

In virtually endless feuds, kings were protesting the detention of their own messengers while simultaneously detaining the messengers of their "brothers" in retaliation:

> My brother, I would like to send back your messenger promptly, but as long as my brother detains my messenger, I detain these men here. As soon as he lets my messengers go and present their report to me, I will let Mane go and I will send Keliya back to my brother as before. As long as my brother detains my messengers, I will do as I have planned.[127]

Letters, such as this, demonstrate that communication went on despite detained messengers, probably by "using couriers of lesser rank whose detention would have provided less leverage."[128] The principle of inviolability, in short, was recognized but not firmly institutionalized in the Ancient Near East.

In Ancient India, as in the Ancient Near East, kings were held responsible for the safety of envoys. According to Sanskrit classics, envoys were immune from killing, and the king who killed an envoy was sure to go to hell with all his ministers. Moreover, such an act would involve his forefathers in the sin in the same way as did the killing of an embryo.[129] In Ancient China the murder of an envoy was also considered a grave affront, and diplomatic immunity seems to have been submerged in a larger principle of extraterritorial privileges applying to all the nobility.[130]

Ancient Greek envoys could not take their inviolability for granted, and "it was for purely practical reasons that they did not often come to

harm."[131] Two categories of diplomatic agents enjoyed immunity: heralds, who functioned under some form of divine patronage, and *proxenoi*, honorary consuls (more about the different diplomatic ranks in Ancient Greece in the next section). Heralds did not risk being seized and often preceded embassies to demand safe-conduct for their reception.[132]

The ancient tradition of immunity was codified by the Romans in the *ius gentium*. In Rome, immunity was extended to include the staffs of foreign envoys. However, their diplomatic correspondence was exposed to scrutiny by the Roman postal officers. If members of a visiting embassy acted against the law, they were, as a rule, sent back under guard to where they came from. In addition, the Roman Senate could refuse to receive a visiting embassy, in which case the envoys lost their diplomatic immunity, were denounced as spies or *speculators* and were similarly expelled.[133]

By the late Middle Ages a fairly consistent theory of diplomatic immunity had been worked out, granting envoys inviolability and extending immunity from any form of civil or criminal action to his suite and his goods. This immunity did not shield ambassadors from punishment for misbehavior, whether espionage, homicide, theft or the non-payment of debts. In such events, however, they were brought before the prince's court, being free from the jurisdiction of any lower court.[134] Even if lip-service was paid to the doctrine of immunity, ambassadors did well to heed Conradus Brunus' warning, written in mid-sixteenth century, that "a still tongue often marketh a wise man."[135] Diplomats were frequently accused of participating in conspiracies by suspicious princes. It was also unclear whether immunity was extended to the ambassador's suite. When Don Pedro d'Ayala was Spanish ambassador in London under Henry VII, the toll of casualties in his household was quite high: out of twelve men in his service, two were slain on the road, four fell in the wars and three more were seriously wounded.[136] Throughout the later Renaissance conflicts between ambassadors' household and local authorities continued to be numerous.

> Embassy staffs ranged from grave secretaries and young aristocrats through tough couriers and lackeys down to horse-boys and turnspits. They were not always carefully selected. Usually they included nationals of the country of residence. As such groups began to realize that their immunity from local prosecution could be extended by the insistence of the ambassador they served, it is not surprising that municipal authorities and city mobs responded to their provocations with violence. Embassy servants were attacked in the streets. Embassy

> precincts were forcibly invaded by local officers. Now and then some ambassador's residence stood for days what almost amounted to a siege. Violence was by no means one-sided. Embassy servants with drawn swords swarmed into the streets to rescue comrades. Peace officers were mauled and maltreated.[137]

Eventually most of these imbroglios had to be settled by the prince, who often wanted to avoid any diplomatic breach. As it became increasingly difficult to deny one embassy what had been granted to another, "acts of special favour tended to harden into custom."[138]

Immunity, in medieval times, "was justified by arguing that diplomats enjoyed the rights and privileges of their sovereigns, and since sovereigns embodied their polities then so, by default, must their representatives."[139] The increasing importance of permanent embassies in the sixteenth century, at the same time as the idea of the territorial, sovereign state was taking hold, revealed the contradictions between medieval theory and evolving practice. The territorial state claimed sovereignty over all who dwelt within its limits. "With the ambassador no longer a mere bird of passage but a permanent resident, this view must necessarily lead to friction."[140] Slowly, "the curious fiction of extraterritoriality"[141] gained ground, the pretension that the ambassador and the precincts of his embassy remained outside the territory of the receiving polity and remained, as it were, on the soil of his homeland. In 1625, Hugo Grotius, in his *De iure belli ac pacis*, developed the legal theory of extraterritoriality or exterritoriality, as it is alternately called.

In a period of bitter religious strife, the embassy chapel question became a prominent test of, and enhanced interest in, the idea of extraterritoriality. The Augsburg principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, making the religion of the prince the appropriate religion for all his subjects, might jeopardize the ambassadors' freedom of worship. Could Protestant ambassadors have private chapels and attend services of their own faith in Catholic countries? In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries disputes arose as a result of the host government's arrest of, or interference with, the ambassador's chaplain, assaults on the ambassador's chapel, and efforts to prevent its own subjects from attending services that the ambassador had been allowed to provide.[142] The fact that these issues were tacitly resolved by the second half of the seventeenth century implied the acceptance and strengthening of the extraterritoriality principle. "If embassies were licensed to flout the most sacred laws of the realm, it was easier to think of them as not being within the realm at all."[143]

The idea of extraterritoriality gave rise to claims of *franchise du quartier*, the notion that the embassy was a kind of sanctuary and that its immunity implied a right of asylum. This created great problems for local authorities. If you cannot arrest any person within the embassy or even search the embassy, ambassadors can protect not only their own households but anyone who takes refuge there. This was a controversial aspect of extraterritoriality among legal experts and governments alike. There were several cases of authorities violating the immunity of embassies in search of criminals or political enemies. Still the right of asylum persisted in practice, underpinned by the extraterritoriality of the embassy.[144] In the absence of any agreement on the circumstances in which this right may be exercised, diplomatic asylum is today regarded as a matter of humanitarian practice rather than a legal right.[145]

Whereas the inviolability of diplomatic missions and agents is guaranteed under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Cold War era saw "a retrogression insofar as diplomatic privileges and immunities are concerned."[146] Infringements on the immunity of Western diplomats in Communist countries ranged from bugged embassies to travel restrictions and detentions. Mutual allegations of espionage haunted diplomatic relations. The emphasis placed on national security in the age of nuclear insecurity accounted for some of the pressures and harassments. At the same time, the growing size and variegated personnel of the diplomatic missions of the Cold War protagonists raised questions concerning the extent of immunities.

Diplomatic privileges and immunities can, of course, be abused, and are among the public often associated with exemption from tax on liquor and luxury goods, unpaid parking fines and unpunished crimes. Such conspicuous abuses as the participation of North Korean diplomats in the smuggling and illegal sales of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes in the 1970s and the bullets fired from inside the premises of the Libyan embassy (labeled People's Bureau) in London in April, 1984, killing one police officer and injuring eleven others, have contributed to this image. Yet, on balance, the risks of diplomatic personnel hiding behind the cloak of diplomatic privileges and immunities are outweighed by the risks of receiving states and zealous groups harassing and harming diplomats representing disliked states.[147] While occasionally abused and violated, immunity rules continue to be a cornerstone of diplomatic intercourse.

In sum, we find expressions of rules and customs of diplomatic immunity, more or less institutionalized, in different historical eras and geographical areas. The justifications may have varied. The notion of

personal representation, prescribing that the envoy be treated as if he were the divine or secular sovereign, has the deepest historical roots.[148] It has also had lingering effects. For example, the US government did not appoint ambassadors until late in the nineteenth century, partly because of the widespread perception that ambassadors were personal representatives of monarchs.[149] To this day, it can be argued, "diplomats must retain a certain residue from the era of direct correspondence" and "have to pretend and get others to pretend that their symbolic claims are in some sense true."[150]

The idea of extraterritoriality, conceiving of the embassy as part of the territory of the sending state, is of more recent origin. It evolved after the establishment of permanent resident missions in the fifteenth century and "has had a relatively short run, a mere four centuries, in the long history of political ideas."[151] While generally discarded today as legal fiction or a "picturesque metaphor," we find vestiges of extraterritoriality in occasional incidents of political asylum in embassies.[152]

As noted earlier, the most perennial and robust foundation of diplomatic immunity seems to be functional necessity: the privileges and immunities that diplomatic envoys have enjoyed throughout the ages have simply been seen as necessary to enable diplomats to perform their functions.[153] Functional necessity rests on the principle of reciprocity: "governments expect that other governments will reciprocate in the extension of immunities to similar categories of diplomatic and non-diplomatic personnel."[154] It was functional necessity, according to Nicolson, that lay behind the presumed prehistoric origin of immunity, it has always been a major consideration, and it remains the backbone of today's firmly institutionalized and codified rules of diplomatic immunities and privileges.

Diplomatic ranks

In the beginning there were messengers. The messengers of the Ancient Near East had different backgrounds and social standing, and they were more or less influential or accepted; yet no formal hierarchy of diplomatic agents emerged, and the term "messenger" was used uniformly for all embassies.[155] An embryonic differentiation of ranks seems to have been made in Ancient India. In his book *Arthasastra*, Kautilya classifies diplomatic envoys into four categories, which, according to one observer,[156] correspond roughly to the classifications adopted both at the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

In Ancient Greece a hierarchy of diplomatic agents evolved. At the apex were heralds (*kerykes*), who were regarded as the offspring of Hermes. Heralds were considered inviolable, protected by the gods, and therefore enjoyed what amounted to a form of diplomatic immunity. Other representative agents were envoys (*presbeis*) and messengers (*angeloi*), who were dispatched on diplomatic missions without these privileges. Unlike the herald, who functioned alone, the latter generally worked in larger numbers, often representing different parties and points of view, and were selected from the politically active circles.[157] These envoys were often wealthy and politically influential, and in Athens they were popularly elected.[158]

Another Ancient Greek representational practice, *proxenia*, bears some resemblance to modern consular services. A *proxenos* was a citizen of the city-state in which he resided, representing the interests of another city-state. Among the privileges enjoyed by the *proxenoi* was that of immunity in peace and war, both by land and by sea. If the *proxenoi* had to leave their own city-state as a result of war or broken alliances, they were often granted asylum in the alien *polis* with which they were associated.[159] The post was regarded as one of honor, and many distinguished men served as *proxenoi*. For example, Demosthenes, the famous orator who was also entrusted several diplomatic missions, was the *proxenos* of Thebes at Athens,[160] and the most celebrated Athenian *proxenos* was the poet Pindar in Thebes.[161] One of the chief duties of a *proxenos* was to entertain and assist citizens of the city-state for which he acted, when they visited his own *polis*. Another duty was to promote commercial relations.[162]

Proxenia was modeled on the ritualized friendship linking elites across political boundaries, called *xenia* (with the double meaning of "guest" and "friendship"). *Xenia* shared with kinship the assumption of perpetuity, and in several ways this ritualized friendship mimicked aspects of kinship relations.[163] In fact, the horizontal ties of *xenia* among elites were sometimes stronger than the vertical ties with their inferiors within their own *polis*.[164] It is noteworthy that "networks of *proxenia* roughly coincided with the networks of *xeniai* to which they owed their origin."[165]

The Roman imperial bureaucracy included no specialized diplomatic personnel. Yet, beginning in the fourth century, a kind of specialization developed, insofar as Rome not only sent the same envoy repeatedly to the same destination, but would also dispatch members of the same family on subsequent embassies in order to capitalize on established goodwill and utilize family expertise.[166] Byzantine envoys were mostly laymen from the court, often with the generic title of *archōn*, or senator.

There was no office or title that was considered as especially appropriate for diplomatic envoys, who were selected from all levels of the bureaucracy on the basis of the emperor's confidence in them personally.[167]

In medieval Europe there existed a variety of titles for diplomatic messengers, such as *legatus, nuncius, missus, ambaxator* and *orator*; yet they did not signify differentiated ranks but in essence referred to the same kind of bearers of written or oral messages.[168] Gradually, the title of procurator came to be used for diplomatic agents who did not only deliver messages from their principals, but could negotiate and conclude treaties (cf. Chapter 5). Well into the seventeenth century most ambassadors were entitled "ambassadors and procurators," until the term "plenipotentiary" finally replaced "procurator."[169] Heralds represented another category of diplomatic agents. As custodians of the medieval codes of chivalry, these minor officials were supposed to make dignified appearances at public ceremonies, confer honors to foreign rulers, convey warnings, ultimatums and defiances, and arrange truces and parleys. Heralds, as a rule, lacked the training, experience and social position of ambassadors.[170] Thus, a hierarchy of diplomatic agents gradually developed.

The 1815 Congress of Vienna and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations adopted similar classifications of diplomatic agents, distinguishing between ambassadors, ministers and chargés d'affaires as heads of mission.[171] Diplomatic ranks today have become thoroughly institutionalized and internationalized. On the other hand, embassies are today increasingly populated by various national specialists catapulted into diplomatic roles. New forms of international cooperation have raised the number of government personnel stationed abroad who are not employed by the traditional foreign affairs agencies. For instance, more than 60 per cent of those under the authority of US ambassadors and other chiefs of mission are not State Department employees.[172] The same pattern is evident in the European Union. Hence, questions of diplomatic rank may arise anew.

Concluding remarks

Processes of institutionalization and ritualization can be found in different eras and different parts of the world. In early diplomacy, these were grounded in religion and kinship or friendship metaphors. Thus, the whole vocabulary of Ancient Near Eastern diplomacy was rooted in the vocabulary of sacred rite and ritual. For instance, in Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the time (see Chapter 4), the original meaning of

the word for protocol, *partsu*, was "service due to the gods." By extension it came to connote "service due to kings."[173] Much of the vocabulary used in Ancient Greek diplomacy mirrored terms used to describe relationships between heads of households,[174] and diplomatic practices mimicked interpersonal relations of friendship and kinship. The power of these symbolic realms is suggested by the vestiges of ancient rituals in modern diplomacy.

Rituals and ceremonial were no doubt more important in the earlier stages of diplomacy than today, but ritualization appears to be a permanent feature of diplomacy. It seems reasonable to conclude that "diplomacy without ritual is inconceivable."[175] Over time we can see a development from religious to secular rituals, but Chiefs of Protocol, "the smoothest of smooth operators even in a profession that is hardly known for its roughnecks,"[176] continue to be important players on the diplomatic scene.

This chapter has also demonstrated the timelessness of problems concerning the norms, rules and organization of diplomacy. Apart from the evolution from religious to secular terms of reference, we do not see any unilinear pattern of development. Questions concerning protocol, reciprocity, precedence, diplomatic immunity and diplomatic ranks have always arisen. The issues may not have been the same at different times, the solutions may have varied, and there have been differing degrees of institutionalization; but the need to maintain, strengthen and develop key pillars of the institution of diplomacy remains constant.

4
Communication

> Communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body. Whenever communication ceases, the body of international politics, the process of diplomacy, is dead, and the result is violent conflict or atrophy.
>
> Tran, *Communication and Diplomacy in a Changing World*[1]

> Communication is the essence of diplomacy. There has never been a good diplomat who was a bad communicator.
>
> Stearns, *Talking to Strangers*[2]

Observers and practitioners alike testify to the vital role of communication in diplomacy. In fact, diplomacy is often defined in terms of communication – as "a regulated process of communication"[3] or "the communication system of the international society,"[4] to mention but two examples. "The pristine form of diplomacy," argues Hedley Bull, "is the transmitting of messages between one independent political community and another."[5] Etymologically, the word "diplomacy" is derived from the Greek verb *diploun*, "to double," and from the Greek noun *diploma*, which refers to an official document written on double leaves joined together and folded.[6] *Diploma* has the double connotations of a secret message and an official paper conferring certain rights to the bearer. Symbolic representations of diplomacy, too, tend to highlight its communicative aspects. For instance, the illustrations in Byzantine manuscripts of a scroll handed from a bowing envoy to a seated figure are "a clear shorthand for an embassy."[7]

The association of diplomacy with communication goes far back in history. Sixteenth-century theorists argued that the first diplomats were angels, messengers between deities and human beings.[8] Even if

modern observers dismiss this notion as "mytho-diplomacy,"[9] we should remember that "in two classical languages, Hebrew and Greek, the words for messenger ('*mal'ach*' in Hebrew and '*angelos*' in Greek) convey the idea of sacredness as well as of secular mission."[10] In Ancient Greece Hermes, the divine messenger, was the deity of language and diplomacy, and the most prominent diplomatic emissaries, heralds (*kerykes*), were regarded as the offspring of Hermes.

In short, diplomats are messengers and diplomacy involves communication between polities. Today the need to communicate is most graphically demonstrated, paradoxically, when diplomatic relations are broken and the parties almost always look for, and find, other ways of communicating.[11] In this chapter we will outline and illustrate a number of pertinent dimensions of the communicative aspects of diplomacy. In doing so, we rely on a perspective on communication that emphasizes its constructive elements.

All social communication involves the transmission of messages to which certain meanings are attached. The traditional approach to the study of communication highlights the process, in which senders and receivers encode and decode messages, while treating the meaning of these messages as given. This view of communication is in keeping with our everyday understanding of language, which is structured by a complex "conduit metaphor," according to which language is a carrier of ideas, thoughts and so on, so that all a listener/reader needs to do is to "unpack" the message and "take out" what was "in" it.[12] A constructivist approach to communication, by contrast, treats the production and negotiation of meaning as central and problematic. Meaning does not reside in the message itself but is produced in interactive processes. Rather than viewing meaning as an absolute, static concept, constructivists see "signification" as an active process. Context and cognition enter into the production of meaning. In the constructivist perspective, therefore, communication is far from effortless and success is by no means automatic.

After reviewing the significance of language to diplomacy, we outline the basic aspects of diplomatic communication, the gathering and transmission of information – diplomats as the "eyes and ears" and the "mouthpieces" of governments. Next we turn to negotiations, processes of back-and-forth communication, as key instruments to solve issues in ways acceptable to the involved polities. We will identify two important dimensions of choice or options in the diplomatic repertoire: verbal vs. nonverbal communication, and private vs. public communication. Finally, we will focus on technological developments as vehicles of change in diplomatic communication.

Language

We need to be reminded that the very word "communication" derives from the Latin verb *communicare*, which means "to make shared or common." The problem of achieving shared meanings has been central to diplomatic communication throughout the ages. Diplomacy usually involves communication among polities that are separated by different languages. The search for shared meanings is then facilitated by the existence of a common diplomatic language. The notion of a common language has two different connotations: language in a purely linguistic sense, and language in a broader sociological sense.

The linguistic aspect may seem trivial but has to be taken seriously. Since the dawn of history, the use of different languages in international communication has been a source of misunderstanding and discord. To mention but one early example:

> Artaxerxes of Achaemenid Persia sent to Sparta a special messenger, named Artaphernes, with a complaint that he was unable to understand the many ambassadors who had been dispatched to his court, and urged the Spartans to choose someone who could speak plainly and be understood by him. Of interest, perhaps, is the highly complicated method involved in the transmittal of the above communication: it was prepared in Aramaic, written in Assyrian script, and in order to be acted upon by the Spartans required translation into Greek.[13]

Thus, there has always been a tendency toward developing a *lingua franca* of diplomacy. Sumerian, the first known linguistic medium of culture and civilization in the Tigris–Euphrates valley, may be considered the "earliest language of diplomatic intercourse and expression."[14] From the third millennium BC Akkadian, a rather peripheral Semitic language, became the recognized diplomatic language. It is puzzling that Akkadian was adopted as the diplomatic language by kings as powerful and different as the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Hurrian, the Hittite or the Elamite.[15] Even though Akkadian was not such a dominant language as Egyptian, Hebrew or Phoenician, it had certain advantages that allowed it to remain the diplomatic *lingua franca* until the time of Alexander the Great.

Akkadian, like Sumerian, used cuneiform script that could be easily used by speakers of other tongues. Egyptian scripts, by contrast, were intended for the use of Egyptian only.[16] In addition, Akkadian had some technical advantages as a diplomatic language.

> [T]here is no denying that an impression left by a stylus on soft clay tablets rapidly drying in the sun was more usable and versatile for the keeping of records than hieroglyphs carved on stone or wood. Furthermore, it was obviously much easier to transport and storage tablets made of dried or baked clay than tablets made of rock and ebony.[17]

In fact, the use of clay tablets for cuneiform writing spread to the most remote parts of the ancient world and became the mainstay of the Cretan–Minoan civilization of prehistoric Greece.

When Akkadian ceased to exist as a living language, it was superseded by Aramaic as the leading diplomatic language. The native tongue of the Arameans in Syria, Aramaic made its way into the polyglot society of Persia and became a *lingua franca* along the caravan routes of the desert. The great advantage of Aramaic was that, by the tenth-century BC, it had adopted the best writing technique hitherto known to mankind – the alphabet.[18]

Greek, and later Latin, became common diplomatic languages in the wake of expanding empires. Chinese, like Akkadian script, had the quality of being understood by speakers of different tongues and was thus useful as the diplomatic language for empire-building in Asia.

The choice between Greek and Latin became an issue in Byzantine diplomacy. By the end of the sixth century, Constantinople abandoned Latin and used only Greek as the language of diplomacy, whereas Latin dominated in Rome. Without skillful translation, mutual incomprehension could occur.[19] As the written language of not only the Roman Empire but also of its successor, the Holy Roman Empire, and of the Roman Catholic Church, Latin eventually became the natural language of European diplomacy. Most treaties were written in Latin, and Latin was used in conversations between diplomats.[20] Letters between rulers of the Franks, Longobards and other successor kingdoms were written in Latin. Moreover, these letters continued to use the "rhetoric appropriate for the late Roman letters of state."[21] By and large, it was this rhetoric, evoking the unity of the former Roman Empire, that "bound the sub-Roman world in east and west into a common orbit."[22]

By 1600, command of conversational Latin began to be rare among European diplomats, and negotiations through interpreters became common.[23] No other common language of diplomacy arose until the eighteenth century, when French became the language of the European nobility and, by implication, the diplomatic language *par préférence*. The French language, argues Nicolson, "is better adapted than any

other to an intercourse requiring the perfect fusion of courtesy with precision."[24]

There were efforts in the nineteenth century to make English a rival. For instance, in 1800 Lord Grenville conducted his relations with foreign diplomats accredited to the Court of St. James in English instead of French. British Foreign Secretary George Canning in 1826 instructed his diplomats to use English in official international relations. And Lord Palmerston in 1851 insisted that every country was entitled to use its own language in official communications.[25] But it was the multilateral conferences of the twentieth century that "offered the English language the first real opportunity to oppose French linguistic supremacy."[26] Only in the aftermath of the First World War did English emerge as one of two languages of diplomacy.

> The predominance of French as the official language of diplomacy suffered a severe setback at the Paris Peace Conference following World War I, where two of the Big Four – Wilson and Lloyd George – could not speak the language, and Clemenceau could speak English as well as French. Much of the discussion therefore took place in English. Following the Conference, with the establishment of the League of Nations, English was elevated to the stature of French as a coordinate language of diplomacy.[27]

While English has increasingly become the *lingua franca* of diplomatic and most other professional communication, the multitude of languages continues to represent challenges to diplomats and opportunities for interpreters.

Multilateral diplomacy has added to the linguistic problems; "unilateralism in diplomatic language is a thing of the past."[28] Yet it has also generated creative solutions. For instance, a constructive distinction between working languages and official languages was introduced at the 1945 San Francisco Conference. Then English, Russian, Chinese, French and Spanish were granted the status of official languages of the conference, whereas only English and French were accepted as working languages.[29]

Sometimes linguistic variety can be an asset rather than a liability. When the Ukrainian leader Leonid Kuchma appeared uninvited at the NATO summit in Prague in November 2002, he created an acute diplomatic crisis. If he were to be placed in alphabetical order following the English spelling of participating countries, the controversial Kuchma, who was suspected of providing Iraq with radar equipment, would sit

next to US President George W. Bush and UK Premier Tony Blair. The embarrassing situation was solved by changing to French, whereby USA became Etats Unis, United Kingdom Royaume Uni, and Kuchma ended up between the Turkish president and EU High Commissioner Javier Solana.[30]

Language, in sum, may contribute to – but is by no means the sole source of – communication problems in diplomacy. Successful communication requires more than a mutually understood language. According to semioticians, it presupposes a common *code*, a certain (often unconscious) preknowledge that is necessary for understanding a message. A common code establishes what German hermeneutic philosophers call *Interpretationsgemeinschaft*, initial commonality with respect to interpretation.[31] Later-day followers of Jürgen Habermas use the term "lifeworld" to denote "the linguistically acquired and organized stock of patterns of understanding."[32] Whatever the label, diplomatic communication rests on such intersubjective structures of meaning and collective understanding. This harks back to what we referred to as the first, cognitive level of institutionalization in Chapter 3, and is in line with the constructivist perspective on communication, alluded to earlier, which treats the meaning of messages as the result of interactive processes.

In fact, we may think of diplomats as "intuitive semioticians," as conscious producers and interpreters of signs. Although semiotics is rarely part of their formal education, diplomats are by training and experience experts at weighing words and gestures with a view to their effect on potential receivers.[33] We may also be reminded that hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, is explicitly associated with Hermes, the Ancient Greek deity of diplomacy.[34]

As shown in Chapter 3, the institutionalization of diplomacy has involved the development of a common language with ritualized phrases, which have allowed cross-cultural communication with a minimum of unnecessary misunderstanding. The diplomatic dialogue, therefore, can be seen to be based on a code that is shared by members of the diplomatic community. Courtesy, nonredundancy and constructive ambiguity are prominent features of diplomatic language. The salience of courteous, nondramatic phrases led the American writer Caskie Stinnett to characterize a diplomat as "a person who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip." The principle of nonredundancy means that "a diplomatic communication should say neither too much nor too little because every word, nuance of omission will be meticulously studied for any shade of meaning."[35] Another ironic characterization of a diplomat is thus a person who "thinks twice before

saying nothing."[36] Constructive ambiguity avoids premature closure of options. Circumlocution, such as understatements and loaded omissions, permits controversial things to be said in a way understood in the diplomatic community but without needless provocation.[37]

Gathering information

Diplomacy is involved both in the formulation of a polity's external policy and in its execution. Policy formulation requires the gathering and assessment of information about the external environment. Thus, the introduction of resident ambassadors – one of the most important innovations of Renaissance diplomacy – flowed from the growing need not only to send messages but to gather information about neighbors among vulnerable yet ambitious Italian city-states.[38] "The collection and processing of information to be relayed to their home government was still, in the Europe of 1620, as it had been in the Italy of 1490, their [the ambassadors'] steadiest and most unremitting task."[39] Ever since information gathering has come to be regarded as a basic function of modern diplomacy, explicitly listed in the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations of 1961. In the words of one textbook:

> Gathering information on the local scene and reporting it home has long been recognised as one of the most important functions of the resident embassy. The state of the economy, foreign policy, the morale of the armed forces, scientific research with military implications, the health of the leader, the balance of power within the government, the likely result of any forthcoming election, the strength of the opposition, and so on, have long been the staple fare of ambassadorial dispatches.[40]

While often associated with the emergence of permanent embassies, information gathering has been an enduring aspect of diplomacy. The Amarna Letters have several references to Egypt's need for intelligence to maintain control of its Asian empire. Two out of the three letters sent from the Pharaoh to another Great King refer to intelligence matters.[41] There is reason to believe that the messengers, who carried written and oral communication between the royal courts, supplemented the official information they received with their own sources of intelligence.[42]

In Ancient India, intelligence played a prominent role, as is evident from Kautilya's classic work *Arthasastra*. Once a diplomat had obtained whatever information he could gather, he had fulfilled his chief

mission and had to ask for permission to return.[43] The Romans "began the development of a system of intelligence-gathering by scouts and spies that served not only military but also diplomatic purposes."[44]

Byzantine diplomacy is the best-known historical example of intelligence taking center stage. The Empire was poorly equipped for, and thus wanted to avoid, war. Therefore, the Byzantine considered information-gathering crucial and saw it as the chief purpose of all diplomatic exchanges. The deeply ingrained expectation that intelligence must be any visitor's intention explains the care with which foreigners were watched, confined and guarded in Constantinople.[45] "The candid Byzantine practice of including the gathering of information among the tasks of embassies gave birth to the reputation of ambassadors as spies," argues Abba Eban: "They have never recovered from this suspicion."[46] A lot of evidence of ambassadorial espionage comes from fifteenth-century Italy, reflecting the increased importance of information-gathering among the functions of ambassadors as resident embassies were gradually evolving.[47] The cultivation of informants shaded into espionage, and by the early 1600s most embassies employed undercover agents.[48]

Today intelligence has become a separate institution with "no more than tacit international recognition."[49] Diplomacy and intelligence are competing as well as complementary institutions. Several states, such as the United States and Britain, spend more on intelligence than on diplomacy.[50] Especially during the Cold War, embassies often provided cover for intelligence officers. Ever today diplomacy "provides intelligence cover and facilities, and is an intelligence target, hence needing defensive intelligence support."[51] A major difference between intelligence and diplomatic information-gathering is that diplomatic sources and the methods used to develop them may be confidential, but are not clandestine.[52]

Whereas diplomats during most of history had a virtual monopoly on the supply of information from foreign polities, they today face competition not only from the intelligence community but also from the media. Not only does most of the information reaching governments about developments throughout the world come from the media, but a large portion of diplomatic reporting consists of analyses based on the work of journalists.[53]

> It is said that during the New York newspaper strike the quality and quantity of diplomatic reporting around the world diminished perceptibly: without *The New York Times* to tell them what to say, the diplomats fell silent.[54]

Today the question is sometimes raised whether the importance of diplomats in information-gathering has been reduced to the verge of obsolescence. The 24-hour news reporting of today's global electronic media tends to make diplomatic reports redundant. The common counterargument is that the information available via various media, including Internet, will remain significant complements to, but no substitute for, information gathered through diplomatic channels. Diplomats have always cultivated private sources as a supplement to official sources. This is as true of Ancient Near East diplomacy,[55] as it is of diplomacy in Renaissance Italy[56] or diplomacy today.

Among such sources of information, in fact, are other diplomats. The principle of reciprocity applies to the exchange of information as well; "communication among diplomats is a two-way street: one cannot expect to obtain information unless one is able and willing to convey information."[57] In Renaissance Italy resident ambassadors bought or traded for information.[58] "Information became a form of currency, to be given and exchanged as well as received and passed on."[59] In 1505 the Venetian ambassador to France, in response to complaints that he was never first with the news, wrote back to his principals that they never sent him gossip that he could trade for other information.[60] Today the mutual exchange of information is an accepted diplomatic practice.

If the significance of diplomatic information-gathering may have diminished over time, the volume of information provided by diplomats has increased. Already in Renaissance Italy industrious resident ambassadors wrote daily reports, and one Venetian ambassador to Rome finished a total of 472 dispatches in twelve months.[61] Today critics speak of "logorrhea,"[62] an overabundance of reporting threatening to choke the diplomatic system. "Too many people push too many pens across too many pieces of paper, filling them with worthless messages."[63]

Transmitting information: diplomatic signaling

If diplomatic information-gathering is designed to provide principals with the necessary background for the formulation of external policies, diplomatic communication to other polities is an important part of the execution of these policies. This communication has verbal as well as nonverbal elements, and is often referred to as diplomatic signaling. We have referred to diplomats as "intuitive semioticians," that is, conscious producers and interpreters of signs. A signal can be understood as "a kind of sign which

is used to generate a response of some kind."[64] Signaling is as essential to diplomacy as to a busy airport. One crucial difference is that there is much more scope for ambiguity in diplomatic signaling. Ambiguous signaling between pilots and traffic controllers may be a prelude to disaster, but in diplomatic communication ambiguity is considered constructive and creative.[65]

There are several reasons why constructive ambiguity characterizes – and probably always has characterized – diplomatic signaling. While needing to communicate, polities want to conceal vital information from each other. Moreover, ambiguity may be a deliberate means to retain flexibility and make signals disclaimable. Ambiguous signals allow the sender to argue "I never said that," "this is not what I meant" and the like, if the situation calls for it.

The possibility of duplicity and deception contributes to the ambiguity of diplomatic signals. Sir Henry Wotton's characterization in 1604 of a diplomat as "an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country" has gained notoriety. In fact, the association of diplomacy with deception can be traced back to Ancient Greece. The Greeks identified Hermes with charm, trickery, cunning and deception and subsequently transferred those traits to envoys.[66] Byzantine diplomacy, known not only for gathering intelligence but also for disseminating misleading information, added to the disrepute.[67] Ever since, dishonesty has continued to be associated with diplomacy in varying degrees. The fact that there is no way of knowing for sure which signals are false and which are true makes for a diplomatic penchant for mistrusting messages and always "reading between the lines." Yet there are obvious restraints on lying in diplomatic communication, the most important of which is the loss of reputation should the deception fail. "The fact that states send and pay attention to signals indicates that statesmen feel they are more apt to give true than false information."[68]

In addition, ambiguity may be prompted by the need to take multiple audiences into account. Explicit and unambiguous signaling, while desirable vis-à-vis one category of receivers, might have disastrous effects on the sender's relations with another category of receivers. In diplomatic signaling the potential audiences may be both international and domestic. In earlier times it was easier to differentiate messages to different audiences. In the Ancient Near East, for example, there is a clear difference between royal inscriptions on monuments, addressed to an inner audience, and letters sent to external partners. The king of Mitanni is described as a "tributary" to the Pharaoh in monumental

inscriptions, as his "brother" in diplomatic letters.[69] The perennial art of sending different signals to different audiences, which flourished during nineteenth-century secret diplomacy, has become more difficult in the modern era of mass media.

Another factor, contributing to the ambiguity of diplomatic signals, is the prevalence of nonverbal messages and "body language" in communication between states, as will be elaborated below. Gestures, like words, require interpretation; yet there is less latitude for misunderstanding in verbal communication.

In sum, the tension between the need for clarity and the incentives for ambiguity impels diplomats to spend much time and effort on the formulation and interpretation of signals. It should be noted that signaling does not necessarily imply intentionality. Even unconscious, unintended behavior and non-behavior may convey messages in a diplomatic setting. Hence we may refer to signaling whenever one actor displays behavior that is perceived and interpreted by another, whether or not it is spoken or intended or even within the actor's conscious awareness. Yet the tendency among diplomats and statement to look for message value in most behavior and non-behavior seems to rest on an implicit assumption of intentionality. "Since all actors know (or quickly learn) that all public acts, except those self-evidently accidental or inadvertent, may be considered significant, the assumption tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy."[70]

While diplomatic agents share a common code, they are at the same time members of separate cultures with their specific codes. Today we think primarily of national cultures; at other stages in history tribal or religious cultures were more significant. The code and conventions of the diplomatic culture do not necessarily take precedence over the code and conventions of national cultures. When interpreted by members of different cultures who bring different codes to them, signs may produce different meanings. Conversely, cultural conditioning does not represent "a cognitive straight jacket."[71] In short, the tension between universalism and particularism reappears as the interrelation between a common diplomatic culture and diverse cultural conditioning of diplomats from different parts of the world. There is no hard and fast answer to the question of which code is more important. One may hypothesize that the diplomatic code applies to the interpretation of verbal communication to a greater extent than to nonverbal signaling. Yet as a rule, both types of codes and conventions are operative, in a varying mix.

Diplomats, therefore, have to be content with saying both less and more than they mean: less, because their verbal and nonverbal signaling will never immediately convey their meaning; more, because their signaling will always convey messages and involve them in consequences other than those intended. The interpretation of signals, in other words, includes both "selective" and "constructive" elements.

Whereas the reasoning thus far has primarily referred to contemporary diplomacy, there is reason to believe that these observations concerning diplomatic signaling tend to be timeless. Let us illustrate this with a number of examples of skilful uses of signal ambiguity taken from different eras and various parts of the globe. We start with a recent example, an episode from the 1971–72 American–Chinese parleys resulting in President Nixon's momentous visit to China.

During one of his trips to Beijing, Henry Kissinger was taken for an ostentatious public appearance at the Summer Palace in plain view of hundreds of spectators. Among them was a North Vietnamese journalist taking photographs, as his host, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, later told Kissinger apologetically. Zhou could thus signal to North Vietnam – and ensure that Washington grasped – that China would not permit North Vietnam's problems to stand in the way of a *rapprochement* with the United States.[72]

The example captures well several of the outlined dimensions of "constructive ambiguity" characterizing diplomatic signaling. The Chinese were able to exploit *nonverbal* behavior to send desired messages to *multiple audiences*, while retaining *deniability*.

Our second example is taken from the Amarna Letters, more than three thousand years earlier. These tablets reflect a keen and jealous preoccupation with status and reciprocity. In one of them the Babylonian king recounts an incident, which would seem to put him in an unfavorable light. His initial bid for the Pharaoh's daughter had been refused with reference to a marriage taboo – "From time immemorial no daughter of the king of Egypt is given to anyone." The Babylonian king then had requested the daughter of a commoner instead: "Someone's grown daughters, beautiful women, must be available. Send me a beautiful woman as if she were your daughter." The Pharaoh again refused. Why should the Babylonian king recall a seemingly humiliating episode like this in his dispatch?

The key to a possible answer can be found in the latter part of the letter, where the Babylonian king offers his daughter to the Pharaoh in marriage: "Should I, perhaps, since you did not send me a woman, refuse you a woman, just as you did to me, and not send her? But my daughters

being available, I will not refuse one to you." He goes on to demand a heavy bride price in gold and establish a deadline for payment. If the main purpose of the Babylonian king's letter was to bargain for the highest possible bride price in return for his daughter, the references to the Pharaoh's dual snubs make sense. The king probably knew that his request for the Pharaoh's daughter would be refused. And the following offer of a ruse might have been a tactic to expose the Pharaoh's hypocrisy – the second refusal to provide a bride could not be accounted for by religious taboos – and gain the moral upper hand. The Babylonian king, in short, made cunning use of the convention of strict reciprocity between Great kings. By reminding the Pharaoh of his failure to maintain the customary reciprocity, he hoped to increase the compensation for offering his daughter in marriage.[73]

While the architects of diplomatic signaling in the Amarna period did not have to worry about multiple audiences, we can discern similarities with the previous example in the subtle manipulation of a common code to send messages beyond the manifest ones. Knowledge of prevalent conventions makes the signals perceptible and understandable by "insiders."

Our third example, highlighting adroit nonverbal signaling, rests on a numismatic analysis of the early efforts by Philip II to make Macedonia the core of panhellenic unity in the fourth-century BC.[74] Philip's early choice of coin standard arguably was used to send powerful diplomatic messages to multiple audiences. Of the three standards from which to select – the Attic, the Rhodian, and the Phoenician – Philip chose the Phoenician. His rejection of the Attic standard signaled that he refused to recognize Athenian commercial supremacy. The popular Rhodian standard was almost as dominant in the Aegean during the fourth century as the Attic had been at the height of Athenian power in the fifth century. While reflecting the lack of direct contact between Macedonia and the cities where it was used, Philip's rejection of the Rhodian standard signaled that he was not looking toward Thrace and Asia Minor for commerce or alliances or conquest at that time.

The Phoenician standard was used by the Chalcidic League, a commercial rival and bitter enemy of Athens. By choosing this standard, Philip signaled to the skeptical Chalcidians "that their interests were his, and that the Chalcidic peninsula and Macedonia together formed an economic unit in which Chalcidian merchants might claim a privileged position and a practical monopoly of trade and commerce."[75] Thus, Philip's adoption of the Phoenician coin standard "was not a meaningless gesture, but the first step in the formation of a cooperative enterprise in which the Chalcidians were equal partners."[76]

Another, less subtle example of "numismatic diplomacy" comes from the eighth century and reflects Rome's distancing from Constantinople. Rome had traditionally preserved the right to mint official Byzantine coins commemorating the ruling emperor. In the late seventh century the pope added his own initial to the imperial silver. Pope Hadrian was the first to issue a silver coin identified by his own name only. "This departure from the century-old practice, which had itself been a symptom of past subordination to the east, marked the culmination of a long process of separation."[77]

Our final example concerns the use of religious symbols in diplomatic signaling. In the ninth century the city of Venice was squeezed between the Byzantine Empire in the east and the Carolingian advances in the north and west. One way of remaining independent was to have a local religious focus for the construction of a political identity. Such foci could be provided by relics of appropriate saints, and these relics were often used as diplomatic gifts. In our example, the Byzantines were pressing for the Venetians to accept relics from St. Theodore (who indeed was Venice's first patron saint), whereas the Carolingians wanted the Venetians to accept St. Martin as patron saint. In 829, however, some Venetian representatives managed to smuggle out the relics of St. Mark from Alexandria – under a cargo of pork, as it happened – and he promptly became the patron saint of Venice. Not only did Mark, as an apostle and evangelist, outrank both Theodore and Martin, but he came without political implications. Alexandria, of course, had been in Muslim hands for over two centuries, and the Venetians could continue to steer their course between Franks and Byzantines without any spiritual debt.[78]

While the history of diplomacy offers numerous examples of skillful, creative signaling, there is of course no dearth of instances of bad, counterproductive signaling. Let us mention but two conspicuous twentieth-century examples. The prelude to the Suez War of 1956 saw recurrent misreading of overly ambiguous signals as a result of divergent expectations. The firm belief of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden in US support, or at least tacit acceptance, of military action against Nasser's Egypt caused him to misread mixed and ambiguous US signals about "the use of force if all other methods failed" and to look for green light in messages that were not intended as such. At the same time, Eden's reliance on the Munich analogy alerted him to behavior on Nasser's part that reminded him of the dictators of the 1930s while blinding him to other aspects of Nasser's conduct, whereas US Secretary of State John Foster

Dulles's preoccupation with the Soviet Union predisposed him to treat Nasser's Egypt as a pawn in a larger game.[79]

Another example of flawed signaling concerns the Swedish response, or rather lack of response, to a message from Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Dekanozov on 16 January 1945, to the Swedish embassy in Moscow to the effect that Raoul Wallenberg had been found by Soviet troops in Budapest and was in Soviet custody. The Swedish failure to refer explicitly to this *note* in subsequent diplomatic communication with the Soviets may have been interpreted in Moscow as a lack of interest in the Wallenberg case. On several occasions, when Wallenberg was discussed, Soviet diplomats demanded that a number of Soviet citizens in Sweden be extradited, which may have indicated a willingness to arrange an exchange. Most likely, the lack of Swedish reactions to these hints along with repeated expressions of his "personal" guess that Wallenberg had died in an accident on the part of the Swedish Moscow ambassador, was interpreted in the Kremlin as Swedish attempts to sweep the whole issue under the carpet and to provide an excuse for the Soviets to shun their responsibility.[80]

Communication failure, like effective signaling, is timeless. For instance, there are signs of misunderstanding in the communication between Egyptian Pharaohs and Asian small kings in the Ancient Near East, centering around the word "protection." While the latter were accustomed to their overlord's protection in return for their loyalty, the Pharaoh needed no protection and did not feel responsible for protecting them. Standard Egyptian letters contained fixed exhortations to keep in good order the post entrusted to one's care.

> When these exhortations had to be translated and extended to the Syro-Palestinian kinglets, the verb *naşaru* "to protect" was selected to cover a whole range of Egyptian verbs. The result was to evoke in the addressees' minds the sphere of political protection in which they were particularly interested, and to stimulate resentment at the lack of any similar interest in it on the part of the Egyptians. … exhortations to be efficient, quite stereotyped among Egyptian officials, were misunderstood in the framework of rescue from external assaults.[81]

Taken together, these disparate examples illustrate the broad range of verbal and nonverbal signaling instruments, the variety of sources and uses of constructive ambiguity as well as the destructive aspects of

ambiguity. Moreover, they indicate the timelessness of the practice and problems of diplomatic signaling.

Negotiation

Negotiation is commonly seen as the core of diplomacy, as "the ultimate form of diplomatic communication."[82] In fact, several authors define diplomacy in terms of negotiations. Adam Watson, for example, characterizes diplomacy as "negotiations between political entities which acknowledge each other's independence."[83] And G.R. Berridge's more elaborate definition is "the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation."[84]

Unlike diplomacy, international negotiation constitutes a relatively well-defined subfield of IR scholarship, with a rich and variegated literature and a respectable amount of middle-range theorizing.[85] This is not the place to rehearse the negotiation literature. Suffice it to point to a few aspects of special relevance to our understanding of diplomacy.

First, the foundations of genuine negotiations are *bargaining situation*s, characterized by the coincidence of cooperative and conflictual elements as well as interdependent decisions. "Without common interest there is nothing to negotiate for, without conflict nothing to negotiate about."[86] It is often the task of diplomats to search for common interests in conflict situations, as pure conflict does not lend itself to productive negotiations. Once again, we are reminded of the universalism–particularism dimension of diplomacy: While negotiating to further the interests of their particular polities, diplomats typically identify the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the avoidance of war as common interests.

Throughout history diplomatic negotiations have been predominantly bilateral encounters. Yet third-party intervention, in the form of arbitration or mediation,[87] has taken place throughout the ages. In the Ancient Near East the great kings had the right to adjudicate in disputes between their vassals.[88] Mediation was customary in Ancient China, with princes or ministers as mediators, either at request or on their own initiative. Mediation between polities reflected a practice deeply embedded within Chinese life, enabling crowded societies to continue in peaceful coexistence.[89] Third-party arbitration was well established among the Ancient Greek city-states as a preferred practice to regulate conflict and facilitate coexistence both internally and externally. The prevailing conception of procedural justice, which prescribed the determination of right and

wrong by means of public moral argument, legitimized jury courts and assemblies inside the *polis* and licensed interstate arbitration. Mutual vows to settle disputes by means of arbitration were often included in treaties. Despite the absence of either a codified body of international law or powerful sanction in case the results of third-party intervention were rejected, arbitration remained a central practice for more than five centuries.[90]

Mediation and the offer of good offices were prevalent in medieval Europe as well, particularly from the twelfth century onward. The Pope was the principal mediator between Christian princes, but a variety of influential individuals, including princes and emperors, acted as arbitrators and mediators (cf. Chapter 7). In modern times, mediating roles are assumed not only by diplomats and other representatives of governments, but also by representatives of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as private individuals, such as businessman Armand Hammer in US–Soviet relations during the Cold War and ex-president Jimmy Carter in several Third World conflicts more recently.

Multilateral diplomatic negotiations, on the other hand, are a relatively recent phenomenon. The earliest multilateral fora were high-level congresses called to arrange the terms of peace settlements, such as the Congresses of Osnabrück and Münster resulting in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Diplomatic conferences, peacetime meetings of diplomats, were unknown before 1830[91] but have since then surged in frequency, significance and complexity. In the middle of the nineteenth century there were about three international conferences annually, today more than three thousand.[92]

Conference diplomacy differs from previous diplomatic forms in several respects, such as the forging of coalitions and groupings, potential leadership roles for the chair, and international secretariats assuming important functions.[93] One technique that has been identified as particularly helpful in diplomatic conferences is the use of a "single negotiation text" (SNT).[94] After listening to the stated positions of all the parties, one participant, in a mediator or leadership role (most often the chairperson), drafts a text, which is then circulated for criticism, modifications and refinements. Successive rounds of redrafting and feedback may eventually produce an agreed document, as in the Camp David negotiations in 1978 and the Law of the Sea negotiations.

In many areas, such as arms control, trade and environmental protection, we may speak of the continuity and institutionalization of multilateral negotiations. In that sense, Cardinal Richelieu's old dictum that

diplomatic negotiations must be continuous and not merely *ad hoc* endeavors[95] seems at last to have been fulfilled. As discussed in Chapter 3, institutionalization entails the development of shared symbols, agreed-upon rules and formal organization.

It should be kept in mind that diplomats, whether in bilateral or multilateral forums, always negotiate on behalf of others, in the sense that they are agents of a principal with ultimate authority, be it an individual king or a collective government. What kind of authority to make concessions and commitments do my instructions give me? What should I do if I cannot reach an agreement with the other side because my principal, rather than the opposite party, is being unreasonable? How far should I go in trying to persuade my principal to accept an agreement? These are questions diplomats have been asking themselves throughout the ages.[96] This is an aspect we will return to in the Chapter 5 dealing with representation.

International negotiations, in short, tend to be "double-edged,"[97] encompassing not only external but also internal processes. Diplomats, in their representative role, have to act with a view to both.

> Diplomatic strategies and tactics are constrained both by what other actors will accept and by what domestic constituencies will ratify. Diplomacy is a process of strategic interaction in which actors simultaneously try to take account of and, if possible, influence the expected reactions of other actors, both at home and abroad.[98]

Modern-day diplomatic negotiators, representing democratic states, usually emphasize the problems of internal bargaining, arguing that they spend as much or even more time achieving consensus within their own side.[99] Diplomats as negotiators participate in "two-level games," to use a phrase that has gained wide currency and has been applied to a number of international negotiations.[100]

Verbal and nonverbal communication

Diplomatic communication, as we have seen, can be either verbal or nonverbal. Just as the verbal components in a normal person-to-person conversation have been estimated to carry little more than a third of the social meaning,[101] so nonverbal messages or "body language" constitute important aspects of diplomatic communication, as alluded to above. Diplomatic "body language" encompasses everything from personal gestures to the manipulation of military forces.

A handshake, for example, is commonly used as a metaphor for the friendly quality of interstate relations, transferring the language of personal relations to the international arena. The origin of the symbolic handshake may have been a precautionary measure to show that the hand did not carry a weapon.[102] In Ancient Greece the term *dexia* in the sense of "pledge" was abstracted from the symbolic handshake, and ancient artists used it as a visual symbol of nonaggression – "two clasping hands nullify each other's aggressive potential."[103]

The venue and format of meetings as well as the shape of the negotiating table (symbolizing prestige and power) and the level of representation (signaling interests and intentions of the parties) are other aspects that can be used for subtle "body language." In the 1930s Neville Chamberlain conceded to Mussolini's insistence that negotiations between Britain and Italy be held in Rome, with Anthony Eden and the Foreign Office disagreeing on the grounds that this "would be regarded as another surrender to the dictators."[104]

Behind the controversy over the shape of the table at the Paris negotiations to end the Vietnam War was the question of the status of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front: to seat it at a four-sided table with representatives of the United States, North Vietnam and South Vietnam would have accorded it equal status. More recently, the six-party talks, prompted by North Korea's admission in 2002 of having developed nuclear weapons and subsequent withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, are being conducted around a hexagonal table, which avoids any connotation of precedence or unequal status.

A lower level of representation is generally seen as communicating coolness or disapproval, whereas a higher level of representation is taken as a mark of respect or esteem.[105] For instance, at Anwar Sadat's funeral in October 1981 Arab representation was weak, whereas the attendance of Western statesmen was impressive, reflecting differing assessments of Sadat's policies toward Israel.[106] By the same token, the Swedish government was criticized by the domestic opposition for conveying the wrong signals by dispatching a lower-rank minister to the ceremony honoring the victims of the terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2004, when most other European states were represented at a higher level; while being represented by the prime minister at Yasser Arafat's funeral in November 2004, when other EU member states sent foreign ministers.

Nonverbal communication has certain advantages. It is often better able to capture the attention and interest of various audiences than is verbal communication. "If nonverbal communication did not exist," argues Raymond Cohen, "it would have been invented by public relations

officers."[107] Another advantage of nonverbal signals, from the viewpoint of diplomats, is that they are inherently ambiguous and disclaimable and thus allow retained flexibility.[108]

In diplomatic communication "saying is doing" and "doing is saying." The "semantic obsession" of diplomats rests on the realization that "speech is an incisive form of action."[109] On the other hand, every gesture or action by diplomatic agents sends messages. In fact, both behavior and non-behavior may constitute messages. The observations of one student of interpersonal persuasion are equally applicable to diplomatic communication: "Activity or inactivity, words or silence, all have message value: they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot *not* respond to these communications and are thus themselves communicating."[110]

Today we commonly associate diplomacy with linguistic skills, a carefully calibrated language allowing cross-cultural communication with a minimum of unnecessary misunderstanding, along with protocol governing interstate "body language." Similarly, the management of verbal as well as nonverbal aspects of communication has characterized variants of diplomacy throughout history.

The exchange of gifts stands out as a prominent form of diplomatic "body language" in early diplomacy. The principle of giving and taking lies deep in human nature, and gifts were exchanged to create goodwill and peaceful relations.[111] Thus, messengers in the Ancient Near East not only carried oral and written communications between royal courts, but also distributed presents among the rulers. Gifts were symbols of the status of, and relations between, rulers. In one of the Amarna Letters the king of Assyria, reminding the Egyptian Pharaoh how much gold his predecessor had sent to the Pharaoh's father, complains about the amount of gold the Pharaoh has sent him – "not enough for the pay of my messengers on the journey to and back" – implying that his proper status has not been recognized. In another letter the king of Mittani makes it clear that he views the Egyptian Pharaoh's dispatch of statues which turned out not to be of solid gold as a symbol of souring relations.[112]

In the Roman world, "to accept gifts was to accept a diplomatic approach and open the way for further contact."[113] In Byzantine diplomacy the exchange of gifts played a particularly prominent role. Diplomatic gifts were meant to buy friendship and ranged from sumptuous items like elephants, gilded beds and organs to consumer goods.[114] It has been suggested that artistic gifts had the advantage of not being perceived as a bribe and partly circumventing the question of value, thus not raising issues of specific reciprocity.[115] Moreover, art in itself

had a "communicative power" in diplomacy by demonstrating that "top people between cultures speak a common symbolic language."[116] Byzantine silks were diplomatic gifts *par excellence*: "precious, light and easily transportable items that embodied the prestige and power of the empire."[117] The ancient tradition of envoys bringing presents for the foreign ruler was upheld even in the worst moments of Byzantine decline.[118] While no longer accredited the same significance, the exchange of gifts remains a ritual component of state visits to this day.[119]

The selection of envoys represents another perennial means of sending nonverbal messages. There are several examples of this in the Amarna Letters. Tushratta, king of Mittani, made it abundantly clear in his correspondence with Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III that the selection of messenger was of importance. In his opening bid for a renewed alliance, he sent no less a person than his chief minister, Keliya, as messenger, while being quite explicit that the Egyptian selection of messenger mattered to him as well. In another letter the Egyptian Pharaoh complained to the Babylonian king who, instead of sending "dignitaries," had dispatched a delegation of "nobodies," one of whom was an "assherder."[120]

Students of Ancient Greek diplomacy point to the great care taken in the appointment of envoys. At Athens envoys were popularly elected rather than chosen by the favored democratic process of drawing lots.[121] The Greek city-states developed a nomenclature of diplomatic ranks, which could be used to send nonverbal messages. Thus, to send envoys whose credentials bore the title of *autocrator*, or plenipotentiary, was a mark of respect to the receiving *polis*,[122] and the presence of *kerykes*, heralds, in exchanges between city-states was a virtual acknowledgment that war existed even if it had not been declared.[123]

The Romans on one occasion sent an athletic instructor as an envoy to Rhodes, which was perceived as an insult on a par with the Babylonian "assherder" in the Amarna Letter. After bitter Rhodian objections the envoy had to be replaced.[124] To make a giant leap in history, a more contemporary example may illustrate the enduring symbolic significance of the selection of envoys. The selection of Averell Harriman to lead the US negotiating team in the test ban talks in Moscow in the summer of 1963 was one in a series of conciliatory signals on both sides. Harriman was well known to the Soviets and had become well acquainted with Khrushchev during the Soviet leader's visit to the United States in 1959. In the words of one official from the Soviet embassy in Washington: "As soon as I heard that Harriman was going, I knew that you were serious."[125]

If the Ancient Near East foreshadowed later refinements of nonverbal signaling, Ancient Greece may be seen as the forerunner of the verbal

skills and eloquence associated with modern diplomacy. Diplomatic communication among the Greek city-states depended on direct and oral exchange and face-to-face contacts between representatives. Moreover, communication was open and public, relying on oratorical skills. "Diplomacy by conference and, by implication, confidential negotiation, were largely unknown in the relations of the Greek city-states, where envoys reported to public assemblies and argued in public."[126] It is significant that *keryx* (herald) is an Indo-European word already found in Mycenean Greek, which refers to the clarity of the speaker's voice.[127] Celebrated orators, such as Pericles and Demosthenes, were frequently entrusted with diplomatic missions.

In Ancient India, as well, eloquence was considered an essential criterion in the selection of envoys.[128] A student of Islamic diplomacy argues that Arabs added an element of poetry to the Ancient Greek diplomacy by oratory.[129] The diplomatic letters of the Byzantine period often had "literary pretensions."[130] And in the eighteenth century, French diplomatic instructions developed into "literary exercises of the utmost elegance."[131] In short, there is no shortage of precursors of the "semantic obsession" of modern diplomats.

Private and public communication

Diplomacy is basically communication between rulers or governments, be they individual or collective. The question whether diplomatic communication should be restricted to, or go beyond, these rulers has occupied thinkers and practitioners throughout the ages. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in keeping the communication private and making it more public, respectively.

Messengers in the Ancient Near East often had to take an oath not to divulge confidential information outside the palace.[132] While making communication simpler in many respects, a strictly delimited audience at the same time can create problems when it comes to making and honoring commitments. Tushratta, king of Mittani, experienced this in the fourteenth-century BC, when Pharaoh Amenhotep III died before having delivered on his promise to send gold statues. He wrote to Tiye, Amenhotep's widow, who was "the one … who knows much better than all others the things that we said to one another," and asked her to remind the new Pharaoh, Akhenaten, of the commitment. In addition, Tushratta wrote to Akhenaten himself on several occasions and pleaded with him to listen to Tiye, his own mother. And although he referred to his own messengers as witnesses, who "saw with their own eyes" how

"your father himself recast the statues in the presence of my messengers," his efforts seem to have been in vain. Tushratta's problem stemmed largely from the circumstance that "no one else" beside the Queen Mother, Tiye, knew about the commitment.[133]

To avoid such problems, some treaties were witnesses by several individuals. A fourteenth-century BC treaty between Hattusili II of Hatti and Ulmi-Teshshup of Tarhuntassa, for example, includes a paragraph on human witnesses, listing some twenty high officials as well as "all commanders of the army, the overseer of the thousand dignitaries, and the entire royal family" as present at the writing of the tablet.[134]

In Ancient Greece, by contrast, diplomatic communication had a much more public character. Diplomatic envoys had to report to public assemblies and argue in public.[135] Their task was to engage in political advocacy rather than in genuine negotiations; they were in the public eye and were forced to engage in public debate.[136]

In Byzantine and Renaissance diplomacy secret and confidential communication again became the rule. Renaissance diplomats were obsessed with secrecy and often sent confidential letters to persons in the ruling circles alongside formal dispatches to their principals.[137] By the late fifteenth century it became standard procedure for resident ambassadors to put sensitive or compromising dispatches in cipher. Cautious ambassadors phrased their correspondence so that even if it would fall into the wrong hands and be deciphered, no serious harm would result.[138] The diplomatic preoccupation with safe and secret communication has continued, but has taken different forms in response to technological changes.

> So long as information was conveyed by written communication physically transmitted, it was necessary to intercept the message before it could be read. With the invention of telegraphy and telephony, messages could be intercepted by tapping and with radio communications they could be captured from the air with no physical intervention. Concealing the meaning behind the message rather than the existence of the message itself became the prime consideration with the spread of worldwide instantaneous communication. Technological progress of information exchange has created its own need for new methods of enciphering messages.[139]

Despite Woodrow Wilson's call for "open covenants, openly arrived at," emblematic of the widespread reaction after the First World War against the overemphasis on secrecy in the "old diplomacy," confidential

communication between governments has remained the backbone of modern diplomacy. And there is still "a constant intellectual war between cryptographers who devise new systems for keeping messages secret and cryptoanalysts who try to break them."[140]

In recent years, however, "public diplomacy" has become a new buzzword among diplomatic theorists and practitioners. In an age of spreading democracy and increasing political importance of mass media, communicating with the "demos" tends to be ever more important.[141] According to present-day advocates of public diplomacy, diplomats need to transform themselves "from being reporters and lobbyists on reactive issues to shapers of public debates around the world."[142] Public diplomacy, in short, includes the efforts by the government of one state to influence public or elite opinion of another state for the purpose of persuading these foreign publics to regard favorably its policies, ideals and ideas.[143]

The challenge for today's diplomats, then, is "to move from supplying information to capturing the imagination."[144] Public diplomacy operates in three dimensions. The first is communication on day-to-day issues, aligning diplomacy with the news cycle. The second dimension is strategic communication, managing overall perceptions of one's country. The third dimension is long-term development of lasting relationships with key individuals through scholarships, exchanges, seminars and the like.[145] In this process, foreign ministries have discovered the potential of the Internet as a powerful medium for the worldwide dissemination of information to an audience of highly educated and influential members of foreign societies.[146]

Contemporary authors are careful to set public diplomacy apart from propaganda, a phenomenon that fell into disrepute in the twentieth century. Yet the two share the reliance on indirect communication, via public opinion, rather than direct government-to-government communication.

Technological development

As a system of communication between polities, diplomacy has been influenced by the development of available means of communication and transportation. Most importantly, the speed of diplomatic communication has varied greatly over time. In the Ancient Near East, diplomatic missions could take years to complete. In the Amarna Letters there is reference to a messenger being detained, and thus bilateral communication being interrupted, for six years.[147] In the sixteenth century it took

four months for a Hapsburg diplomat to travel to Moscow, and in the seventeenth century it took eleven days to send a courier from Paris to Madrid.[148] The well-known expression that Napoleon did not travel faster than Caesar is not merely a figure of speech, but reflects the reality that even in the eighteenth century the Ancient Roman roads remained the best communication routes on land and transport was dependent on the physical capacity of animals and humans to carry and pull.

Even if medieval diplomacy could put a premium on speedy communication – in 1496, for example, the Venetian Senate wrote to its orator keeping the death watch over the king of Naples that it wished reports not daily, but hourly[149] – communication over great distances traveled slowly well into the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century the US president wrote a memorandum to his secretary of state, lamenting the fact that the ambassador in Spain had not been heard from for two years. "If we do not hear from him this year," he added, "let us write him a letter."[150] Still by 1838 US regulations instructed consuls "once in three months at least to write to the Department, if it be for no other reason than to that of apprising the Department of their being at their respective posts."[151]

It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that technological revolutions changed the premises of diplomatic communication. In the nineteenth century the advent of steamships and railways increased the mobility of diplomats significantly, at the same time as the invention of the telegraph permitted fast and direct communication between governments as well as between foreign ministries and embassies. The development of air travel and information technology (IT) in the twentieth century added to the ease and speed of movement and communication. Today we need to be reminded that "not until the 1930s were the first diplomatic pouches conveyed by air, and most communications were still traveling by sea as late as the end of World War II."[152]

While facilitating the exchange of diplomatic communication, these technological innovations have been seen as challenges to ingrained diplomatic procedures. For instance, when the first telegram arrived on the desk of British foreign minister Lord Palmerston in the 1840s, he reputedly exclaimed: "My God, this is the end of diplomacy."[153] Similarly, the Royal Commission of 1861, which investigated the British Diplomatic Service, dwelt on the influence of the telegraph on diplomacy and wondered whether it would make ambassadors unnecessary.[154] The dramatic development of today's media and IT has elicited similar concerns.

One of the obvious effects of the IT revolution is that diplomacy has lost its position as the main facilitator of contacts and communication across state boundaries. Another effect is that the ease of relaying instructions has circumscribed the actions of diplomats. Moreover, direct contacts between political leaders have become more frequent – "as communications become easier the nomadic instinct is given greater scope," in Abba Eban's words.[155] George Ball, a senior US diplomat, lamented in the early 1980s that "jet planes and telephones and the bad habits of Presidents, National Security Assistants and Secretaries of State had now largely restricted ambassadors to ritual and public relations."[156] A former British ambassador wonders whether the jet-set needs the pedestrian any more.[157]

Summitry, international meetings at the highest levels of government involving direct communication between political leaders, became an established component of interstate relations after the Second World War. The war itself, with the intimate consultations of Allied leaders, was the cradle of the modern summit. The use of the word "summit" for this kind of gathering was coined by Winston Churchill in the 1950s.[158]

Sovereigns have occasionally met to discuss their affairs in earlier times. In China, formal, prearranged, face-to-face meetings between two or three princes, *hui*, are recorded as early as the eighth century BC. These were usually held in the open, at more or less sacred spots, and had both a practical and a ceremonial character.[159] In the early Middle Ages final negotiations were commonly carried out by the principals, often on neutral ground, such as the center of a bridge or on a ship moored in the middle of a river, with elaborate safeguards against treachery. Thus, as early as 921 a meeting was arranged between Henry the Fowler and Charles of France on a ship in mid-Rhine, and as late as 1807 Napoleon met Alexander I on a barge anchored in the middle of the Memel river.[160] But it is only in recent decades that such meetings have become frequent and routinized. Today few weeks go by without summit meetings.

Summitry has been consistently resented by diplomats who prefer their own professional dialogue to the amateurism of politicians. In the fifteenth century Philippe de Comines advised: "Two great Princes, who wish to establish good personal relations should never meet each other face to face, but ought to communicate through good and wise ambassadors."[161] Five centuries later, former US Secretary of State Dean Rusk cautioned that "summit diplomacy is to be approached with the wariness with which a prudent physician prescribes a habit-forming drug – a technique to be employed rarely and under the most exceptional

circumstances with rigorous safeguards against it becoming a debilitating or dangerous habit."[162] Yet by now, in the words of one observer, "the practice of summitry has become an addictive drug for many political principals."[163] Paradoxically, the dangers of summitry may have been reduced by multiplication: "Now that summit meetings have become more or less routinized their failures, if not too frequent or drastic, can be absorbed without undue shock."[164] Whereas summits have become one of the major rituals of international politics, there are indications of a revaluation of summitry in recent years.

> After a number of sobering experiences at controversial summits in the second half of the 1990s, it has … become clear that meetings at the highest level also have the potential to turn against the chief executive. The diminished propaganda value of summitry is a serious headache for heads of government and international organizations, as far as their perceived failure to address a number of international problems adequately can be interpreted as either poor leadership or as evidence of the bankruptcy of multilateralism.[165]

The agenda of national leaders is increasingly crowded with engagements abroad, and their absence from the domestic political scene is often criticized and entails certain political risks. In addition, summit proliferation imposes a burden on scarce diplomatic resources. The preparation and diplomatic follow-up of summits require a lot of effort from foreign ministries. Perhaps most importantly, the economic costs of summits have skyrocketed, primarily because of the expensive security measures that nowadays surround meetings at the highest level. The G-8 meeting in Genoa in 2001, for example, cost 19 million US dollars, plus 90 million dollars on improvements of the city.[166]

In addition to depriving diplomats of their privileged role in communicating across state borders and facilitating direct communication among political leaders, the dramatic increases in the speed of communication affect diplomacy in other ways as well. It often forces decision-makers to react instantaneously to international events, bypassing traditional diplomatic channels. In the age of abundant and instant information combined with intrusive media, the moderate tempo of traditional diplomatic communication, which allowed for careful deliberations of signaling strategy and interpretation, seems irrevocably lost. In the words of an experienced diplomat, "the information revolution has compressed the time and distance which once separated one's own country and others in all parts of the globe."[167]

For example, President Kennedy in 1961 could wait eight days before making a public policy statement on the erection of the Berlin Wall. By contrast, President Bush was compelled to make a statement within hours of the dismounting of the wall in October 1989.[168] Strobe Talbott, then Deputy Secretary of State, recounts how he was in telephone contact with his Russian counterpart Georgi Mamedov on 4 October 1993, when the showdown took place in Moscow between Boris Yeltsin and his opponents, holed up in the parliamentary building. Talbott and Mamedov both had their television sets tuned to CNN, which broadcast the dramatic storming of the building, and exchanged occasional impressions as the battle unfolded.[169] Here representatives of two states that only a few years earlier had been bitter rivals were able to watch an event unfold in real time as they discussed its implications over an open phone line.

As the latter example illustrates, television and other new media have a significant effect on diplomacy. In the television age, the significance of nonverbal signaling and body language is enhanced. At the same time, signaling via the TV screen does not abide by old conventions of diplomatic protocol. Rather, contemporary diplomacy can be analyzed and understood in terms of a *theater* metaphor.[170] Just as in the theater, diplomatic signaling takes place within a setting contrived for that purpose; in the performance actors manipulate gestures, movement and speech to conjure up a desirable impression for a watching audience; statesmen and diplomats assume the role of producer or stage manager, molding the total performance. Television amplifies the visual aspects of the diplomatic drama. As an ideal medium for conveying nonverbal messages, television therefore accentuates the symbolic aspects of diplomatic signaling.

Television affects traditional diplomatic signaling in various ways. For instance, signaling via television often implies a loss of flexibility. Signals become simplified and tend to incur commitments. Whatever appears on TV screens tends to create commitments, whether statesmen and diplomats like it or not. The "constructive ambiguity," associated with traditional diplomatic signaling, becomes increasingly difficult to manage. For example, the parties to the peace ceremony on the White House lawn in September 1993 created strong and unequivocal commitments merely by allowing it to be televised. Yitzhak Rabin knew he had no chance to avoid commitment, when Yasser Arafat stretched out his hand before the TV cameras broadcasting live to a world audience. Had he chosen not to accept the outstretched hand, it would have

sent strong signals of lingering hostility. By accepting it, he made an equally strong commitment to friendly relations. In contrast, Bill Clinton never allowed television to record any handshake with Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams during his US visit in May 1995, precisely in order to avoid unwanted commitments.

Moreover, television makes the differentiation among audiences more difficult. Classic diplomacy relied on signaling to exclusive and clearly delineated audiences, with a high degree of control and possibilities to vary the message according to audience. Television, on the other hand, tends to engage public opinion and does not allow for differentiated messages. This has a bearing on diplomatic negotiations.

> To your negotiating partner you describe your concession as so painful as to be almost beyond endurance. Simultaneously you whisper to your suspicious constituency that your concession is inherently trivial and that only your own virtuosity and your adversary's gullibility have given it some importance. The trouble is that in the modern world, with close press surveillance and instant communication, the wind carries the two voices in both directions; your adversary and your constituency each hear what you say to the other.[171]

While diplomatic communication has been affected by television in uncontrollable ways, it is also true that statesmen and diplomats may exploit the new media for their purposes in communicating with the world. Diplomats inceasingly become engaged in "media diplomacy."[172] They are aided by the fact that media susceptibility to "news management" by the government is perhaps greatest in the realm of foreign affairs. This is an area where journalists often have to rely on official "primary definers," where references to alleged national security threats can be used to keep the media compliant, and where strong domestic constituencies contesting official sources are relatively rare.[173]

Concluding remarks

Proceeding from a conception of communication that emphasizes its constructive elements and poses diplomats as "intuitive semioticians," we have pointed to the perennial quest for a common diplomatic language – both in the literal, linguistic sense, and in the sociological sense of common codes and conventions of expression. Furthermore, we have tried to demonstrate that the manifold problems of gathering and transmitting

information as well as exchanging information in negotiations are timeless; that varying combinations of verbal and nonverbal as well as public and private communication can be found throughout diplomatic history; and that technological developments have affected diplomatic practice.

More specifically, we conclude that the diplomat's role in information-gathering has diminished in importance, as professional intelligence organizations provide governments with secret information and modern media offer continuous news reporting. We have demonstrated that the inevitable ambiguity of diplomatic signaling has constructive as well as detrimental aspects. As negotiators, diplomats tend to search for, and expand upon, common interests and minimize friction with their opponents, while being aware of their position at the nexus of external and internal processes in a "two-level game." The "semantic obsession" of contemporary diplomats is tempered by the enhanced significance of nonverbal signaling and body language in the television age, just as diplomats of other ages have had to attend to both the verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication. While public diplomacy is in the ascendant, private, confidential communication remains the backbone of diplomacy. The revolution in communication technology tends to diminish the role of diplomats, insofar as it has made direct communication between political leaders much easier at the same time as leaders often have to react instantaneously to international events, bypassing the diplomatic establishment. On the other hand, diplomats are key agents in the preparation and follow-up of summit meetings, at the same time as they are adjusting to the new media landscape and learning to pursue "media diplomacy."

In a contemporary perspective, the changes brought by the new communication technology seem to overshadow aspects of continuity in diplomatic communication. Yet these changes cannot be seen as the culmination of any unilinear process. As we have attempted to show, variations within the basic dimensions we have distinguished do not follow an evolutionary pattern. They reflect historical contingency rather than an inevitable, teleological trajectory. Moreover, the degree of change in diplomatic communication is today often exaggerated. The accelerating speed and abundance of information has both facilitated and complicated the traditional information-gathering function of diplomacy. Diplomacy still rests on the creative combination of verbal and nonverbal communication.

Whereas diplomatic signaling has traditionally been addressed to exclusive and clearly delineated audiences, with a high degree of control

and possibilities to vary the message according to the audience, the advent of new media has made the differentiation among audiences more difficult. On the other hand, the repertoire of signaling instruments has been expanded. In short, the changes resulting from the revolution in communication technology should not blind us to the timeless features of diplomatic communication.

5
Diplomatic Representation

Textbook writers typically distinguish representation as a core function of diplomacy. This is true of general introductions to international politics[1] as well as specialized texts on diplomacy.[2] Early European writers on diplomacy, such as Wicquefort, focused on the representative function, seeing ambassadors first of all as representatives of sovereigns and regarding "the right of embassy" as the foremost mark of sovereignty.[3] Students of contemporary diplomacy point to the problematic aspects of representation: "the idea of embodying the state is seen as immodest, false, and dangerous in a democratic and empiricist era replete with memories of the evils which can flow from treating nations as real and states as ends rather than means."[4] Professional diplomats, for their part, experience the dilemma of having at least two personae: their own and that of the state that employs them. "It is a fortunate diplomat who finds the two entirely compatible."[5]

Representation is no simple, unequivocal concept. Representatives (*sic*) of such diverse disciplines as philosophy, theology, art history, literature, psychology, anthropology, semiotics and political science have pondered over the meaning of representation. This implies that representation is a central yet multifaceted and ambiguous term. Some argue that representing is a *sine qua non* of human culture, that *homo repraesentans* – the ability to use symbols and create meaning – sets human beings apart from animals.[6] Representation is then seen to include everything from artistic and theatrical representation as well as sacred representations of myth, magic, ritual and rite to the activities of political, economic and legal representatives.[7] Little wonder, then, that representation has been characterized as a "myth-shrouded concept,"[8] and one student of diplomacy regards it as "a slippery concept but one which we cannot do without."[9]

The breadth and ambiguity of the concept has to do with its etymology. The term is of Latin origin. The verb *repraesentare* means "to make present or manifest" or "to present again." The Romans used it to mean the bringing into presence of something previously absent, or the embodiment of an abstraction in an object (e.g., the representation of various virtues in pieces of sculpture). Its use was largely confined to inanimate objects, and the term was not applied to human beings acting for others. In fact, neither the Greeks nor the Romans, who had a number of political institutions and practices we today would label "representative," had any corresponding word or concept.[10]

Only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did the Latin verb *repraesentare* come to be applied to human beings acting on behalf of others.[11] The word *repraesentatio* was first used in connection with the medieval Christian Councils, the forerunners of modern parliaments.[12] Today "representation" in this interpersonal sense is a central concept in the political science vocabulary. Representation can then be understood in broad, general terms as "a relation between two persons, the representative and the represented or constituent, with the representative holding the authority to perform various actions that incorporate the agreement of the represented."[13] A literature search using representation as key word yields a plethora of works focusing on representative democracy and representative government. Although "democracy has no intrinsic link with representation, and representation has no intrinsic link with democracy,"[14] this has become the predominant use of the term in contemporary academia. Diplomatic representation is frequently mentioned but seldom elaborated in some of the more generic treatises on the concept. Yet students of diplomacy, we argue, have something to learn from discussions of the concept in other contexts.

In addition to the literature on representative democracy, principal–agent (P–A) theory is another branch of social science that has been preoccupied with relationships between representatives and represented, and hence can be applied to diplomacy. Principal–agent relations arise whenever one party (principal) delegates certain tasks to another party (agent). Diplomats are obviously agents, who have been entrusted with certain tasks from their principals (rulers, governments). Because of conflicting preferences and information asymmetry, agents may pursue other interests than those of the principal ("shirking" in the P–A vernacular). Principal–agent theory was originally developed in the so-called new institutional economics tradition, and was applied to relations between shareholders and corporate executives, managers and employees, retailers and suppliers, and the like. In the hands of political scientists,

P–A theory has been used to analyze voter–parliamentarian and politician–bureaucrat relationships as prevalent examples of political delegation and control.[15] While preoccupied with measures to avoid "shirking," such as monitoring, positive or negative sanctions, and administrative procedures,[16] the P–A literature has also paid attention to other problems of delegation and control that are of relevance to diplomacy, as we shall see.

In this chapter we elaborate on the basic distinction between representation as *behavior* ("acting for others") and as *status* ("standing for others"), as applied to diplomacy. As for the proper behavior of a representative, the question is whether representatives have an "imperative mandate" or a "free mandate." To what extent are representatives bound by mandates or instructions from their principals, to what extent are they free to act as they see fit in pursuit of the principals' interests? Standing for others implies either the embodiment of principals or symbolic representation.

Behavior: acting for others

Diplomats are often compared to other professionals who act on behalf of others, such as lawyers. Diplomats acting for rulers of polities would seem to represent their interests, just as other professionals represent the interests of their clients.[17] Both lawyers and diplomats "are charged with advocating and thereby advancing the interests and viewpoints of a client."[18] Like an attorney, the diplomat does his best to persuade the client of his professional view, and may have to consider withdrawal if he fails and the client follows a course against the attorney's/diplomat's conscience.[19]

Persons have representatives because they cannot "be present" themselves or lack the required expertise. Having representatives "acting for others" means that the latter "act through" their representatives. The need to be represented has been compared to the need to be advised. "One person cannot be wise in all matters and he cannot be in all places at once."[20] This applies, *a fortiori*, to rulers of polities. Thus, several of the labels used to characterize diplomatic officials throughout the ages – such as "ambassador" from the Latin verb *ambactiare*, "to go on a mission," or "delegate" from the Latin *legare*, "to send with a commission" – express the notion of being sent out on orders, or in an official capacity, by a superior. They testify to the antiquity of diplomatic representation. The representative function has traditionally decreased with the diplomat's rank. Thus, the roots of the words "envoy" (French *envoyer*) and "emissary"

(Latin *emittere*) mean simply someone "sent" on, or "charged" with, a mission.[21]

Yet neither the diplomatic terminology nor efforts to unravel the notion of representation as acting on behalf of others more generally have offered any unequivocal answers as to the substantive limits on, or standards for, the behavior of a representative qua representative. "Any number of writers tell us that there must be some connection or relationship or tie between a representative and those for whom he acts; the difficulty lies in specifying what that tie is, in trying to characterize it."[22]

The proper behavior of a representative is a matter of intense debate, especially in the literature on representative democracy. At issue is whether representatives have an "imperative mandate" or a "free mandate."[23] Principal–agent theory would frame the issue as the amount of control accompanying delegation. This "mandate-independence" controversy[24] pertains to diplomacy as well. It concerns whether representatives must do what their constituents or principals want, being bound by mandates or instructions from them, or are free to act as they see fit in pursuit of the principals' interests and welfare.

Imperative mandate: accountability

Mandate theorists argue that true representation occurs only when the representative acts on explicit instructions, and regard any exercise of discretion as a deviation; they see representatives as "mere" agents, as subordinate substitutes for those who sent them. Such a view of diplomatic representatives can be found throughout the ages. Whereas there are those who claim that "the modern diplomat is little more than a clerk at the end of the telephone mechanically executing the instructions of his home government,"[25] the office of *nuncius* in medieval Europe is a prime example of restricted or "imperative" diplomatic mandates. A *nuncius*, in the words of a medieval commentator, "is he who takes the place of a letter: and he is just like a magpie, and an organ, and the voice of the principal sending him, and he recites the words of the principal."[26] These envoys deviated at their peril from the most literal interpretation of their prince's instructions.

Evidence of similarly narrow mandates can be found in some of the earliest diplomatic texts from the Ancient Middle East. In one of the sixteenth-century BC Hittite treaties, Tudhaliya II of Hatti wrote to Sunashshura of Kizzuwatna:

> In regard to the tablet which I, My Majesty, send you – a tablet upon which words have been set down – and the words of the

> messenger, which he speaks orally in response to you – if the words of the messenger are not in agreement with the words of the tablet, you, Sunashshura, shall certainly not trust the messenger and shall certainly not take to heart the evil content of that report of his.[27]

Accountability is a crucial aspect of representatives with a restricted mandate. A representative, in this view, is someone who must eventually answer to those whom he represents for what he does. Diplomacy is not alien to such a view. A recent introduction to statecraft and diplomacy by a veteran diplomat points out that the diplomat's role of agent not only requires the subordination of personal interests to those of the principal being represented, but also implies that credit for any diplomatic success goes to the agent's principal, whereas the agent is supposed to accept blame for any failure.[28]

The view of diplomats as accountable agents can be found throughout history. In Ancient Greece, for example, envoys had to submit to audit, *euthyna*, on completing their task. The Athenians, in fact, had a reputation for making such intensive scrutiny of their envoys as to discourage men from serving in such a capacity.[29] The audit had an economic side: the Greek assemblies, in the words of an American observer, "scrutinized the accounts of returning ambassadors as meticulously as a subcommittee of Congress or the General Accounting Office today."[30] Yet envoys had broader responsibilities and, according to Demosthenes, the famous orator who was sent on many diplomatic missions, were to be scrutinized on five counts: "for what they had reported, for what advice they gave on the basis of those reports, for the extent to which instructions had been carried out or exceeded, for whether their advice and action bore any relation and relevance to the circumstances, and finally, and most important, whether they had remained uncorrupted and clear of bribery in those activities."[31] Envoys could even be brought to trial for the misconduct of an embassy, *parapresbeia*; yet such trials were infrequent.[32] Similarly, Roman envoys who exceeded their mandate could be impeached.[33]

Examples of ambassadors being rebuked for exceeding their mandates can be found in medieval Europe as well. Venice, for instance, had a great deal of trouble with overly ambitious ambassadors in the fifteenth century. The Venetian Senate, which exercised tight control over the republic's diplomatic relations, on several occasions refused to accept the concessions made by an ambassador and instructed him to renege, using whatever excuses he could contrive, or replaced him with another envoy.[34]

Modern examples of diplomats being held accountable for acting beyond their instructions can easily be found. Andrew Young, appointed US ambassador at the United Nations by President Carter, is a case in point. Among other things, the outspoken ambassador publicly accused Britain of institutionalizing and "almost inventing" racism; applauded the Cuban troops in Angola for "bringing stability" to that country; and compared persecuted Soviet dissidents with "political prisoners" in the United States. After having attended an "unauthorized" meeting with the unrecognized Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), he was forced to resign in 1979.[35] The dismissal of the British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, in 2004 is a parallel case. Murray, known as "the world's most undiplomatic diplomat," in a leaked dispatch accused MI6 and CIA for making use of Uzbek intelligence reports, produced by means of torture, in the war against terrorism.[36]

Another less flagrant example, even more emblematic of the accountability problem, is the "walk in the woods" episode in the summer of 1982. It refers to a package deal made by US and Soviet arms control negotiators Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky during a private conversation in the Swiss Jura Mountains. The two experienced diplomats were careful to label the deal "a joint exploratory package for the consideration of both governments," and agreed to blame each other in the event of resistance at home. "I'll tell them it's your scheme, and you tell them it's mine," Kvitsinsky said. Yet they apparently both felt the deal was within their broad instructions. However, in Washington it was seen as a major departure from the official US negotiating position and a breach of discipline on Nitze's part, and the deal was eventually disavowed by President Reagan. Kvitsinsky, for his part, later told Nitze that his bosses had castigated him for conveying the scheme and for implying Soviet endorsement of it. Both diplomats had to proceed under stricter instructions, and the negotiations proved inconclusive.[37] Different, less well-known versions of negotiators being held accountable for allegedly going too far in accommodating the other side can be found throughout history.

From the viewpoint of the principals, as P–A theory reminds us, accountability is a question of monitoring and sanctions. In order to ensure that agents do not deviate from their mandate, principals need to monitor their behavior and be prepared to sanction undesirable acts. To act as deterrents, the grounds for, and character of, sanctions ought to be known to the agents in advance.

Imperative mandates imply that, when a diplomat disagrees with his government's policy, he may remonstrate and state his reasons for

disagreeing, but in the end must defend his government's position loyally. The alternative is to request a transfer or resign. Arthur B. Lane, US Ambassador to Warsaw 1945–47, not only resigned but published a book in 1948, sharply criticizing the failure of his government to take a stronger stand against the Soviet absorption of Poland.[38] In 1958, the US ambassador to Indonesia disagreed so profoundly with a policy he was instructed to carry out that he requested a transfer, and was appointed ambassador to Prague.[39] In 2003, a number of high-level US diplomats, including John Brown and John Bradley Kiesling, resigned in protest against President Bush's war preparations against Iraq.[40]

Diplomats, in effect, are accountable not only to their own principals but also to the government of their host country, which can declare an individual diplomat *persona non grata*. Sensitivity as to what constitutes a grave enough breach of diplomatic etiquette to dismiss an ambassador has varied across time and between countries.

> When in 1584 the Spanish ambassador at London was discovered in a plot to depose Queen Elizabeth in favor of Mary Queen of Scots he was handed his passports and told to get out of England without delay. Three years later the French ambassador in London was accused of attempting to assassinate the Queen. However, on this occasion the Queen did not dismiss him but simply read him a severe lecture on the role of an ambassador and admonished him not to try again to assassinate her.[41]

In 1606 the scandalous life of the Imperial ambassador to Venice – he ran a brothel in his residence, produced counterfeit money, killed his butler and made an unsuccessful effort to kill his own wife – prompted the Venetian Senate to call for his dismissal.[42] Throughout its history the United States has frequently requested the recall of ambassadors. Examples of US dismissals of diplomats include: the French minister in 1792 for fitting out privateers in the United States to be used against the British; the British minister in 1809 for offending the Secretary of State; the Russian minister in 1871 for misconduct, both officially and personally; the Spanish minister in 1898 for writing disparaging remarks about the US President in a private letter; and the Austrian minister in 1915 for allegedly attempting to instigate strikes in the United States.[43] Examples from other parts of the world include the expulsion of the Libyan ambassador to Egypt in 1976 after having been found to distribute pamphlets hostile to President Sadat, and of North Korean diplomats in Scandinavia the same year after evidence was released of

their participation in widespread smuggling and illegal sales of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.[44]

As these examples indicate, the *persona non grata* instrument is used in exceptional cases of personal offences. Yet it has been used in modern times to dismiss such a prominent and experienced diplomat as George F. Kennan. In 1952, when he served as ambassador in Moscow, Kennan met the press during vacation in Berlin and described Soviet practices in unusually vivid language, making explicit comparisons with Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union then declared Kennan *persona non grata*, and the US government recalled him "for consultations."[45]

Free mandate: authorization

In opposition to mandate theorists, who regard representatives generally, and diplomatic representatives in particular, as restricted and accountable agents, independence theorists see representatives as free agents, trustees, or experts who are best left alone to do their work.[46] *Authorization*, rather than accountability, is then the key term to characterize the relationship between representatives and principals. A representative is someone who has been authorized to act.

> This means that he has been given the right to act which he did not have before, while the represented has become responsible for the consequences of that action as if he had done it himself. It is a view strongly skewed in favor of the representative. His rights have been enlarged and his responsibilities have been (if anything) decreased. The represented, in contrast, has acquired new responsibilities and (if anything) given up some of his rights.[47]

In contrast to accountability theorists, who emphasize the representative's obligations, authorization theorists consider the represented rather than the representative responsible for the latter's action. "Whereas authorization theorists see the representative as free, the represented as bound, accountability theorists see precisely the converse."[48] For Max Weber, for example, the primary aspect of representation was that the actions of representatives are binding on, or accepted as legitimate by, others.[49]

The notion of emissaries being authorized to act on behalf of their rulers is no doubt central to diplomacy. Already in the Ancient Near East, messengers could have a considerable range of discretion. In highly important and delicate negotiations concerning inter-dynastic marriages, the written letter was just the starting point for complex deliberations entrusted to messengers. There is even a documented

instance when a Hittite messenger arrived to the Assyrian king with both a "letter of peace" and a "letter of war" and was authorized by his king to decide, after a round of negotiations, which letter to deliver.[50]

In Ancient Greece, an *autocrator* was an envoy given "full power." It was a mark of respect for a major city-state to send envoys whose credentials bore the title of *autocrator*.[51] If we return to the Middle Ages and the restricted *nuncii*, pressures of distance and time – negotiations required *nuncii* to go constantly back-and-forth between their principals and their foreign counterparts – eventually led to the emergence of procurators, agents who could speak in their own person and not only in the person of the principal and who could negotiate *and* conclude treaties. The procurator, in turn, was the forerunner of the ambassador plenipotentiary.[52] Instead of explicit instructions, thirteenth-century procurators were often provided with blanks sealed in advance by the principal and left to be filled out by themselves, giving them immense freedom and power of discretion.[53] Eagerness to underline the free mandate of diplomatic agents sometimes entailed verbal redundancy, as in a British royal letter of 1701 appointing one ambassador "*Legatum Extraordinarium, Commissarium, Procuratorem et Plenipotentiarium*."[54]

One can easily find examples of principals becoming bound by the actions of overly ambitious diplomatic representatives. In 1470 the Venetian Senate was annoyed with Filippo Corrario, ambassador to King Ferdinand the Bastard, for entering into conventions beyond his mandate. As King Ferdinand was not disposed to alter the agreement, Venice suffered serious diplomatic embarrassment.[55] Although envoys were known to frequently exceed their mandates in medieval diplomacy, principals repudiated the acts of their procurators only in extremely rare instances.[56]

A more recent example concerns the handling of the disappearance of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest in January 1945 by the Swedish Foreign Ministry. While Soviet diplomats had informed Sweden on 16 January that Wallenberg had been found and was in the safe custody of Soviet troops in Budapest, Swedish requests for further information concerning Wallenberg's whereabouts were left unheeded by Soviet authorities. Without being explicitly instructed to do so, the Swedish envoy in Moscow, Staffan Söderblom, in 1945–46 repeatedly told his Soviet counterparts that he believed Wallenberg had died in an accident during the chaotic final stage of the war. His "theory," which was even reiterated at an unusual audience with Stalin, seriously hampered subsequent Swedish efforts to hold the Soviet Union accountable for Wallenberg's fate and obtain his release from Soviet captivity.[57]

In the authorization perspective on diplomatic representation, disagreements between principals and agents become more problematic

and their solutions less clear-cut than in the accountability perspective. In 1620, the Spanish scholar, courtier and diplomat Don Juan Antonio De Vera wrote a book entitled *El Embajador*, which was translated into French and Italian and was read by most aspiring diplomats throughout the next century. He stated the perennial problem:

> What faith does the ambassador owe to the prince or republic he serves and what to the principal to whom he is sent? And what must he do when the two duties conflict? Or when the wishes or orders of his own government seem to him contrary to the true interests of his country? Or to his own honour? Or to the law of nations under which he lives and by which he is protected? Or to the interests of peace which he is supposed to serve?[58]

Unlike earlier medieval authors, who advocated unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the ambassador's own principal, De Vera recognized the dilemma, realizing that "it was, indeed, the position of the resident, alone and far away, and for that very reason unable to disregard instructions or even to resign without grave danger to his country, which made the moral problem of diplomacy so acute."[59] Part of De Vera's answer was that the ambassador must never forget that his ultimate object is peace; other authors argued that diplomats were not bound to obedience if their principal's orders contravened moral laws.[60] A century later, François de Callières claimed that ambassadors should refuse to obey instructions only if they entailed doing something "against the laws of God or of Justice."[61]

In the field, resident ambassadors at that time often suffered from contradictory instructions or general uncertainty. Some were reduced to inactivity, whereas others boldly pursued independent foreign policies of their own, risking harmful results to themselves as well as their principals.[62] Similarly, in modern times there are examples both of ambassadors who have used their latitude to pursue personal policies and of those who have been so terrified of exceeding their instructions that they have missed opportunities as a result of their passivity.[63]

Thus, as far as diplomacy is concerned, the mandate–independence debate remains unresolved, which can be frustrating to a practicing diplomat:

> In the public mind he is often considered a clerk merely carrying out orders. On other occasions he will find himself cast as the principal architect of his nation's foreign policy failures. Remarkably, there are times when he is regarded, and abused, as both.[64]

However, this is symptomatic of representation in other contexts as well, as most analysts recognize. The two extremes of "imperative mandates" of restricted, accountable representatives and "free mandates" of fully authorized agents rarely appear in real life. Diplomats do not like to be merely mouthpieces, nor do they desire total latitude and responsibility. The most comfortable position is somewhere in between. Latitude can be useful in floating one's own ideas informally, constraint can be useful in negotiations. "To say that one is limited by instructions or that one does not have the authority to commit something may or may not be true, but it is a way to test the waters for the temperature of the other side's position without necessarily making any commitments."[65]

In line with our general approach, representation, in the sense of acting for others, is best understood as a *process* rather than a static relationship. It is a process of mutual interaction between principals and agents.[66] Some authors have suggested that the notion of "plastic control," introduced by Karl Popper to describe the relation between two interacting and indeterminate systems, may help us to understand this mutual relationship, at the same time as it points to the difficulties in defining representation in more precise terms.[67]

Dynamics of principal–agent relationships

In the world of diplomacy, the mandate–independence or principal–agent problematique revolves around the nature and role of the instructions diplomats receive. As the examples already cited indicate, the degree of restriction or leeway of diplomatic envoys has varied throughout history. The development of communication and transportation technology may account for some of the variation. It seems reasonable to assume that emissaries had more restrictive mandates in earlier periods of slow and cumbersome communication. Yet it could be argued that, compared to earlier periods when it took a long time to relay instructions, the actions of diplomats are today much more circumscribed.[68] New communications technology has made possible ever more detailed and frequent instructions regardless of the physical remoteness of diplomats from their principals.[69] One ambassador complains:

> Today, instant communications have transformed all diplomatic posts into branch offices of headquarters and heads of post into branch managers. There is practically no detail of a post's operations too small to escape detailed instructions from headquarters, even in areas where the crucial element is the local situation and the ambassador should be in the best position to know that situation.[70]

By contrast, other seasoned diplomats argue that "because communications are now so fast, it is more feasible than it used to be for an ambassador to be part of the policy-formulating process."[71] "If he is now liable to receive instructions several times a day a few minutes after they have left the minister's desk, he can give his own views with equal facility and speed and thus influence the decisions of ministers."[72] The effects of technological developments on the relation between principal and agent, in short, appear to be ambiguous.

Another factor with a more discernible effect is whether the diplomatic agent has a single principal or receives instructions from a collective body. Principal–agent theory pays attention to the problems of collective or multiple principals, especially the increased autonomy agents may enjoy as a result of competing preferences among principals. When principals are not in agreement concerning appropriate agent behavior and/or the need to impose sanctions, the agent's discretion is enhanced.[73] By analogy, the unequivocal instructions from a single sovereign leave less leeway for the diplomat than the frequently vague instructions resulting from negotiations among different actors and agencies in modern democracies. Modern diplomats often find themselves "stranded between different constituencies."[74] It is an irony of modern diplomacy, writes Paul Sharp, that "the rise of democratic values which makes the extensive idea of representation necessary, simultaneously makes any idea of representation much more difficult to sustain."[75]

In P–A terminology, democratic polities place diplomatic agents at the end of multiple chains of principals and agents. For example, in a parliamentary democracy the electorate is the ultimate principal, delegating authority to elected parliamentarians. Parliament, in its turn, is the principal of the government. In the government, the prime minister (or, possibly, the ruling party) can be regarded as the principal, delegating specialized authority to other ministers. Finally, the foreign minister is the immediate principal of diplomats in the field. From the perspective of diplomats, the question then arises as to who their "real" principal is. If public opinion, parliament, the government, or individual ministers do not agree, to whom should the diplomat be loyal? US Ambassador to London, John L. Motley, for instance, in 1869–70 followed the policy line of the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee rather than that of the Secretary of State, which resulted in President Grant sacking him.[76]

Multiple chains of principals and agents may create problems not only for diplomatic agents themselves but also for their counterparts in

negotiations, who have to ask themselves whether their negotiating partner is entirely representative of his principals. Harold Nicolson points to the position of President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–20, where he acted in the double capacity as principal and agent, as a "painful and embarrassing instance of incomplete representation":

> On the one hand he was the chief executive officer of the United States and his credentials were not by any possible means open to question. On the other hand it was generally known that he was not fully representative of the central authority in his own country, namely the American electorate. A most difficult dilemma was thereby created for those who were obliged to negotiate with the President. They could not say that he did not represent the United States, since in theory he did; they did not feel that he represented the determining authority in his own country because they knew that in practice he did not.[77]

This is not an entirely new problematique. Without reasonable certainty that the emissary's signature will be honored by his own principal, negotiations cannot succeed. And the emissaries of Greek city-states experienced similar dilemmas as US envoys do today. In fact, it has been said that one of the defects of Ancient Greek diplomacy was its uncertainty[78] and the failure to reconcile popular democratic control with effective prosecution of foreign policy.[79] Witness, for example, Demosthenes' complaints about the multiple principals of Athenian diplomatic missions:

> first the Council has to be notified and adopt a provisional resolution, and even then only when the heralds and the ambassadors have sent in a note in writing. Then the Council has to convene the Assembly, but then only on a statutory date. Then the debater has to prove his case in face of an ignorant and often corrupt opposition; and even when this endless procedure has been completed, and a decision has been come to, even more time is wasted before the necessary financial resolution can be passed. Thus an ambassador who, in a constitution such as ours, acts in a dilatory manner and causes us to miss opportunities, is not missing opportunities only, but robbing us of the control of events.[80]

At any rate, diplomats today need to use their judgment in evaluating instructions from the collective principals of democracies. One

experienced US ambassador describes the process thus:

> The ambassador must decide whether the instructions leave latitude for interpretation and, if so, how much; he or she must decide whether they represent the considered view of the government at a senior level (indicating a true consensus) or are cursory views tilted toward the needs of one agency or another. Once diplomats believe they have assigned the proper weight to their instructions, they must decide how best to carry them out.[81]

As this quote indicates, diplomatic agents have considerable leeway in pursuing the interests of the polities they represent. Seasoned ambassadors read their instructions with a critical eye and often have to use their diplomatic talent in interacting with their own foreign ministry. In the words of a veteran Swedish diplomat, "the wisest instructions are those you write yourself." The technique is to propose a line of action to one's own government, with the concluding phrase "*sauf avis contraire*." This translates into "unless you give me immediate counter-instructions, I will proceed as suggested."[82]

This reminds us that the relationship between principal and agent rests on two-way communication and influence attempts. Agents rarely represent principals whose interests are fixed and static. Instead, "interests are constructed in interactions between representatives and those they represent, interactions informed by the representatives' superior knowledge of external realities."[83] Thus the reports diplomats send to their foreign ministries and the policies they propose or imply can have a decisive influence on government foreign policy. George F. Kennan's "long telegram" from Moscow in 1946 is a classic example; it laid the foundation for US containment policy during the Cold War era.[84] The presence of diplomats among the advisers of policy-makers can be crucial during a crisis. Former Ambassador to Moscow Llewelyn Thompson played a key role as presidential adviser during the Cuban missile crisis. According to Robert Kennedy, his "advice on the Russians and predictions as to what they would do were uncannily accurate" and his recommendations "surpassed by none."[85]

A diplomat is a representative not only *of* someone, but also *to* someone. This is analogous to other forms of representation. "As a portrait is intermediate between the person portrayed, on the one hand, and the person *to whom* it portrays, on the other, so a representative is intermediate between the principal and some party to whom the practical affairs or concerns of the principal pertain."[86] Diplomatic representatives, in this

respect, find themselves in *boundary roles*, to use a term favored by organization theorists. As intermediaries between their own organization and its environment, boundary-role occupants must not only represent the organization to its environment, but also represent the environment to their constituents.[87] As boundary-role occupants, ambassadors in particular are susceptible to role conflict. They are liable to get caught in the cross fire between divergent role expectations.

Another way of framing the problem is to ask whose image of the principal a diplomat is representing. "There are at least two images of a principal – a self-regarding and an other-regarding one – and either of them might in practice be represented by a representative."[88] One of the assignments of diplomats is, of course, to convey to their home government the "other-regarding" images of their home country prevailing in the host country. At the same time, envoys run the danger of catching what in diplomatic circles is referred to as *localitis* or "going native" – that is, becoming too attached to, and assuming the perspectives of, their host country.[89] Foreign ministries around the world preempt this danger by regularly circulating their diplomatic personnel, letting them serve limited terms in foreign countries. To P–A theorists, this is exemplary of those administrative controls that principals use to avoid shirking by agents.

A final observation on the special nature of diplomatic representation has to do with the nature of the principals. Today we take for granted that a diplomat's principal is the government of a state. In our diachronic perspective, we have broadened this prevalent notion to include rulers of polities. We need to be reminded that in the Middle Ages, for example, all sorts of principals sent diplomatic agents to all sorts of recipients, be they political, commercial or religious.[90] Still in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, not only princes, free cities and feudal nobles, "but even merchant towns, even universities and craft guilds, sent formal quasi-diplomatic agents on occasion, apparently without anyone's questioning their right to do so, or finding it odd to refer to them as ambassadors (*legati*)."[91] Incidentally, although there was no developed system of resident ambassadors in the Middle Ages, the pope – like the patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch – had permanent representatives, *apocrisiarii*, at the court in Constantinople.[92] Arguably, this foreshadowed the institution of resident ambassadors as it developed during the Renaissance.[93]

The changing nature and increasing number of principals in today's world raise questions of broadened representation. Other principals than state governments today take part in international relations and

thus need diplomatic agents. For instance, the lack of legitimate representatives of global currency dealers or the global NGO community curtails the state's ability to interact with crucial sets of international actors.

> This amounts to a crisis of representation and there is nothing in the existing machine that is going to help. The problem will worsen until areas of activity have also become centers of organized power and have acquired the need to deal with others like them.[94]

Status: standing for others

To represent, according to a classic semiotic definition, is "to stand for, that is, to be in such a relation to another that for certain purposes it is treated by some mind as if it were that other."[95] The idea of representation as one-for-one correspondence was readily accepted in ancient as well as medieval thought. "The medieval ambassador represented his sovereign in the sense that he was him or embodied him (literally in some readings) when he presented himself at court."[96] While such a view is alien to modern thought, today's principle of diplomatic immunity has deep roots in notions of personal representation. The reason that early envoys were inviolable was that they were to be treated "as though the sovereign himself were there."[97] "On official occasions," Peter Barber argues, "the ambassador is in theory transmuted into his master."[98] Immunity was justified on the grounds that diplomats were to enjoy the rights and privileges of their sovereigns, and as sovereigns, in turn, embodied their polities, then so did their representatives.[99]

The fiction of direct correspondence has not vanished altogether. One of the reasons the US government did not appoint ambassadors until late in the nineteenth century was that the American public regarded ambassadors as personal representatives of monarchs.[100] And it could be argued that even modern diplomats must retain a certain residue from the era of one-for-one correspondence in order to justify their claims of embodying the state.[101]

If not personal representatives, diplomats, like parliamentarians, stand for others in two different ways. In a literal or descriptive sense, diplomats are mirroring or reflecting their home polities, in the same way that the composition of parliaments is expected to be an accurate reflection of the community, public opinion, or the variety of interests in society.[102] This notion of representation has been, and remains, less common in diplomacy. For most of recorded history, diplomatic envoys have represented individual rulers rather than whole communities and have not

necessarily come from the same polity as their rulers. In late Byzantine diplomacy, most diplomats of the eastern Mediterranean were of Greek descent, working for non-Greek masters, such as the Turks, the Venetians or the Crusaders.[103] Well into the nineteenth century diplomats were aristocrats, who could easily change from one monarchical employer to another. Thus, among the ministers and advisers brought to the Congress of Vienna in 1815 by the Russian Tsar Alexander I were two Germans, one Greek, one Corsican, one Swiss, one Pole and one Russian.[104] Some prominent diplomats, such as Laski of Poland, Rincon of Spain and Frangipani of Hungary, served several masters in turn.[105] Only in the latter half of the nineteenth century did most European governments begin to recruit diplomats on the basis of merit rather than social rank, and to introduce nationality requirements.

It is actually only in recent years that the idea that diplomats should be an accurate reflection or typical of the society they represent has gained some currency in a few democratic states. The first paragraph of the US Foreign Service Act of 1980, for example, states that the service must be "representative of the American people."[106] In countries with substantial immigration, such as Sweden, governments have recently made efforts to influence recruitment policies in order that the diplomatic corps better mirror the multiethnic character of these societies.

However, by far the most common understanding of representatives standing for others has to do with *symbolic* representation. The diplomat is then a representative in the same way that a flag represents a nation. In the fifteenth century Duke Ludovico Sforza said that princes and crossbows could be tried by the same rule. "Whether the crossbow is good is judged by the arrows it shoots. So too, the value of princes is judged by the quality of the men they send forth."[107] Diplomats "personify both their nation's traditions and its contemporary culture to the officials and people where they are assigned."[108] Representation, in this sense, refers to "a diplomat's efforts to demonstrate through his personality, manners, hospitality, and erudition the admirable qualities of his country and thus the advantage of maintaining close friendly relations with it."[109]

Any claim to symbolic representation has to be accepted by the significant audience.[110] Successful representation, in this perspective, does not depend on what representatives are doing or their likeness to the represented, but rather on the perceptions of others – recipient countries in the case of ambassadors. For instance, in 2001 the nomination of Carmi Gillon as Israeli ambassador to Copenhagen provoked a storm of

protest in Denmark and among international human rights groups. A former head of Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security forces, Gillon had admitted that he had authorized the torture of Arab suspects. Thus, in the eyes of many Danes, he came to symbolize Israeli brutality and intransigence in the Arab–Israeli conflict more than anything else. Yet, in the end, the Danish Foreign Ministry accepted him as ambassador.

There are several historical examples of receiving governments refusing to accept a particular emissary (refusing *agrément*, in diplomatic terminology). In 1891 the Chinese government did not accept the appointment of former US Senator Henry W. Blair as minister to China because of his earlier opposition to Chinese immigration. In 1913 Mexico refused to receive US envoy James W. Gerard with reference to alleged mistreatment of labor on his Mexican mining property. The US government in 1922 did not accept Andreas Hermes as the German envoy, since he was under indictment for fraud committed while he was heading one of the German ministries. In order to avoid such incidents, the custom of sending states consulting the receiving government in advance has developed.[111]

The fact that effective representation depends on the perceptions of others also means that diplomats can be perceived as symbols of other things than their own polity. When Geoffrey Jackson, British ambassador to Uruguay, was taken hostage by urban guerillas in the 1970s, one of his captors told him that he was being punished as a "symbol of institutional neocolonialism."[112] The vulnerability of symbolic representation has since been graphically demonstrated in a series of embassy occupations, hostage-taking and assassinations of diplomats. In 1968 there were 11 threats against diplomats worldwide; in 1982, 189. In 1968 2 diplomats were assassinated; in 1982, 21.[113] The killing of the US ambassador to Guatemala during an unsuccessful kidnap attempt in 1968 foreshadowed an epidemic of kidnappings the following years, involving US, British, Japanese, Belgian, Swiss and German diplomats.[114] Attacks on embassies, rather than individual diplomats, date back to 1958, when a crowd burned the British embassy building in Baghdad in connection with General Abdul Qasim's coup d'état. During the Chinese "cultural revolution" Western embassies in Peking were threatened and attacked. The more than year-long occupation of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979 and the coordinated bomb attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998 are two dramatic examples among many recent ones of this renewed vulnerability. One pessimistic diplomatic representative claims that embassies have become "hostages

rather than status symbols" and wonders: "If the diplomat must now be described as an honest man sent to cower abroad for his country, his usefulness is clearly at a close."[115]

One is reminded of the perilous situation of messengers in the Ancient Middle East, whose journeys through remote areas could be quite risky, especially if they brought precious gifts to be delivered with the letter.[116] Moreover, they were not allowed to return home without the permission of their hosts, on whom they were dependent for supplies, and were often detained.[117] Similarly, in Byzantine diplomacy ambassadors were hostages for the good behavior of their governments. In case of war with the Turks, the ambassador of the enemy state in Constantinople was at once sent to the prison of the Seven Towers.[118] In medieval Europe, the dangers of traveling and staying in foreign territories were so great that rulers had difficulties in recruiting personnel for their embassies. A Venetian decree of 1271, for example, imposed heavy fines on persons evading diplomatic service. Florence issued a similar ordinance in 1421.[119]

Yet today's vulnerability of diplomats and embassies represents a dramatic break with the immediate past. As diplomats and their premises are perceived by different groups to represent disliked countries or "-isms," the quality of "standing for others" has been transformed from a rationale for diplomatic immunity to a rationale for political violence. No longer inviolable symbols, diplomatic representatives have increasingly become highly vulnerable symbols.

There is, on the other hand, a more positive side to symbolic diplomatic representation. A distinguishing aspect of diplomatic representation concerns the notion that diplomatic agents represent not only their individual or collective principals, but also certain ideas. Diplomat-cum-scholar Adam Watson, for example, argues that diplomats throughout history have been guided not only by *raison d'état*, but also by *raison de système*.[120] Diplomats are commonly described as representing peace or international order. One author refers to diplomacy as "the angels' game," arguing that diplomats, "regardless of nationality, have an enduring obligation to their guild and to each other to work always toward that most elusive of human objectives – a just, universal, and stable peace."[121] One may even wonder whether "the idea that diplomats serve peace predates that of serving the prince."[122] Diplomats are said to be "conscious of world interests superior to immediate national interests,"[123] and to feel bound by their professional ethic to "act in such a way as to ensure that the functioning of the international state system is sustained and improved."[124] While this may sound as old-fashioned rhetoric, benefiting the diplomatic guild, outside observers point to the continued representation of ideas.

> Secularism and statism were great spurs to the development of diplomacy as a profession, but they did not overwhelm the earlier commitment to peace. Indeed, a shared commitment to peace and saving their respective princes from themselves became hallmarks of the profession, something which diplomats could hold in common to cement their sense of corps and to gain some distance from their political leaderships.[125]

This particular aspect of diplomatic representation means that diplomatic agents not only have to deal with the problems of representing collective principals and of balancing divergent role expectations in their boundary roles; they must also "strike a balance between diplomacy as a means of identifying and fostering 'us' and diplomacy as a means of fostering the latent community of mankind."[126] In short, this is one of the facets of the mediation of universalism and particularism that we associate with diplomacy.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have drawn on analyses of the concept representation in various contexts in order to enrich our understanding of diplomatic representation. More specifically, we have found works that treat representation as "by no means modern or confined to the democratic state"[127] particularly useful in this regard. Whereas many students of diplomacy have pointed to various aspects of the representative functions of diplomats, the generic literature offers a conceptual framework that may help us in sorting and systematizing these insights.

The most basic lesson is that representation is not a static but a dynamic concept. Representation, we have argued, is best understood as a *process* of mutual interaction between principals and agents. Rather than connoting a static relationship, diplomatic representation entails varying combinations of imperative and free mandates, accountability and authorization. Diplomats act on behalf of principals, and also serve as symbols of their rulers and countries as well as certain ideas.

Variations in the principal–agent relationship in diplomatic history do not follow any unilinear pattern. The character of the principal has an obvious impact, especially the difference between individual and collective rulers. Thus, diplomats in Ancient Greece and in today's democracies can be assumed to have more autonomy and latitude than their counterparts in, say, the Ancient Near East or in medieval kingdoms. Developments in communication technology also influence the

relationship, even if the effect is more ambiguous. It is debatable whether the increased speed and ease of communication have entailed more restricted or freer mandates for diplomats. One aspect that distinguishes diplomatic representation from many other forms of representation is the dual accountability of diplomats. Representatives *of* a country as well as *to* a country, diplomats enact boundary roles. Thus, they need the confidence, and are vulnerable to the mistrust, of the rulers of two polities.

6
The Reproduction of International Society

In Chapter 2 we professed to be partisans of flux. We suggested that stability is no more natural than change, and in equal need of explanation. We also suggested that international societies, and their legitimizing principles, can be conceptualized as being poised between the extremes of universality and particularity. In this chapter we focus on diplomacy as an important factor in explaining the relative stability of international societies. We propose, in other words, that diplomacy is a crucial component in the reproduction of international societies. At the same time as diplomacy helps establish the balance between universalism and particularism, it also reflects this balance. In other words, the institutionalization of diplomacy implies an institutionalization of any given balance between universalism and particularism.

We elaborated our understanding of the concept of international society in Chapter 2. By "reproduction of international society," we understand the processes by which a population of polities maintain themselves as a political and social entity. This usage of the term "reproduction" is inspired by archaeology,[1] but has been employed in IR theory as well.[2] Recalling our understanding of international society, we need to identify the mechanisms that allow polities to continue to agree with one another on the "institutional superstructure." Diplomatic recognition and socialization are the two mechanisms we highlight.

Recognition is a concept with long standing in discourses on diplomacy, international relations, and international law. We return to some of the legal and technical niceties of the concept later in this chapter, since they are relevant only for the most recent history. At this juncture it is noteworthy that the word recognition has a double meaning even in non-specialized language. While difficult to disentangle, both are of interest in our context. The first meaning has to do with acceptance.

To recognize another polity, or person, is to accept them more or less as peers, and to treat them accordingly. The other meaning of recognition actually precedes the first one. The prior question is not "do I accept this other as a counterpart?" but "what *is* this other?" This is fundamentally an existential or epistemological question. The questions "will state *x* recognize state *y*?" and "do we recognize a state when we see it?" may illustrate the difference between the two connotations.

Recognition, in this double sense, is equally crucial for interpersonal and international relations. There is, however, one significant difference between the two.

> At the level of recognition between individuals, relation, that is, encounter, precedes the achievement of reciprocal recognition. However, at the international level, relations between states turn on recognition as their prior condition. Here recognition precedes "official" relations.[3]

Recognition, in other words, is a prerequisite for reciprocal exchanges in international relations. The principles of diplomatic recognition, which have varied considerably throughout history, have determining consequences for diplomacy and the reproduction of international society. The range of principles can be seen as lying between the two poles highly inclusive and highly exclusive. For instance, to recognize only humans as proprietors of ethical rights on the grounds that only they have souls is fairly exclusive, while the view that all higher beings have ethical rights since they can feel pain and suffering is fairly inclusive. And, as we show in this chapter, diplomatic recognition has ranged from "virtually anyone with some authority and material or moral resources" to "sovereign states which adhere to the principles of Western civilization."

Socialization, too, has long been a crucial concept in IR theory. For instance, the realist Kenneth Waltz argues that the two mechanisms through which the structure of the international system has causal effects are competition and socialization.[4] And while the social constructivist Alexander Wendt dismisses the importance of socialization for Waltz, he himself gives it considerable attention and weight.[5]

When socialization is strong, the international society tends toward homogeneity; and when socialization is weak, toward heterogeneity. We are not suggesting that diplomacy is the only socializing mechanism, nor are we suggesting that socialization is the only process leading to homogeneity. Researchers have convincingly shown that there are other processes, such as economic competition and war-making, that have to

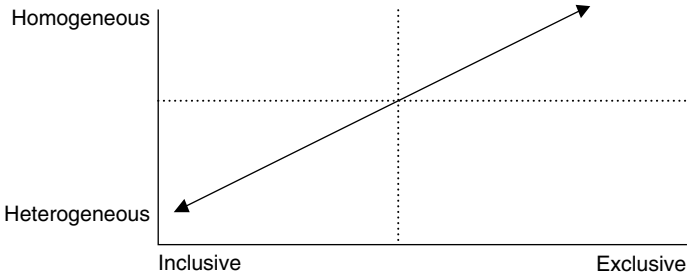

Figure 2 Variety of international societies

be taken into account.[6] Yet diplomacy plays a crucial role in shaping particular international societies, as exemplified by the problems the Hanseatic League faced as a result of the Peace of Westphalia. Less able to credibly commit itself to international treaties, the economically strong but geographically dispersed Hanse was increasingly incompatible with, and eventually not considered a legitimate polity by, territorially defined states.[7]

While it may be tempting to view the relationship between inclusion and exclusion and heterogeneity and homogeneity as in Figure 2 – that is, a strong correlation, and perhaps even causation, between heterogeneity and inclusiveness, on the one hand, and homogeneity and exclusiveness, on the other – we maintain that all four "fields" are represented in history. Thus for instance, Christian Europe during the High Middle Ages – the years of the crusades – was an exclusive but heterogeneous international society (excluding non-Christian polities). And Alexander the Great tried to build an inclusive international society based on mythical kinship with Greek gods and heroes, while applying strong homogenizing pressure on recognized polities to emulate Greek *poleis*. A variety of international societies have thus been reproduced with the aid of diplomacy. By way of illustration, let us outline how diplomacy has contributed to the reproduction of premodern and modern international societies, respectively.

Reproduction of premodern international societies

Antiquity offers two polar models of recognition. In the Ancient Near East, with "great thirst for recognition on the part of all sovereigns,"[8] the "great kings" formed an exclusive and homogeneous club. Ancient Greece, by contrast, had "no regular procedure whereby formal requests

for diplomatic recognition were made and granted,"[9] and its "kinship diplomacy" allowed for inclusive recognition of heterogeneous entities by means of claiming mythical descent from gods or prehistoric heroes.

The international society of Europe in the Early Middle Ages (*c.*300–1000) was inclusive and heterogeneous. This "loose commonwealth"[10] of polities was poised between the particularism of, *inter alia*, Ostrogoth, Vandal, Frankish and Longobard attempts at state-formation, and the universalism of the remaining Eastern Roman Empire – or Byzantium – and the idea that the Christian realm was indivisible. Diplomacy was crucial in the reproduction of this society, although the "routes of communication between east and west were breaking down" around the eighth century.[11]

While it has generally been assumed that the number of embassies was low in the Early Middle Ages, recent research shows that they were "ubiquitous, constant, and crucial."[12] One commentator argues that "political communication through formal conventions was a shaping force in this period of change, more frequent if less obvious than warfare."[13] The importance of diplomacy is demonstrated by a Byzantine succession crisis in 641. When the emperor Heraclius died, he left two underage sons. Heraclius had wanted his queen, Martina, to assume power, but the Byzantine people would not allow this because "as a woman, she could not receive foreign ambassadors."[14]

There were four major categories of embassies during the Early Middle Ages.[15] First, there were embassies for the notification of the accession to the throne of new rulers. Second, there were embassies for the recognition of foreign rulers after their accession. These two embassies were socially reproductive in two ways: in addition to constituting explicit and affirmative answers to the question "do I accept this other as a counterpart," they addressed the difficult question of what happened with agreements and treaties concluded by individual rulers after they died. Embassies for the notification and recognition of new rulers thus also had the purpose of reconfirming the status quo of treaties.[16]

The third and fourth types of embassies concerned the notification of great events (such as important victories, marriages, and the birth of royal offsprings) and more practical things (such as the regulation of trade, declarations of war, requests for interventions, and peace negotiations). While less directly involved in the reproduction of international society, these two types may be thought of as *constituting* the international society, which the first two were involved in reproducing.

The international society of the Early Middle Ages was inclusive. In addition to heads of state, "bishops, generals, and senior officials"

as well as cities sent and received embassies. In fact, there was no "differentiation in vocabulary between 'internal' embassies, such as provincial legations to government magistrates, and communications between heads of state."[17] For instance, the fifth-century bishop Hydatius recorded 41 embassies – mainly concerning the relationship between the Suevi and the roman province Gallaecia (both located in the same geographical region) and the interest the Goths as well as the Roman General Aetius had in this relationship.[18] When the two Merovingian kings Guntram and Childebert II sought to subjugate the two cities of Tours and Poitiers in 584, both cities sent and received embassies from the two kings, as well as their generals, and also exchanged embassies between themselves. The list of diverse diplomatic principals could be prolonged. Suffice it here to say that contemporary records show clearly that the only criterion applied in recognition was that the counterpart had some form of authority – and not necessarily exclusive authority – over some form of constituency.

One peculiar method of recognizing a variety of counterparts was the long established Roman, and later Byzantine, practice of bestowing honorary titles on foreign rulers. Attila, for instance, although never in Roman employ, was a *magister militium*. The Byzantine practice of presenting foreign counterparts with lavish gifts, far from being simply flattery or even a form of tribute, reflected "the substantive procedure of recognizing the empire's partners not only on the grounds of their actual military and political potential but also according to their degree of constitutional and political development."[19]

Diplomacy in the Early Middle Ages had socializing effects, but not strong enough to create a homogeneous international society. In addition, the socializing agent – the East Roman Empire – could, of course, not be emulated. Instead, socialization had the effect of shaping the territories conquered by the Germanic invaders into more formalized states, or polities. What the barbarian successor states learned from Constantinople was, first, administration and, second, ceremonial.[20] Later, when Charlemagne had made himself emperor, there were controversies between him and Constantinople, both powers seeing themselves as the inheritor of Rome. "Rome, not the city but its *genius* as a mobile mystical and mythical idea, functioned as the commonplace for the promotion of their political identity."[21] Constantinople had lost its role as "socializer," but the decaying international society still socialized its component polities to the idea of Rome and a unified Christian empire.

As we exemplify in Chapter 7, this system of intensive and frequent diplomacy in a heterogeneous and inclusive international society

continued beyond the High Middle Ages into the dawn of modern times. What changed, in terms of recognition, was that international society became less inclusive and more exclusive. During the period discussed so far all polities with which contact was possible exchanged embassies. For instance, Constantinople and the Persian Empire had regular diplomatic relations. From around the eleventh century, however, the polities of Latin Christendom developed an increasingly exclusive outlook concerning those who belonged to international society. Catholic Christianity became a principal criterion of inclusion. An illustration of this development is the history of the *reconquista* of the Iberian peninsula. In the eighth and ninth centuries alliances between Christian and Muslim polities had not been unusual in the various wars on the peninsula. Later, in the High Middle Ages, the struggle became one between Muslims and Christians. Also, the crusades were not normal wars of conquest or honor. Instead, they constituted a sort of answer to the question "what is this other?" The answer was that the Muslims were the antagonists in eschatological history, and just as pagans had to be converted, Muslims had to be fought. Neither was part of international society.

This exclusiveness in terms of the second "dimension" of recognition – the epistemological or existential dimension – grew increasingly strong in the early modern and modern periods. The European "discovery" of America, described as a "culture shock,"[22] constitutes a prominent example. In Europe, the "dominant aspiration" was to understand humanity as well as history as having one single point of origin – genesis.[23] Also, while Christian Europe obviously interacted with infidels (Muslims) and pagans on a regular basis, there was no obvious room for the Amerindians in Christian cosmology: they were not Christians, but could hardly be classified as anti-Christians either, never having heard of God or Jesus. How, then, could they be fitted into the Christian story of unity-fall-redemption-salvation? The Amerindians, in other words, were "only partly comprehensible within the received categories of contemporary and ancient learning."[24] What ensued, in our terminology, was a failure of recognition.[25] The Amerindians were "not, or no longer, capable of governing themselves any more than madmen or even wild beasts and animals," in the words of the famous contemporary *defender* of their rights, the theologian and legal scholar Francisco de Vitoria.[26] The Europeans, then (1) did not recognize the Amerindians as counterparts, and (2) were, at best, divided on the existential dimension of recognition. Hence, diplomatic intercourse did not develop beyond Europe, and no elements of international society were established.

The inclusive outlook of the Early Middle Ages had been replaced by a more exclusive attitude – premised on Christian theology and its offshoot natural law.

Reproduction of the modern society of states

The Treaty of Westphalia laid a foundation for the gradual emergence of the territorial, sovereign state. For centuries, however, state sovereignty remained contested. "Dynastic linkages and remnants of feudal rule continued to litter the European political landscape arguably until the Napoleonic era," and "empire and papacy retained considerable authority."[27] Diplomacy has contributed to the process of producing and reproducing an international society of states via the mechanisms of recognition and socialization. Diplomatic recognition has become essential to statehood, at the same time as it has delegitimized other types of political formations.

Diplomatic recognition

While eventually incorporated in modern international law, the term "recognition" remains nebulous. Winston Churchill in 1943 wrote in a letter to US President Franklin Roosevelt: "What does recognition mean? One can recognize a man as an Emperor or as a grocer. Recognition is meaningless without a defining formula."[28] Even international lawyers admit that "recognition is one of the most difficult topics in international law." The major reason is that its "legal and political elements cannot be disentangled; when granting or withholding recognition, states are influenced more by political than by legal considerations, but their acts do have legal consequences."[29]

International lawyers, diplomats and statesmen agree that statehood requires a central government that exercises effective control over a defined territory and a permanent population, and has the capacity to enter into relations with other states. Yet there are examples of non-recognition of polities that fulfill these criteria as well as recognition of polities that do not fulfill them. In addition, the factual conditions many states require for recognition have changed over the years. Thus, recognition is ultimately a political act, as we exemplify below.

Legal scholars have debated the relative merits of the "constitutive theory" and "declaratory theory" of recognition. According to the constitutive theory, a state does not exist until it is recognized; recognition, in other words, has a constitutive effect. The declaratory theory, on the other hand, claims that recognition has no legal effects – it is merely

an acknowledgment of facts.[30] Whereas the prevailing view among international lawyers today is that recognition is declaratory and does not create a state, our notion of the reproduction of international society, which puts more emphasis on the political than on the legal aspects of recognition, comes closer to the constitutive theory. In our perspective, predicated on the primacy of international society, a state's existence depends in large measure on the collective judgment of its peers.[31]

Although international lawyers may argue that "the act of recognition has no legal effect on the international personality of the entity,"[32] it is obvious that recognition carries substantial political advantages: "prestige, exclusive domestic jurisdiction, and the right to conclude international treaties and seek membership of international bodies, as well as eligibility for foreign aid and investment."[33] Recognition, in short, implies "a willingness to deal with the new state as a member of the international community."[34] Consequently, "granting or withholding recognition remains a political weapon or bargaining tool which governments can use if they wish."[35]

A distinction needs to be made between the recognition of a *state* and the recognition of a g*overnment*. Whereas the recognition of a government necessarily implies recognition of the statehood of the entity it is governing, the recognition of a state does not preclude nonrecognition of particular governments of that state. Just as the recognition or nonrecognition of a state may be based on either established criteria of effective statehood or a political evaluation, so the recognition or nonrecognition of a government may reflect either a judgment whether the regime is in effective control of the state or a mark of political approval/disapproval.[36]

One solution to the problem of indicating that a new government effectively rules its state without implying approval of its political orientation has been the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* recognition.[37] The terms are technically incorrect, as the words *de jure* and *de facto* refer to the government, not the act of recognition; the terminology thus seems to imply that a *de facto* government does not have the same legal foundation as a *de jure* government. The distinction is hard to uphold and has, in effect, become obsolete.[38]

Since recognition and nonrecognition of foreign governments can be interpreted as marks of approval and disapproval, an increasing number of states have adopted the policy of simply never recognizing governments. This implies regarding changes of government in a state as an internal matter while retaining the option of breaking off diplomatic relations with new governments. Originating in Mexico in the 1930s,

this policy is known as the Estrada Doctrine. In the 1970s and 1980s several other states, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, began to apply this policy which, in practice, substitutes implied recognition for express recognition.[39]

Notwithstanding such clarifications and simplifications of the legal aspects of diplomatic recognition, examples of the constitutive, political use of recognition abound. In modern times, for instance, diplomatic recognition has been denied to "uncivilized" societies during the age of imperialism, to republicans during the Napoleonic wars, and to social revolutionaries in the twentieth century.[40] When the United States declared its independence in 1776, Britain claimed that title to territory could never be established by revolution or war without recognition by the former sovereign, whereas France saw its recognition as an acknowledgment that the United States fulfilled the criteria of statehood.[41] During the nineteenth century, diplomacy had the character of a European "club," into which other states were admitted only if they were "elected" – that is, recognized – by the other "members."

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 established that polities would not be regarded as sovereign unless recognized by other powers, primarily the great powers of the day. The Final Act of the Congress listed 39 sovereign states in Europe, much fewer than the number of polities claiming to be sovereign.[42] After 1815, in the Concert of Europe era, members of the Holy Alliance tended to treat revolutionary or republican governments as outlaws to be excluded from the "club."[43] Nor did the European states allow non-European polities into the "club." Despite commercial relations with Asian polities, whose rulers were treated as if they were sovereign, none was recognized as a state. Imperialism implied "civilizing" rather than recognizing polities.[44]

The relationship between the Western powers and Japan and China during the nineteenth century illustrates this increasing exclusivity. Arguably this relationship was characterized by a mutual failure of recognition. The Western powers did not recognize Japan and China as equal counterparts, while China and Japan did not recognize the Western powers for what they were: powerful, insistent, and there to stay.

> The European confrontation with East Asia proved to be more than merely political, economic, or military. It was also cultural and involved the clash of fundamentally irreconcilable standards of "civilization."[45]

Prior to the Opium War (1839–42) China's standard of cultural superiority precluded equal relations with the West.[46] Having won the Opium

War, the Western powers, for their part, imposed a set of unequal treaties and created a set of relations with China that is usually referred to as the "treaty port system," forming part of the more general phenomenon of "free trade imperialism."[47] Thus, neither side granted the other full recognition.

Japan, similarly, "operated what might be called an ethnocentric system with herself at the centre."[48] Moreover, Japan pursued a policy of seclusion, regulating its limited contacts with foreigners strictly. The United States, in particular, found this intolerable and used military threat to force Japan to open up for trade and international "cooperation." Unequal treaties were imposed on Japan as well. For instance, Japan was not free to set her own tariff levels, and Europeans in Japan were not subject to Japanese law, but to the law of their home country. The Western powers, in short, did not "regard the Japanese state as an equal member of international society."[49] Yet, trying to emulate the Western powers, Japan soon learned the Western standard of civilization. For instance, Japan's "meticulous observance of international law during the Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer Intervention, and the Russo-Japanese War" helped her gain a reputation as a civilized nation and also made her "accepted by the Western Great Powers as a member of the ruling directorate of international society."[50]

After the First World War democratic constitutions and guarantees for minority rights were added to the recognition criteria used by the victorious states.[51] US President Woodrow Wilson's plea to "make the world safe for democracy" was emblematic of this change, and a prominent case of nonrecognition was the US refusal to recognize the Soviet Union until 1934.

After the Second World War, recognition and nonrecognition again became prominent political instruments as a result of three major developments. Most important was the ideological and strategic rivalry of the superpowers, but concomitant processes of decolonization and the proliferation of international organizations also contributed to bringing issues of diplomatic recognition to the forefront.[52] For example, the three developments in the first postwar decade combined to create an impasse in the United Nations concerning the admission of new member states. The United States and the Soviet Union long attempted to win recognition and membership for those newly independent states in the Third World that they supported politically, while denying admission of those supported by the rival superpower. Only in 1955 was the deadlock broken, as 16 new members were admitted in a package deal. Even if ten of these were European states, this breakthrough paved

the way for Third World states. Once the floodgates were opened, UN membership soon redoubled.

The most striking manifestations of political use of the recognition tool during the Cold War were the cases of China and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Between 1949 and 1979 successive US administrations refused to recognize the communist government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the legitimate government of China, instead supporting the claim of the nationalist government of Taiwan to represent all China. This entailed preventing the PRC from taking China's seat in the UN Security Council until 1971. Another example was the Hallstein Doctrine of the West German government, denying recognition of any government recognizing the GDR, which was seen as a creation of the Soviet Union in breach of treaties between the allies concerning the administration of Germany after the Second World War. Only after Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* led to mutual recognition of the two Germanies in 1972 did Western states recognize the GDR.[53] Less conspicuous was the lack of formal recognition by a number of Western states of the Soviet takeover of the Baltic states throughout the Cold War era. Withholding *de jure* recognition can be seen as a mild political sanction that kept disapproval "on the record."

With the end of the Cold War the political use of recognition did not disappear but changed character. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet "empire" entailed complex issues of state succession. The Soviet Union dissolved into its constituent republics, and Yugoslavia disintegrated into separate, hostile entities coveting statehood; Germany was reunited, and Czechoslovakia was divided. Whereas changes in government do not have any bearing on the existence and identity of a state, territorial changes like these do.[54] The problem of timing and the danger of premature recognition were demonstrated when Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from the Serbian-dominated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in June 1991. Under heavy pressure from Germany, the members of the European Communities recognized Croatia in January 1992, although state authorities only controlled about one-third of its territory.[55] In 1995 the European Union made it one of the conditions for its recognition that all successor states to former Yugoslavia had recognized each other, thus forestalling premature recognition in the future.[56]

The reunification of Germany was universally recognized, and the "velvet divorce" negotiated by the Czech and Slovak republics was similarly uncontroversial. Nor did the dissolution of the Soviet Union raise thorny questions of recognition, but the prospects of contested

secessions and breakaway states within former Soviet republics, such as Chechnya, might well do. In general, violent secessions have seldom met with widespread recognition, as demonstrated by the examples of Biafra in 1967–70 and Northern Cyprus since 1975. The secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1970, supported by India's armed intervention, is an exception, insofar as it met with worldwide recognition despite different views of its legality.[57]

If anything, recent developments have sharpened the political conditions many states require for diplomatic recognition. For instance, in response to the momentous developments after the end of the Cold War, EC member states adopted common guidelines for the recognition of new states in December 1991. Specific requirements include: the rule of law, democracy and human rights; guaranteed minority rights; the inviolability of frontiers; acceptance of commitments regarding disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation; and an undertaking to settle by agreement all questions concerning state succession and regional disputes. Recognition of "entities which are the result of aggression" is expressly excluded.[58] Other criteria for recognition that are used or proposed in today's world are nondependence on foreign military support and respect for other states' rights.[59]

As a result of the inconsistent application of basic and supplementary criteria for diplomatic recognition, we have today entities that have all the hallmarks of a state and yet are not widely recognized as such (Taiwan and North Korea are cases in point) as well as entities that do not fulfill the criteria for statehood and yet have gained diplomatic recognition. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was granted observer status in the UN in 1974, and its status was upgraded to that of a mission in 1988, despite its lack of control over territory. Andorra became a UN member in 1993, although France and Spain control its security affairs and appoint two of the four members of its Constitutional Tribunal.[60] Moreover, we have complex situations with two local *de facto* authorities each claiming to be the only legitimate government (China: Beijing and Taipei); with governments claiming control over parts of its territory that have *de facto* seceded (Cyprus); and with authorities in exile claiming to be the government of an entity under effective control of an occupant (Tibet).[61]

Yet these exceptions and complications do not invalidate, but rather underscore, the general rule that recognition is a "ticket of general admission to the international arena"[62] and that the granting of tickets is a political act. Although the criteria may vary and their application may be inconsistent, diplomatic recognition is still given to states or

state-like entities, and not to other influential international entities, such as multinational corporations or financial actors. It should also be noted that nonrecognition of a *de facto* state[63] does not exclude it totally from the realm of diplomatic relations. The US nonrecognition of North Korea has not prevented it from signing an armistice agreement ending the Korean War in 1953 or negotiating with the North Korean government concerning the Pueblo incident, the capture of a US navy intelligence ship in 1968, and on nuclear matters more recently. The mutual nonrecognition of China and Taiwan has not precluded intensified economic relations. In short, as demonstrated by G.R. Berridge, states that refuse to recognize each other's existence have been ingenious in finding ways of maintaining diplomatic contacts.[64] Thus, paradoxically, both recognition and nonrecognition contribute to the reproduction of a society of states.

Socialization

Once recognized and admitted into international society, polities become affected by the institution of diplomacy. This process of socialization, in which prevailing diplomatic norms, rules and practices are internalized, was facilitated by the common background and education of the "aristocratic international" of diplomats in the seventeenth, eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, as noted in Chapter 3. Members of the aristocracy were the primary socializing agents.

More recently, the process of socialization has been particularly observable among newcomers to diplomacy. Well into the twentieth century the United States distrusted the diplomatic system fashioned and developed in European courts. Condemning European power politics and secret diplomacy, the United States minimized its involvement in the diplomatic world. Still in 1906, there were only nine US embassies abroad, the rest being legations, and up to the end of the Second World War fewer than half of the heads of mission were career diplomats.[65] It has been argued that "the Monroe Doctrine, which marked the divorce of America from European politics, also marked the shift of American diplomacy from cosmopolitanism to parochialism" or, in our terms, from universalism to particularism.[66] The State Department and diplomats in the field devoted their energies principally to consular, economic and trade matters. Nor did the United States favor state visits. The established tradition was that the US President should not leave the territory of the United States during his incumbency. Theodore Roosevelt was the first to break with precedent by visiting Panama in November 1906. Visits to the United States by foreign chiefs of state or

heads of government were equally rare – merely some 30 until the end of the First World War.[67]

Only after the Second World War did the idea of diplomacy as an honorable profession rather than a disagreeable necessity take root in the United States. But, as noted by Abba Eban,

> once the United States joined the diplomatic community in full momentum and responsibility, it readily adapted itself to a tradition largely fashioned and developed in Europe. American statesmen and envoys made no attempt to rebel against the pomp and formalities bequeathed by the Congress of Vienna. They sought no change.[68]

In a parallel fashion, after the Russian revolution in 1917 the Soviet government wanted to distance itself from bourgeois diplomacy.

> When Leon Trotsky reluctantly accepted the post of Foreign Commissar he considered it to be a strictly part-time and transitory appointment whose main function would be to liquidate the foreign service. "I will issue a few revolutionary proclamations," he announced, "and then shut up shop." Trotsky paid a visit to the Foreign Ministry, assembled all the workers in the Ministry into a central hall and simply asked all those supporting the new regime divide to the left and those not to the right. None chose the left, whereupon Trotsky demanded the keys and fired them all on the spot. … On November 26, 1917, a decree by Trotsky virtually disestablished the diplomatic apparatus of the Russian state. All members of the Russian foreign service abroad were summarily dismissed unless they expressed loyalty to the Bolshevik regime.[69]

A decree of 1918 abolished all Soviet diplomatic titles in favor of a single designation, "plenipotentiary representative" (*polpred*).[70] However, it soon became apparent that the expected world revolution, which would have rendered Soviet diplomacy superfluous, did not materialize, and Trotsky's successor, Georgi Chicherin, had to organize a new diplomatic service from scratch when he took office in 1918. Within a short time, the Soviet Union appropriated the practices and titles formulated in aristocratic Europe of previous centuries.

Similarly, most of the new states emerging as a result of decolonization eagerly adjusted to existing diplomatic conventions and are today zealous defenders of diplomatic traditions. As diplomatic representation was seen as an important manifestation of their newly won independence

and sovereignty, the new states were eager to invest in costly missions abroad. "Even those societies which could look back upon a tradition of pre-colonial diplomacy (and amongst these must be included not only the ancient polities of Asia, but also the kingdoms and tribal-based societies of west Africa) seemed readily to assume the mannerisms, methods and practices of the European states."[71]

Abba Eban sums up the significance of socialization processes in modern diplomacy succinctly: "the old traditions have a way of imposing themselves on all newcomers to the diplomatic world."[72]

The role of international organizations

Membership in international organizations has become an increasingly important component of diplomatic recognition and socialization. UN membership has come to reflect widespread recognition of statehood, at the same time as it implies participation in a permanent, multilateral diplomatic forum. Voting in favor of UN membership is tantamount to diplomatic recognition of a state. The continuous presence and "social interaction" of permanent missions in New York and Geneva allow diplomats to maintain informal contacts, build friendship, learn to know each other's points of view better and prepare informal encounters and formal meetings between groups of states.[73]

In recent decades, certain international organizations have contributed to the development, noted above, in the direction of increasing exclusiveness and homogeneity as a result of sharpened political conditions. The Council of Europe can be seen as a pioneer in this respect; since its establishment in 1949 a democratic constitution has been a prerequisite for membership. Moreover, a member state that relinquishes democratic governance – such as Greece under the military junta – risks expulsion.

The European Union has developed even more exclusive membership criteria. The homogenization of member states is achieved through the twin processes of conditionality and socialization. The European Union has made accession conditional on convergence with policy models adapted within the Union. Conditionality proved to be useful in the recent Eastern enlargement process, where prospective member states had to fulfill the so-called Copenhagen Criteria: they had to be a stable democracy, respecting human rights, the rule of law and the protection of minorities; they had to have a functioning market economy; and they had to adopt and enforce the body of EU law called *acquis communautaire*.[74]

Through processes of socialization, member states – as well as states engaged in negotiations for association or accession – learn to internalize EU norms and rules and develop similar organizational structures and

practices. It is a process based on interaction, and the dense institutional environment of the European Union is particularly apt to socialize agents from within.[75] Other international organizations, such as NATO, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization of American States (OAS), also rely on conditionality in entrance negotiations and socialize member state representatives into their respective "clubs."[76]

Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have seen how international societies have varied in terms of homogeneity/heterogeneity and inclusiveness/exclusiveness, and how diplomacy has contributed to the shaping and reproduction of particular societies. Whereas the mythical "kinship diplomacy" of Ancient Greece and the generous medieval practice of granting virtually any kind of unit diplomatic recognition made for a high degree of inclusiveness (and concomitant messiness), modern diplomacy of the last few centuries has contributed to an international society of increasing exclusiveness. Only states are recognized as legitimate participants in international relations. Moreover, the criteria for statehood have in recent years become more discriminating. Diplomacy, in brief, contributes to the reproduction of a homogeneous society of territorial states, required to fulfill an increasing number of criteria.

Diplomatic recognition in our times has come to rest on international law rather than religious or mythical conceptions. Yet, as we have seen, it remains to a considerable extent a political instrument indicating approval or disapproval. The criteria of statehood, laid down in international law, have been inconsistently applied, and there are obvious problems in applying ever more political conditions. The United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations have served as important socializing factors in this exclusive and homogeneous society of states.

At the same time, today's notions of a globalized world envisage an international society with a diminished role, if not obsolescence, of the state and enhanced roles of other actors, such as multinational corporations, NGOs and transnational networks. Paradoxically, "the virtually universal recognition of territorial sovereignty as the organizing principle of international politics" goes hand in hand with an equally clear "tendency toward erosion of the exclusivity associated with the traditional notion of territoriality."[77] This raises the question whether diplomacy is today contributing to the prolongation of an eroding international society, and whether diplomacy will have to adjust to the

allegedly different society in the making. Interestingly, the European Union figures both in the trend toward greater exclusiveness through its conditions for aspiring member states, as discussed in this chapter, and in the shaping of a more inclusive international society by becoming itself a recognized diplomatic actor alongside states, as we elaborate in the next chapter. We turn, then, to the question of what happens to diplomacy in times of flux and changing polities, using the European Union as one of our examples.

7
Diplomacy and Changing Polities

Diplomacy, we have argued in Chapter 2, emerges whenever and wherever polities with distinct identities see the need to establish regular exchange relations while keeping their separate identities. Moreover, diplomacy contributes to the recognition and reproduction of similar polities while delegitimizing other types of political formations, as discussed in the previous chapter. By the same token, diplomacy mediates, and reflects a particular combination of, universalism and particularism.

On the other hand, we have espoused a processual approach and have maintained that polities, as loci of authority and identity, are constantly evolving. This raises the question of what happens to diplomacy in times of flux, when new types of polities challenge existing ones around which diplomatic norms, rules and practices have been built, and when a different combination of universalism and particularism becomes a possibility. Will new polities change and adjust to the institution of diplomacy, or will diplomacy change and adjust to the emergence of new polities? In this chapter we will look at three eras of more or less successful transformations in the nature of polities: the panhellenist project of Philip II of Macedonia and Alexander the Great as an alternative to the Greek city-states, the medieval struggle between religious and secular loci of authority, and the recent emergence of the European Union as an international actor. Did they entail changes in the basic dimensions of diplomacy, communication, representation and the reproduction of international society?

Philip, Alexander and the Greek community

The system of city-states in Ancient Greece was highly particularistic, insofar as each *polis* was passionately attached to its political independence.

At the same time, the Hellenes were perceived to be "related in blood and language, and have shrines of the gods and sacrifices in common, and a similar way of life," to quote Herodotus.[1] After the revival of Greek culture in the eighth century BC the Greeks began to think of themselves as "Hellenes," as descendants of an eponymous ancestor called Hellen. The term "Hellene" gradually came to designate Greekness and common culture without reference to place or political system.[2] In 359 BC Philip II succeeded to the throne of Macedonia, and determined to use panhellenist sentiments to make himself master of all Greek lands, thus altering the balance between universalism and particularism.

Macedonia stood in an ambiguous relation to the Greek world. Its kings were of Greek descent and aspired to be Greek in the fullest sense. But they ruled over a mixed people, and their rule was despotic rather than democratic. Moreover, the Macedonians had fought against the Greeks in the Persian Wars. After extending his control into the outlying regions of Macedonia, Philip moved south into Thessaly and east into Thrace. In control of the rich Thracian gold and silver mines, he was able to bribe his adversaries and build a professional army of formidable strength. In addition to his military skills, Philip used his diplomatic talents to encourage dissension among the Greek city-states. While they fought each other, he increased his forces and added to his domains. In 338 BC Philip won a decisive victory at Chaironeia over the allied Greek forces led by Athens and Thebes. Having united the Greek city-states through a combination of force and diplomacy, Philip prepared for the conquest of Persia.

The quest for Greek unity

Philip's victory ended a century of internecine wars between the Greek city-states and of internal upheavals in most city-states. His political program of panhellenism had great appeal – the notion that the Greek cities were to solve their endemic political, social and economic problems by uniting and thereby to become able to conquer all or part of the Persian Empire, to which Greeks had suffered humiliating defeats. Originating in the fifth-century BC, panhellenism became especially popular in the fourth century through the tracts of Isocrates.[3] Many Greek intellectuals, who disagreed vehemently on other issues, agreed that fighting the barbarians rather than each other was the solution to the problems of the city-states.[4]

Isocrates sent letters to many of the powerful rulers in the Greek world, exhorting them to support the panhellenist cause. In the *Philippus* of 346 BC, the most important of these, he advised Philip of Macedonia

"to take the lead in both the concord of the Hellenes and the campaign against the barbarians."[5] Panhellenism provided Philip with a convenient pretext for a war of revenge against Persia. At the same time, Philip was careful to win the support of the Greeks, stressing that he was not their tyrant but their leader (*hegemon*) and avenger.[6] His victory over the Greeks in 338 BC was preceded by a decade of propaganda, designed to win the goodwill of the Greeks, and in 346 BC Philip secured a voice for himself in the affairs of Greece and proved himself a true Hellene by defending Delphi against Phocis, which had financed its mercenary army by plundering the Delphic temple treasures. The rest of Greece had proved powerless in the face of this sacrilege. As a result of Philip's victory, Macedonia came to be represented in the Amphictyonic Council, administering the shrine, and Philip himself presided over the panhellenic games in Delphi.[7]

The organizational manifestation of Philip's panhellenist ambitions was the Corinthian League, which he established in 338 BC, following his triumph at Chaironeia. Philip's plan was to include all Greek polities in the league, which had a federal character, insofar as constituent polities were assigned representatives in proportion to their size or strength and members were to retain their autonomy and existing constitutions. The treaties that served as constitutions for the league included stipulations concerning the prevention of revolutions and the preservation of peace among the members.[8] A *synedrion*, a federal assembly of representatives, was the supreme governing council of the league and also served as a high court for the arbitration of disputes and for trials of those who violated the league's decrees.[9] Not only city-states, *poleis*, or leagues of city-states, but also ethnic groups, *ethne*, were members of the league. The total number of members was probably over a hundred, each having between one and ten votes depending on their size.[10] An executive board of five *proëdroi*, selected by lot from among the members of the *synedrion*, summoned the members to meetings of the *synedrion*, maintained order at the meetings, and functioned as a standing committee when the *synedrion* was not in session. The *proëdroi* also acted as liaisons between the outside world and the league, receiving ambassadors and introducing them to the *synedrion*.[11]

On the other hand, notwithstanding its federal character, the Corinthian League also had distinctive "supranational" traits, if the anachronism is allowed. First, the representatives in the *synedrion* were not accountable to their constituencies but had full power delegated to them – they had a free mandate, to use the terminology introduced in Chapter 5. Moreover, in their judicial capacity they had the authority to

hold high government officials to account.[12] Second, the decrees of the *synedrion* were final, unalterable and binding for all members, apparently without ratification by the home governments, and as a law court the *synedrion* constituted the highest legal authority of the league.[13] But above all, Philip, and after him his descendants, held the office of *hegemon*, executive head of the league. Formally, all decisions of the league required the consent of the *hegemon* and a majority vote of the *synedrion*.[14] Yet, to a large extent, the league represented an effort to lend constitutional legitimacy to the predominance of the victorious Macedonian king.

In sum, the Corinthian League appears as an anomalous creation, reflecting contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, there was centralized power to override all opposition from member polities, a manifestation of the popular notion of panhellenic unity. On the other hand, members of the league were guaranteed complete autonomy, a reflection of the continued desire for the independence of the *polis*.[15] The conflict between Philip and Demosthenes, the skilled Athenian diplomat and orator who delivered a series of vitriolic *Philippics* against the plans of the Macedonian king, can be said to symbolize these two polar influences.[16] Obviously, the *hegemon* and the Greeks had different ideas of what "autonomy" implied.[17] In any event, the league represented a significant step in the direction of universalism from the extreme particularism of rival city-states.

One of the first acts of the league was to declare war upon Persia and elect Philip as *strategos autokrator*, commander-in-chief. The subordination of the member polities to the central authority was shown in their obligation to make a *syntaxis*, a contribution to the war effort, in the form of either money or an armed contingent.[18] While preparing for the military campaign, Philip was assassinated in 336 BC. At the age of twenty, his son Alexander succeeded him as Macedonian king as well as *hegemon* of the Corinthian League and *strategos autokrator* in the conquest of Persia.

Alexander and the Greeks

The news of Philip's death caused unrest throughout western and southern Greece. Athens sent embassies to exhort other cities to support the cause of freedom in flagrant breach of the decrees of the Corinthian League, the Thebans voted to expel the Macedonian garrison, and several other city-states expressed their disaffection with Macedonian hegemony.[19] In 335 BC a revolt in Thebes was swiftly crushed by Alexander and the city was obliterated, formally by a decision of the *synedrion*. Those city-states that had supported Thebes were cowed into subordination. Several sent

envoys to ask for forgiveness. Even Athens, after a debate in its Assembly, sent envoys to convey congratulations on Alexander's punishment of Thebes. Alexander, who shared his father's panhellenist ambitions, combined decisiveness with moderation. In implementing the decision to punish Thebans, he exempted and let free those who had voted against the revolt, descendants of the famous poet Pindar, those who had diplomatic ties with Macedonia, and priests and priestesses. In addition, he granted an appeal from Athens not to honor Alexander's request to surrender nine named Athenians considered Theban ringleaders but instead try them in Athenian courts. By showing leniency he hoped to keep the Greek city-states at peace, to win allies, and to induce Greek military forces to fight alongside Macedonia against Persia.[20] And when Alexander crossed the Hellespont in 334 BC, his army of 35,000 comprised 7000 infantry and 600 cavalry from his Greek allies, including an Athenian squadron.[21]

The nature and profundity of Alexander's panhellenism have been a matter of much debate. His belief in the superiority of Greek civilization and his passionate love of Greek mythology and poetry are undisputed. He believed literally in the presence in the real world of the Olympian gods, he considered Heracles and Achilles his ancestors, and his most treasured possession was the *Iliad* of Homer.[22] Mythical symbolism accompanied Alexander's actions. When he reached the Hellespont, for instance, he sacrificed at the tomb of Protesilaus, the first of the Achaeans to be killed during the Trojan War, after which, emulating Protesilaus, he was the first to leap ashore onto Asian soil. He then immediately proceeded to Troy, sacrificing in the temple of Athena and replacing his own armor with a set dating from the Trojan War.[23]

Alexander's Hellenic mind was no doubt influenced by Aristotle, who was appointed his tutor when Alexander was only thirteen years old and Aristotle, at forty, was not yet acknowledged as a great philosopher.[24] Yet it remains open to controversy whether any traces of Aristotle's political ideas can be found in the thoughts and actions of Alexander, and whether Aristotle approved of Alexander's political program. Aristotle's theory was limited to the *polis* and did not include the idea of Greek unity; he did not advocate the Hellenization of barbarians, and did not share Isocrates' idea of a Hellenic mission of civilization.[25] In fact, Aristotle counseled Alexander to be "a hegemon to the Greeks and a despot to the barbarians; to look after the former as after friends and relatives, and to deal with the latter as with beasts or plants."[26]

Alexander's panhellenist visions, by contrast, seem to have been tempered by universalist ideas of the unity of mankind,[27] based on the

Greek concept of *homonoia*, "being of one mind together."[28] As we have seen, his belief in Greek gods and heroes, remembered as promiscuous wanderers, facilitated his recognition of the kinship of distant peoples. For instance, in what is now southern Pakistan, Alexander was approached by ambassadors of a tribe called the Siboi, whom he believed to be descendants of Heracles and his companions; and in what is now northern Afghanistan, he met envoys from a city, whose local god he recognized as Dionysos and therefore identified as Nysa, the legendary birthplace of the god. In both cases the cities were given freedom and other benefits.[29] Alexander also founded cities, modeled on the Greek *polis*, throughout Asia and advocated the education of future leaders in Greek art and literature as a way to spread Greek culture.[30] Yet he increasingly came to believe in the idea of blending and uniting peoples. Thus, he promoted interracial marriage, himself marrying a Bactrian princess and a daughter of the Persian King Darius.[31] The expanding dimensions of Alexander's empire, in short, entailed a gradual evaporation of the panhellenist program.

Concomitantly, the Corinthian League lost its significance for the conqueror of the Persian Empire, and the role of the *synedrion* was drastically reduced. Increasingly Alexander acted autocratically without reference to any other authority. He made constitutional changes that violated the letter of the league without consulting the *synedrion*. Antipater, the veteran Macedonian diplomat who acted as the hegemon's representative in his absence, rather than the *synedrion*, came to supervise the execution of Alexander's orders. The Greek city-states declined more and more into dependency. In 330 BC, on his way to complete victory over the Persians, Alexander dismissed the last contingents of the Corinthian League and released the Greek city-states from their *syntaxis*.[32]

If Alexander's commitment to the panhellenic cause can be questioned, the loyalty of the members of the Corinthian League was equally uncertain. Although Alexander claimed to be going to war on behalf of Greece, more Greeks than were in his own army, fought as Persian mercenaries when he defeated the Persian forces in the early battle at the River Granicus in 334 BC. Alexander killed most of the 20,000 Greek mercenaries and sent some 2000 of them as prisoners to Macedonia. After the battle of Issus in 333 BC, Alexander's army captured Athenian ambassadors, who had been sent to the Persian King Darius.[33]

In sum, the vision of creating a new political identity by uniting all of Greece never came to fruition. "Just as the specifically Greek mind, though recognizing and admiring the greatness of the man Alexander,

never could truly grasp his work, so Alexander himself loved and admired Greek mentality and Greek civilization and yet did not make his empire their representative instrument."[34] And when Alexander died in 323 BC, not yet 33 years old, the political structure of his empire rapidly disintegrated. The Corinthian League fell apart. While profiting from the new trade routes to Asia opened up by Alexander, the Greek city-states sought renewed autonomy rather than panhellenic unity.

Summary

To what extent, then, did this remarkable period of Greek re-identification and conquest affect diplomacy? The simple answer is: not very much. As we have seen, the city-states continued to send individual rather than joint embassies. Athens went so far as to dispatch ambassadors to Alexander's enemies, undermining panhellenic unity. Moreover, during Alexander's Asian campaign, the only instrument each *polis* had of communicating with their hegemon over great distances was to send envoys individually. In terms of communication, in short, traditional diplomatic methods prevailed, unaffected by notions of panhellenism.

The real innovation was in the area of representation. The Corinthian League was a unique creation, with "supranational" features going beyond traditional alliances. Members of the *synedrion*, while representing member *poleis* or *ethne*, had a free mandate and were not accountable to their constituents. The *synedrion* and *hegemon*, acting in unison, could issue and enforce binding decrees. To be sure, the league gradually lost its significance, as Alexander's conquest went on, and it had no lasting impact after his death. Yet, ironically, when the Greek city-states, led by Athens, revolted against Macedonian domination after Alexander's death, they made use of the machinery of the league against Antipater, the hegemon's representative. Athens sent ambassadors to the other Greek city-states inviting them to cooperate through the league against the Macedonians.[35] "So useful had the league proved that even the most ardent champions of liberty wished to preserve its institutions and negotiate through it, while the most telling blow delivered by Antipater against Greek liberty consisted in his refusal to recognize the league and in his restoration of the old principle of particularism and the right of each state independently to determine its own course of action."[36] In reimposing Macedonian domination, Antipater made little concession to Greek sentiments. An effort to revive the Corinthian League in 302 BC by the Macedonian King Demetrius Poliorcetes failed for lack of a common purpose.[37]

Thus, in terms of the reproduction of international society, Philip's and Alexander's ideas and institutions entailed little or no change.

The Corinthian League never developed into a full-fledged diplomatic actor in its own right, a Greek polity writ large. Nor did it elicit the emergence of similar counterparts. As Alexander's conquests and empire-building extended over ever greater areas, its panhellenic rationale was lost. "It is possible to believe that the league might have functioned successfully in the Aegean area, but it certainly never could have functioned if cities as far away as Central Asia and India were included."[38] In sum, Philip's grandiose designs and Alexander's formidable diplomatic and military execution did not result in a different type of polity with a lasting impact on diplomacy.

Religious vs. secular polities in the Early Middle Ages

The breakdown of the Carolingian empire ushered in a period of strong particularism in European history. While feudal practices and tendencies dated back several centuries, the Frankish emperors had by and large maintained political control over their empires. With the death of Charlemagne in 814 this changed. Civil war between Charlemagne's son and grandsons as well as raiding by Magyars, Muslims and Vikings destroyed central power and necessitated the development of local defense. Military technology – with its emphasis on expensive heavy cavalry – ensured that only a warrior elite could provide this defense. Against increasingly localized politics and economics there was no effective political universalism.

The church, too, became "feudalized," and certainly secularized, in the mid-eighth century. Forced to seek protection from the raiders, priests, bishops, and abbots turned into vassals of secular lords. Perhaps this development went furthest in Rome itself. The Pope had always been the secular lord over the Papal States and the civil leader of Rome, both of which were constantly threatened by Muslim incursions from Sicily. In those circumstances the papacy came to be seen as a secular office, coveted by the noble families of Rome. "The papacy at this time reached its lowest ebb in dignity and spiritual prestige."[39]

In the latter half of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, however, two forms of universalisms-to-be had reassembled and begun to counterbalance particularism. First, in 910 reform-minded members of the clergy had established a new monastery at Cluny. This monastery was not a feudal fief, and not under the control of any secular lord. From here the reform movement started that in a century would transform the Catholic Church and make it into a power with universal aspirations.

Second, in what is today Germany, where feudal fragmentation had not developed very far, the ever more powerful kings eventually assumed the title of Holy Roman Emperors.

In 1046 these two universalist forces interlocked, when Henry III went to Rome to be crowned emperor and found three competing popes. Henry III deposed all of them, appointing three new ones in swift succession. His third pope, Leo IX (1049–54), succeeded in making the papacy the head of the reform movement and putting the papacy at the head of the Western church. During his five-and-a-half-year pontificate, Leo traveled extensively and convened synods and councils in order to propagate and implement the new decrees. It is estimated that he did not spend more than half a year in Rome during his time as pope.[40] This was a time of harmony between empire and papacy.

The emperor Henry III, who more than any other emperor symbolized theocratic rule – "the guidance of church and state as a single entity by the divinely elected, anointed emperor"[41] – died in 1056, and was succeeded by his infant son, Henry IV. During his childhood the power of the empire was attacked from two different quarters. First, the German princes saw their chance of increasing their own power at the expense of the emperor. Second, the papacy turned on the empire, which had supported it, and argued that secular lords – including the emperor – had no right to appoint sacral offices. Only the church could appoint church offices.

Over the better part of the next century – until the Concordat of Worms in 1122 – wars would be fought, emperors excommunicated, popes deposed, and the theoretical and factual foundations of new types of polities were laid. This long conflict between the papacy and the empire is usually called the Investiture Controversy, or Conflict. This clash between two claims to universalism and its eventual solution resulted in two noticeable developments in diplomacy. First, the eleventh century witnessed an increase in direct negotiations, or "summitry," between rulers of polities. Second, as religious universalism had to coexist with secular particularism in the twelfth century, arbitration and mediation came to replace direct negotiation as the dominant form of nonviolent conflict resolution.

The investiture controversy

Henry IV, when he came of age, could not accept not to be in control of the appointment of bishops, abbots, and other prelates. The political theory and reality of the day made no distinction between secular and sacral power and office, and the emperors had always used bishops as

royal servants. Henry IV certainly needed the support of "his" bishops, whom he had made wealthy and powerful, against the newly independent-minded lay princes of Germany. The relationship between Henry IV and the papacy was tense, if not yet hostile. For instance, several of Henry's advisors were excommunicated.

In 1073 Gregory VII became pope. He is often counted among the foremost popes and regarded as a great reformer. For the purposes of our study, three particulars of the Gregorian reforms stand out. First, Gregory anticipated the institution of resident ambassadors. He "partially transferred his papal rights to legates, including standing legates in particular countries."[42] And as agents of papal policies abroad, these legates were charged with missions that were not exclusively religious but combined the ecclesiastical with the political.[43] Second, Gregory claimed that the papacy had the right, and even the duty, to depose secular rulers. He proposed the following assertions, known as the *Dictatus Papae*:[44]

> That all princes shall kiss the feet of the pope.
> That he may be permitted to depose emperors.
> That he himself may be judged by no one.

Needless to say, this was not something emperors appreciated. Arguably, these assertions, in the longer run, provided the impetus for the theoretical foundation of the modern multi-state system. A third Gregorian reform with political repercussions was that only the cardinals, and nobody else, were to elect popes. In other words, the influence of both the emperor and the Roman noble families over the papacy was severed.

Duke Rudolf of Swabia addressed a letter to Gregory VII in his capacity as mediator between Henry and the papacy.[45] Gregory replied that he had no quarrel with Henry, and suggested a meeting between himself, the mother of Henry, and a range of other important individuals. The purpose of the meeting was to negotiate the healing of the break between Henry and the papacy. Later, Henry's excommunicated advisors were absolved, and reconciliation seemed to have been accomplished. Gregory even asked for, or did not object to, Henry's appointing a number of bishops north of the Alps in due course.[46] South of the Alps the situation seems to have been different. The reason Gregory's predecessor had excommunicated a number of Henry's advisors was a conflict over the post of bishop in Milan. The empire and the papacy supported one candidate each. The election of Gregory as pope did not alleviate the situation. Neither the pope nor the empire would give up Milan. At a church meeting at Worms in 1076 the German clergy withdrew their allegiance from

the pope, and encouraged Henry to do the same. He followed their advice, and sent a letter to Gregory, addressing him by his secular name Hildebrand, and demanded his resignation. Gregory excommunicated Henry, as well as the German bishops. It was not the first time an emperor had deposed, or tried to depose, a pope; but it *was* the first time a pope had excommunicated and, in effect, deposed a king or emperor.

For Henry, the effect was devastating. Ever since Leo IX, the papacy had been the head of Christianity and nobody questioned the deposition of Henry. The bishops, although they were the instigators of the conflict, quickly changed sides; and the German lords, who were loath to accept strong centralized rule, soon revolted, again seeking independence. Henry was the weaker party against the bishops and the nobility. Negotiations between Henry and the nobility commenced, but the nobility did not seem to be in a compromising mood. However, the pope was invited to mediate the dispute between Henry and the noble families – an assembly was planned for February 1077 at Augsburg.

This assembly never took place. Wittingly or unwittingly, Henry cut the ground from under the nobility's feet. He traveled to meet the pope on his way north, and intercepted him at the fortress at Canossa, where he did penance, and was forgiven by the pope. By begging forgiveness, Henry in effect turned "the ancient concept of the duality of church and monarchy upside down, introduced profound changes, and destroyed forever the medieval ideal of the one Christian *res publica*."[47] What Henry had done was to accept that the monarchy was not sacral – kingship had to rest on something else than divine will. At the same time, the papacy held firm to the idea of an indistinguishable secular and sacral realm.

The German nobility, of course, felt betrayed by the pope. Without consulting him, they elected a new king, and for the next three years Germany was torn by civil war. In 1080 Gregory decided to support the anti-king and excommunicated Henry again. His decision came too late. Henry had won the war, ignored his excommunication, deposed Gregory and appointed Clement III as an anti-pope. In 1084 Henry marched on Rome, Gregory fled, and Henry was anointed emperor by his new pope. The Normans of Sicily and southern Italy had long been vassals to the popes however, and came to Gregory's "aid." Henry left Rome, the Normans pillaged the town, and the papacy regained control. "The struggle over investiture had begun."[48]

If we compare the papacy's relations with the empire and those with France and Britain, what is striking is that the papacy never insisted on a prohibition on lay investiture vis-à-vis the latter. In both instances compromises were reached, so that the French and the British kings

could invest prelates, albeit not with the full ceremony and ritual, and not without church influence. For example, English–papal relations had ceased in 1083, and it seems as if William the Conqueror was entertaining the idea of recognizing Henry's anti-pope. In 1095 the English archbishop, St. Anselm of Canterbury, wanted to go to Rome to gain recognition as archbishop from the pope Urban II. The king forbade this, as this would have equaled recognition of *that* pope. Clement III was still Henry's anti-pope, north of the Alps. Anselm was refused leave to travel. Instead, King William II sent two emissaries to Rome. They returned in the company of Urban's legate who did everything in his power – including insulting Anselm – to gain England's recognition of Urban. Urban's legate made far-reaching concessions and agreed "on behalf of the pope that no legates would be sent to the kingdom without express royal permission and that no English cleric should receive papal letters without royal permission." Even more strikingly, "no English cleric should have to obey the pope without royal orders."[49] The relations between the pope and the king of France were equally characterized by pragmatism and a willingness to compromise.

The struggle between papacy and empire went on until the Concordat of Worms in 1122. At Worms a compromise regarding investiture was established but, more importantly, the papacy gained great prestige while the empire was severely weakened. Three years later Henry V died without an heir, and the German nobility chose a new, weak king among themselves. Although new great kings or emperors – such as Frederick Barbarossa or Frederick II – would emerge, continuing the conflict with the papacy, in the long run the papacy retained its independence and came to dominate over the empire. Popes such as the great Innocent III (1198–1216) managed to "reduce a multitude of kings and princes to complete subservience."[50] Germany finally became feudalized, and the twelfth century was the popes' century.

Summary

How was diplomacy affected by the turbulent developments of the Early Middle Ages? Initially, there was a certain decline in diplomacy. As noted, the ninth and tenth centuries were strongly particularistic, and politics was localized, the struggles of the Ottonians to resurrect Charlemagne's empire notwithstanding. Of course, localized politics did not mean that diplomacy had ebbed out entirely. The historical record does contain references to envoys and embassies, and the Treaty of Verdun (843) is famous. Still, the combination of localization and pervasive violence certainly diminished the scope for diplomacy.

Yet with the joint rise of the universalistic empire and papacy, diplomacy as such became both necessary and functional. Keeping in mind Paul Sharp's understanding of diplomacy as a response to the problem of "living separately and wanting to do so, while having to conduct relations with others,"[51] we can see why this is so. The Investiture Controversy, as its preceding and subsequent conflicts, was not about conquest but about control. None of the German emperors wanted to be both pope and emperor, and no pope wanted to be without emperor or empire. They were mutually dependent; yet they had diverging aims and ambitions, and different interpretations of the agreed upon universalism. Furthermore, neither pope nor emperor recognized any equal or higher authority, so mediation or arbitration between these two powers was ruled out.

As mentioned initially, two changes in diplomatic communication patterns ensued. The first development concerns the increase during the eleventh century in direct negotiations by heads of polities, prepared by envoys. In other words, what we today would call summitry was becoming institutionalized in the eleventh century.[52]

In the twelfth century the universalistic papacy "won out" over the empire but was forced to accept that kings and princes consolidated their power in the process – thus creating a marked distinction between universalism and particularism. This entailed a second noticeable development in diplomacy: arbitration and mediation replaced negotiation as the dominant form of *nonviolent* conflict resolution (by all accounts, the predominant way of conflict resolution was still violence). Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) claimed that the pope was the "sovereign mediator upon earth."[53] Indeed, having cemented the papacy as the center of Christianity and the pope as the ultimate interpreter of God's will, the inheritors of the church reform movement had put in place a set of objective norms – canon law. What the popes or their legates did in arbitration or mediation, then, was to apply this law to conflict resolution.[54]

It should be noted that not only the pope or his legates acted as mediator or arbitrator. Influential individuals, such as Bernard of Clairvaux in the eleventh century and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Hermann von Salza, in the twelfth century were among several well-known mediators.[55] In 1165 Emperor Frederick Barbarossa arbitrated in a conflict between Count Florent III of Holland and the Bishop of Utrecht.[56] In brief, we suggest that the rise of dual universalisms, cooperating at first but later in conflict, led to the institutionalization of

"summitry." Later, when the major tension to be managed was between a singular universalism and particularism, arbitration and mediation became institutionalized as the preferred modes of nonviolent conflict resolution.

In terms of representation, the Early Middle Ages saw a great variety of principals being represented by a great variety of diplomatic agents. One innovation, noted in Chapter 5, concerns the popes' permanent legates, as well as their permanent envoys to the court in Constantinople, which foreshadowed the later invention of resident ambassadors.

If the immediate consequences for diplomacy of this conflict-ridden era, epitomized by the Investiture Controversy, was primarily a gradual intensification of communication and the refinement of existing diplomatic instruments, it had a more lasting impact on the reproduction of international society through what Brian Tierney has called "the rebirth of Western political theory."[57]

The shifts in the balance between universalism and particularism during this period were reflected in the development of medieval political thought. During the period of dual universalisms, no conceptual distinction was made between state and church – only a functional distinction between *sacerdotium* and *regnum*.[58] The Gregorian reforms and the Investiture Controversy, however, "almost demanded the invention of the concept of the State."[59] In other words, the process, driven by the popes of the eleventh century, of clearly defining the papacy and the empire as two different kinds of polities generated a need to understand what secular power was, if it was not part of sacral power.

Second, such thirteenth-century political thinkers as John of Paris, Marsilius of Padua and Dante questioned papal supremacy and asserted the "primacy of the secular … in temporal government,"[60] paving the way for the political thought of Machiavelli – who is generally said to have invented the concept of *raison d'état*. The pendulum swung markedly toward the particularistic end. More prosaically, "the decline of the papacy and empire as important focuses of universalism gave way to a Realism of naked power politics propelled by an undisguised raison d'état."[61] When political theory based legitimacy on something other than theology, the popes were left "to fight their battles without the aid and comfort of objective norms," which can be seen as the "opening phase of modern Western Europe's international relations."[62] In Joseph Strayer's words, "the foundations for a multi-state system had been laid."[63] Paradoxically, then, at the same time as universalism seemed triumphant, particularism gained ground both *de facto* and theoretically.

The European Union

After the Peace of Westphalia, the pendulum in Europe definitely swung toward the particularist pole, as the continent was segmented into sovereign states. Whereas efforts to unite Europe by force, from Napoleon to Hitler, had failed, the idea of European unity through peaceful cooperation took hold after the Second World War. The Hague Congress in 1948 and the creation of the Council of Europe in 1949 were manifestations of pan-European sentiments. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), created in 1951, placed the production of coal and steel – the foundation of military power – under supranational authority and reconciled the traditional archrivals Germany and France. The ECSC, in turn, was the precursor of the European Economic Community (EEC), established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The evolution of European integration since then is reflected in changing designations and acronyms. The term the European Community (EC) came into use when the political institutions of the ECSC, the EEC and Euratom were merged in 1967, and the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 brought into being the European Union (EU). Beyond altering labels, this development can be described in terms of widening geographical domain (from the original "six" to twenty-five member states today), expanding functional scope and enhanced institutional capacity.[64] Thus, the pendulum is moving from particularism toward universalism.

However, the story of European integration is not one of unidirectional evolution but rather one of twists and turns, of oscillations between "Europhoria" and "Eurosclerosis." In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Europe stagnated while the United States and Japan surged ahead in economic growth, the "Eurosclerosis" rhetoric ran high. A new era of intensified integration and pronounced "Europhoria" was triggered by the Single European Act, signed in 1986, and gained momentum with the end of the Cold War. The new spirit came to be associated with the leadership of Jacques Delors, the dynamic President of the Commission. As the EC/EU gradually developed common policies in new areas, its external responsibilities increased, as did the pressures from third countries to pay attention to the various ways these policies affected their interests.[65] In other words, the need arose for the Community to evolve into a diplomatic actor, alongside the separate diplomatic activities of each member government.

This was never intended by the "founding fathers" of European integration. For Jean Monnet, for example, the involvement of the business community, with its cross-border links, natural desire for trade and wider

horizons, was key to European unification. By the same token, Monnet deliberately tried to exclude foreign ministries from the building of the new community, due to their commitment to national interests, the sanctity of borders and the protection of state sovereignty.[66] From another vantage point, several member states have been reluctant to delegate diplomatic functions to European organs. For instance, early disputes between President Walter Hallstein's Commission and President Charles de Gaulle's government concerning the Commission's diplomatic status and competence had a lingering effect in severely limiting the EC's capacity to act internationally as a single authority.[67]

The growing diplomatic role of the EC/EU has run in parallel with the changing character of the organization. The fluidity and complexity of the "experimental union"[68] seems to defy simple categorizations. It is obviously more than a traditional international organization, yet less than a federal state in the making. The European Union is perhaps better understood as a *process* than as a frozen institution; it "is still an unsettled constitutional order, in terms of geographical reach, institutional balance, decision rules, and functional scope."[69] Moreover, the European Union looks different depending on which issue you select. As functional segmentation tends to entail fragmentation of policy making, the European Union has been characterized as a "prismatic political system," in which rays of activity and authority are scattered or focused differently in various policy areas.[70] Such difficulties of fixation notwithstanding, two aspects of the emergent European Union are particularly important for an understanding of its diplomatic role: the elements of *supranationality* and the distinctive policy process commonly labeled *multilevel governance*.

Supranationality implies that there are bodies – in the European Union, the Commission, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and, to a lesser degree, the European Parliament – that enjoy a degree of autonomy from member-state governments, insofar as they have the capacity to define and pursue a politically relevant agenda. Furthermore, they are capable of constraining the behavior of member states in specific policy domains. In short, they are more than "passive structures," merely reflecting the interests of the member states.[71] The most relevant body as far as diplomacy is concerned is the Commission, which has broad powers to initiate policy and monitor the implementation of EU decisions and, consequently, is able to speak authoritatively on behalf of the Union. This has enabled the EU to progress further in developing a distinct diplomatic *persona* than most other international organizations founded on the intergovernmental logic.

At the same time, it should be noted that supranationality applies primarily to the so-called first pillar of the EU, encompassing economic matters and trade. The second pillar, which includes foreign and security policy, rests principally on intergovernmentalism. This means that decision-making authority rests with the Council of Ministers. Thus, the member state holding the rotating Presidency of the Council along with the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (who is also the Secretary General of the Council Secretariat) represent the European Union externally in "high-politics" foreign affairs. Let us look closer at various manifestations of this tension between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, as far as diplomacy is concerned.

The term "multilevel governance" is frequently used by EU specialists to characterize the peculiarities of the EU policy process. The prefix "multilevel" indicates that it takes place on several different levels, from the local to the supranational. According to one recent effort at summarizing the literature on multilevel governance,[72] the concept catches three essential elements of the European Union: (1) decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by national governments; (2) collective decision making among states involves a significant loss of control for individual national governments; and (3) political arenas are interconnected rather than nested, which means that subnational actors operate in both national and supranational arenas.

The implications for diplomacy of multilevel governance are manifold. The growing participation by a variety of actors has resulted in "polylateralism" as a new mode of diplomatic dialogue besides bilateralism and multilateralism. "Polylateralism" is understood as "the conduct of relations between official entities (such as a state, several states acting together, or a state-based international organization) and at least one unofficial, non-state entity in which there is reasonable expectation of systematic relationships, involving some form of reporting, communication, negotiation, and representation, but not involving mutual recognition as sovereign, equivalent entities."[73] "Polylateral" relations in the European Union entail new roles for foreign ministries and professional diplomats.

The European Union as a diplomatic *persona*

We have identified representation as a basic dimension of diplomacy. From the vantage point of a polity, this means being able to receive and send out legitimate representatives; from the vantage point of the representatives, it means being able to act on behalf of, and be accepted

as symbols of, their polity. Entrusted by the Treaty of Rome to represent supranational interests, the Commission has gradually acquired the authority to receive representatives from, and appoint EU representatives to, other polities, be they states or international organizations. The Council has successively obtained similar authorities in the "high-politics" area. As a result, the European Union is becoming a diplomatic *persona*.

For a long time the Commission's capacities for handling the growing need for external consultations and negotiations remained quite limited and heavily dependent on the personal qualities of a few senior officials. The responsible Directorates-General, DG I (External Relations) and DG VIII (Development), were understaffed well into the 1980s. The Commission's external service, consisting of delegations, permanent representations and offices in non-member states, grew up "in the most haphazard and untidy fashion."[74] Its origin dates back to 1954, when the European Coal and Steel Community established a mission in Washington, DC.[75] Development assistance to former colonies or dependants of member states long dominated the activity of the Commission's delegations. By the late 1970s the Commission had some 50 representations in third countries, 41 of which were in the so-called ACP countries, a group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries linked to the EC/EU by the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions. Only seven delegations were attached to major capitals and international organizations, reflecting the other major original purpose of the external service – the management of the Community's trade agenda.[76]

Once member states had pooled sovereignty in a whole range of crucial areas, such as trade, agriculture and the single market, they increasingly accepted the introduction of external relations on the EC/EU agenda. In the 1970s and 1980s they established European Political Cooperation (EPC) – a "useful and efficient framework for common declaratory diplomacy, but inadequate when the member states attempt to translate common declarations into common action"[77] – followed by a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the early 1990s, adding the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999.

Even though these initiatives constitute the second pillar where intergovernmentalism rules, the gradual widening of EU functions to cover a whole range of foreign-policy issues has entailed a marked expansion of the Commission's external service. The number of delegations increased from 50 in 1980 to 89 in 1990. The Commission's external service has grown rapidly since the beginning of the 1990s, with the most dramatic increase in the number of non-ACP delegations. By 2004, the Commission is represented in 130 states, encompassing all continents,

as well as at five international organizations, making it the fourth largest "diplomatic service" in the world. In early 2000, the delegations had a staff of 672 *fonctionnaires* and 1813 local agents; by 2003 that number had increased to 954 *fonctionnaires*, 26 seconded national experts and 3771 local agents. The average size of the delegations has increased substantially, and what were once relatively small "family" missions now have a staff of 50–100.[78] Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers, with its responsibility for CFSP and ESDP, has opened liaison offices at the UN in New York and Geneva. In addition, the Council has Special Representatives in various crisis areas around the world.

In 1972, the Commission's delegation in Washington was the first to obtain full diplomatic status through legislation approved by Congress.[79] Although the diplomatic community originally had qualms about granting diplomatic immunity to Commission delegates in the ACP countries, the delegations now enjoy full diplomatic recognition. Heads of delegation, with credentials signed by the President of the Commission, are accredited according to normal procedures and carry the rank and courtesy title of ambassador. Reciprocally, a large number of states, beginning with the newly independent African countries in the 1960s, have established diplomatic missions in Brussels.[80]

The management of the Commission's network of delegations has traditionally been organized along geographical lines, with DG I responsible for China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States; DG IA for non-EU European countries; DG IB for Asia, Latin American, the Mediterranean and the Middle East; and DG VIII for the ACP countries. This organization made it difficult to deal with increasingly important cross-cutting issues, and the EU's growing role in development assistance called for administrative change. In response, a Common Service for External Relations (SCR) was established in 1998 to clarify, simplify and increase the efficiency of the EU's diplomatic functions, at the same time as the old cluster of external relations DGs became the *Service Commun Relex (relations extérieures)* – commonly known under the acronym RELEX. The RELEX Commissioner, Chris Patten, was placed in charge of the management as well as the continued restructuring of external relations. Another important element of the reform process was the decentralization of the Commission's delegations, allowing them more autonomy and imposing more responsibilities on heads of delegations.[81]

The activity of the external delegations of the Commission has been characterized as "diplomacy without a state." In fact, it amounts to diplomacy without a clearly defined foreign policy, without a representative head of state, and without a professional diplomatic corps.[82] The CFSP

and ESDP are still new and unstable policies, and foreign policy by and large remains a national prerogative. The status of the head of the Commission is far inferior to traditional heads of state, which creates a difficult and ambiguous situation for the heads of Commission delegations, who are equal in status to any national ambassador. And those who work in the delegations are, as a rule, regular EU civil servants who have chosen to go abroad for a period but who have no diplomatic training. All this creates a problem of representation.

> The delegations … represent not only the Commission, which they have a legitimate right to represent, but the EU in general, which they have no specific right to represent. From a formal standpoint, the delegations are answerable to the Commission but in practice they have links with the Council and the European Parliament, which means that their representative function is also on behalf of the Community as a whole.[83]

The ambiguity concerning the representative role of the delegations reflects the lack of a central coordinating body for external relations. In addition to the Presidency of the Council, which rotates semi-annually among member states, the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council (at present Javier Solana) and the RELEX Commissioner (until 2004 Chris Patten) represent the European Union to the outer world. In principle, the High Representative is to work at the request of the Presidency on all CFSP/ESDP matters. In practice, however, there are overlaps and uncertain divisions of labor.[84] The Council is represented in third countries by the diplomatic representation of the country holding the Presidency. Even in the Commission, which is in charge of non-CFSP/ESDP aspects of external relations, responsibility is dispersed within the so-called *famille RELEX*, which includes – in addition to DG External Relations and DG Development – DG Trade, DG Enlargement, the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), and some external aspects of DG Economic and Financial Affairs.

Against this background it is not surprising that the 2002–03 Convention on the Future of Europe discussed various ways of enhancing the coordination, effectiveness and consistency of EU external relations. From the outset, there was general agreement that the Union lacks a common voice and needs to be a stronger and more effective player on the international scene.[85] The debate soon came to focus on the possibility

of merging the positions of the High Representative of the CFSP and the RELEX Commissioner into a new EU foreign minister. Thus, the draft treaty on an EU constitution – which was agreed upon at the intergovernmental conference (IGC) in Brussels, June 2004, but has yet to be ratified by the member states – envisages a "double-hatted" Union Minister for Foreign Affairs with two distinct mandates. On the one hand, the Council, deciding by qualified majority vote, is to appoint the minister, who is then to chair the Foreign Affairs Council. On the other hand, he or she shall be responsible for external relations in, and act as one of the vice-presidents of, the Commission. In that capacity, the minister's nomination is subject to a vote of approval by the European Parliament. This seems to imply that the foreign minister will be accountable both to the Council and to the President of the Commission.[86] The foreign minister, in short, is to supply a bridge between the intergovernmental and *communautaire* aspects of EU external relations,[87] while at the same time providing "a public face" for the European Union externally instead of "the cacophony of voices that currently speak for the EU in external relations."[88]

Two other innovations in the draft constitution are designed to facilitate the foreign minister's ability to "ensure the consistency of the Union's external action": an explicit recognition of the Union's legal personality to supplant the legal personalities of existing EU bodies, and the creation of a European External Action Service. As far as external relations are concerned, the assumption of legal identity by the Union implies that the European Union will become a subject of international law, with full powers to conclude international agreements and be represented in third countries and international organizations.[89] The European External Action Service, in turn, is designed to meet the need for any foreign minister to have a "ministry" to assist him or her.

The draft constitution refers only briefly to the establishment of a European External Action Service, composed of officials from relevant departments of the Council Secretariat and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services. It is envisaged to start functioning within the first year after entry into force of the treaty establishing the new EU constitution.[90] Most commentators point to the formidable problems and challenges concerning the function and scope of this new service or "ministry" that are left unanswered by the draft constitution.

One set of problems concerns the "double-hatted" character of the service as well as the minister. "How are the two sets of career streams in the Commission and the Council Secretariat to be fused, when we recall

the problems that arose simply within the Commission during the 1990s as the result of attempt to rationalise its external relations staff?"[91] The proposed innovations clearly point in the direction of some sort of EU diplomatic service. It is also evident that the existing Commission delegations are the foundations on which the envisaged Union delegations will be built. These delegations will operate under the authority of, and report to, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs. They will include seconded national diplomats. In all probability, the Council and member states will want to influence the composition of the delegations in general, and the appointment of heads of delegations in particular.[92] Pessimists foresee "delays, back-biting, and general chaos," as a result of which the foreign minister "will not only be seen to be wearing no clothes, but even to lack the wardrobe from which to get dressed."[93]

Another problem that is not addressed in the draft constitution concerns the professional training that the creation of a *corps diplomatique* in the European Union will require. Although there were proposals both before and during the Convention to establish some sort of European diplomatic academy, these did not make their way into the text. While such a training institute could build upon the modest European Diplomatic Programme that exists since 1999, training for the European External Action Service will not only have to include the unprofessional staff of present Commission delegations but will also have to take into account the enlargement of the Union as well as greater involvement of Council officials and seconded member-state diplomats.[94]

In sum, the European Union seems to be at a crossroads. Will the gradual emergence of the EU as a diplomatic *persona* and the plans for a foreign minister and ministry eventually lead to a truly European diplomatic corps? Some would argue that the increasing demand for European-level expertise in combination with the increasing workload and financial pressures on the diplomatic services of member states will push in this direction,[95] that "the emergence of a European response reflex may well come to outweigh the embedded psychology of national as opposed to European interest."[96] Others warn that the creation of a European External Action Service might trigger conflicts between national, Council and Commission staffs, which may eventually result in the renationalization of diplomacy.[97]

"Polylateral" diplomacy

EU membership entails a changing role of foreign ministries. Within the Union, relations across state borders are no longer handled exclusively by foreign ministries. In fact, most of the contacts and meetings within

the EU are channeled through other ministries and government agencies; "transgovernmental" relations – that is, "interactions between governmental subunits across state boundaries"[98] – play an increasingly important role within the European Union. One may speak of the "Europeanization" of member states' domestic affairs. With the growing EU workload of domestic ministries, foreign ministries have not been able to maintain the coordinating role they could play in the earlier phases of European integration. The coordinating role has increasingly come to be assumed by the prime ministers' offices.[99]

Not only have European foreign ministries lost their former monopoly of government contacts across national borders and "found that the policy milieu in which they work is inhabited by bureaucrats from an ever more diverse range of government departments,"[100] they have also become more permeable. The trend is toward specialization and secondment to foreign ministries from other ministries.[101] This is not unique to the European Union; for instance, more than 60 percent of those under the authority of US ambassadors and other chiefs of mission are not State Department employees.[102] In the EU context, the trend is most noticeable in the member states' permanent representations in Brussels. While customarily headed by a senior diplomat, these representations have gradually come to be seen as the extended arm of national governments in general. The balance has shifted from foreign ministry to lead ministry staffing, and today officials from domestic ministries constitute the majority in the permanent representations.[103] The "intra-European mode of diplomacy," in short, focuses on "facilitating the sectoral and functional cooperation between national administrations."[104]

Moreover, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 made cooperation and coordination between member states' embassies and Commission delegations mandatory to ensure that "the common positions and joint actions adopted by the Council are complied with and implemented." This coordination is to be further developed with the proposed EU delegations, to project the image of a truly united Union.[105] As a harbinger of deepened collaboration, a joint embassy compound is under construction in Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria, where all existing bilateral and EU missions, taking advantage of the need to relocate from the old capital, will share a number of common facilities.[106] In addition to coordination between member state embassies and EU delegations, there is a marked increase in operational collaboration on EU matters among bilateral embassies, which hold weekly joint meetings of embassy staff throughout the world.[107] Close relations are functional in curtailing mutual tensions between member states as a result of external events

and increasing mutual understanding and solidarity.[108] Diplomats in individual member states, in short, "must increasingly be prepared to promote common European interests and must therefore have an intimate knowledge of the EU, its working practices, shared concerns and interests."[109] At present, this is as most pronounced when a member state assumes the rotating presidency for six months, when its diplomats all over the world and in different international organizations not only represent their home country but also the European Union.[110]

Yet, the complexity of diplomatic relations in the European Union goes beyond the need to coordinate governmental and supranational actors. "Multilevel governance" entails broad participation in EU policy processes. Thousands of special interest groups of various kinds are represented in Brussels, employing approximately the same number of persons as the European Commission. These groups represent business interests (cross-sectoral organizations such as the European Round Table of Industrialists, sectoral organizations and individual firms), labor interests, public interests (e.g., environmental and consumer groups) as well as territorial interests (regions and localities). These take part in informal policy networks along with government representatives, individual specialists and members of the Commission. This means that diplomats engaged in European issues typically become engaged in "polylateral" dialogues with NGOs, firms and subnational actors.

Again, this reflects a more general trend. At global conferences and multilateral forums NGOs have increasingly been granted presence. Twenty years ago NGOs staged protests outside the doors of international organizations and had to gather information from the dustbins of national delegations; today many of them are involved in preparing global UN conferences and routinely get the floor in plenary meetings. On several global issues, such as environmental protection, trade and human rights, NGOs have become key actors who cannot be bypassed in the search for viable solutions. Two prominent examples of active NGO involvement in diplomatic processes concern the 1997 Ottawa convention banning anti-personnel landmines and the 1998 Rome treaty establishing the International Criminal Court.[111]

In sum, member states' foreign ministries and embassies have become "co-participants"[112] rather than exclusive practitioners in the "post-territorial diplomacy"[113] of the European Union. "To a considerable degree, their continuing and evolving role appears to represent success in responding to change that is underpinned by their boundary-spanning capabilities, which enable them to operate in the shifting boundaries that separate complex policy domains."[114]

The persistence of traditional diplomacy

It is important to note that all these innovations have not replaced, but merely added new layers to, traditional diplomacy. The structure of bilateral diplomatic relations between EU member states remains intact; they all maintain embassies in other member states with the same organization, functions and staff as in third countries. There is no sign of this structure withering away – for example, member states established embassies of great architectural value in Germany's new capital, Berlin, as a matter of course.[115] The continuing significance of traditional bilateral diplomacy can be related to the increased use of majority voting in the European Union and the ensuing need to build coalitions on issues of key importance.[116] One may speak of a mode of "bi-multilateral" EU diplomacy that is "bilateral in its procedures but multilateral in its purposes."[117]

Traditional multilateral diplomacy is manifested primarily in the central role of COREPER (*Comité des représentants permanents*) in EU policy-making. In preparing Council decisions, the permanent representatives and their deputies, all professional diplomats stationed in Brussels, meet every week. Having ample time to develop relationships, they have established a sense of institutional solidarity and a club-like working style.[118] Most EU decisions are resolved informally in COREPER before reaching ministers in the Council, and COREPER serves as the "negotiating instance of last resort before foreign ministers and heads of state or government meet."[119] Since 2001, the Political and Security Committee, with representatives from member state foreign ministries, prepares EU decisions concerning such matters as conflict prevention and crisis management, and has also been given the right to take formal decisions regarding the implementation of the Union's crisis management missions.

Summary

The innovative elements of the European Union have created "a hybrid diplomatic arena."[120] In addition to traditional bilateral and multilateral functions, member state diplomats have become engaged in multiple layers of "polylateral" diplomacy. There has been a considerable degree of convergence in diplomatic style and practice among member states,[121] at the same time as the Union as such is in the process of acquiring a diplomatic *persona*. What, then, does all this imply in terms of communication, representation and the reproduction of international society?

It is obvious that the European Union has produced an ever tighter communication network among member-state foreign ministries and

diplomats in the field. The CFSP and ESDP have entailed high-level networking,[122] and member-state diplomats, wherever they are posted, hold regular and frequent meetings with their colleagues from other member states as well as Commission delegations. The other side of the coin, however, is that foreign ministries and diplomats have lost their former monopoly of communication between governments. While reflecting a more general trend, the European Union displays a singularly dense and complex pattern of transgovernmental and transnational communication. The 2002–03 Convention epitomizes this; here the role of diplomats was reduced from that of exclusive negotiators to co-participants in the deliberations and administrative facilitators.[123]

The most far-reaching innovation concerns representation. No other "supranational" entity in world history, perhaps with the exception of the Catholic Church in medieval Europe, has developed a system of representation similar to the European Union, with permanent delegations all across the world. The transformation from Commission to EU delegations, in combination with the establishment of an EU foreign minister, as envisaged in the draft constitution, will represent another step in the direction of establishing the European Union as a genuine diplomatic actor. There will still remain uncertainty as to who the ultimate principal, is and EU diplomatic representatives will still find themselves at the end of multiple chains of principals and agents; but in this respect they differ from the representatives of democratic states in degree, rather than in kind.

While epitomizing change in communication and representation patterns in today's world, the European Union has yet to make an impact on the reproduction of international society. The diplomatic world is still, by and large, populated by territorial states, which have been granted diplomatic recognition by other states. Nor have the member states seriously contemplated replacing their bilateral diplomatic posts with joint EU delegations. Third states have accepted EU delegations and "EU ambassadors" as additions to, but not substitutes for, the representation of individual member states. Other regional organizations are still far from being granted similar diplomatic status. In other words, the emergence of the European Union as a diplomatic *persona* has not triggered off any "regionalization" of diplomacy; nor is regionalized diplomacy discussed as a likely future scenario in the way regionalized trade is. The European Union, in short, remains an exception in a world of state-centric diplomacy. The fact that this odd creature has been accepted into the society of states testifies to the flexibility and adaptability of the institution of diplomacy rather than any profound transformation.

Finally, we should remind ourselves that the decisive steps toward establishing the European Union as a diplomatic actor – the creation of a foreign minister, a European External Action Service and EU delegations – remain blueprints, which have yet to be subjected to referendums and other processes of ratification by member states. And, as pointed out initially, the EU has developed in cyclical rather than unilinear patterns in the past. One cannot exclude the possibility that the enlargement, which has added ten new voices to the EU cacophony, in combination with a series of backlashes in the ratification process of the draft constitution, may reverse the trend toward EU "actorness" on the diplomatic arena.

Concluding remarks

Diplomacy not only contributes to the reproduction of a particular international society; it is also affected by changes in an international society, brought about by the emergence of new types of polities. Our three examples, which are suggestive rather than exhaustive, indicate that major changes in polities do not necessarily entail corresponding changes in diplomatic practices. Philip's and Alexander's grandiose panhellenic designs and structures did not replace diplomacy among city-states. The medieval fight between several different types of polities intensified and refined existing forms of diplomatic exchanges. And the emergence of the European Union as a diplomatic actor has so far added another layer to, rather than revolutionized, traditional diplomacy.

By a stretch of the imagination, one may see certain parallels between the classic panhellenic and modern European efforts at constructing "supranational" structures some 2300 years apart. Neither the members of the *synedrion* of the Corinthian League nor today's EU Commissioners are accountable to their constituencies. EU member states, like their counterparts in the Corinthian League, have representation and votes in proportion to their size and political weight. The decrees of the *synedrion* and the EU Council of Ministers alike are binding for all members. And in both cases "supranational" structures constitute the highest legal authority. The differences, of course, are no less significant. By far more effective, all-encompassing and long-lived than the Corinthian League, the European Union seems to have much greater potential to become a harbinger of change in diplomacy.

The contemporary international system in general, and Europe in particular, is sometimes referred to as having medieval traits. "Neomedievalists" point to the uncertainty and geopolitical complexity

resulting from the entrance of a multitude of actors on the international scene. To be sure, the term "polylateral diplomacy" has been coined to catch the consequences of this fragmentation for diplomatic practice. Yet, in our terms, there are limits to the analogy as far as diplomacy is concerned. There is today no equivalent either to the highly inclusive recognition practices of the Middle Ages, or to the battle between the competing universalisms of church and empire.

Each era, in short, displays its own pattern of interaction between diplomacy and international society, which are not easily changed as a result of the emergence of new polities. Like other institutions, diplomacy contributes to maintaining existing patterns, thus dampening the consequences of changing polities, at least in the shorter run.

Conclusions

Viewing diplomacy as a perennial international institution, we have emphasized the continuity of some basic parameters while pointing to constant change within these parameters. The overall picture that emerges from our overview is one of an institution characterized by great resilience and adaptability. Within the essential dimensions of communication, representation and the reproduction of international society, diplomacy has adjusted to changing circumstances and has sometimes been instrumental in affecting these changes. Given its long history of adaptability, then, diplomacy does not seem a likely candidate for obsolescence or decline in the future.

This is not to say that diplomacy has described a unilinear, inexorable development, from less to more advanced forms. On the contrary, we have drawn attention to the historical contingency of diplomatic practices. We have also provided examples of older practices that, in various ways, can be regarded as superior to more recent ones. For instance, the divine sanction of treaties in antiquity in some respects created stronger commitments to obedience, and greater deterrents to violation, than does modern international law. And the "kinship diplomacy" of Ancient Greece as well as the inclusive medieval recognition practices provided for considerably more pragmatism than modern rules of diplomatic recognition. In other areas, such as the drastically diminished emphasis on precedence, we see continuous progress over time. Other aspects yet, such as the idea of diplomatic immunity, display remarkable continuity; even if justified differently and formalized to varying degrees, rules of immunity seem to have always existed and been honored as much in the breach as the observance. The historical record, in short, describes a mixed rather than uniform pattern.

At the most abstract level, we argued from the outset, diplomacy can be seen as the mediation of universalism and particularism.

The coexistence of, and varying balance between, the two have assumed different forms, as we have seen. Throughout early history, religion often provided the universalist element. Medieval Europe saw the struggle between the universalist claims of papacy and empire, and later the coexistence of religious universalism with secular particularism. Modern diplomats are guided not only by *raison d'état* but also by *raison de système*. The balance between universalism and particularism manifests itself in the interrelation between a common diplomatic culture and diverse cultural conditioning of diplomats from different parts of the world. Throughout history the universalism–particularism dimension has been reflected in the coexistence of common and conflicting interests in negotiations, the ultimate diplomatic method: While negotiating to further the interests of their particular polities, diplomats have typically identified the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the avoidance of war as common interests.

We have distinguished three essential dimensions, or constitutive elements, of diplomacy: communication, representation and the reproduction of international society. Having treated them separately in different chapters, we may at this juncture reflect on their interrelationship. To hark back to Allison's *Essence of Decision*, he was criticized for describing his three models as alternative rather than complementary conceptual lenses. In a later, revised edition, he and his co-author have taken such criticism into account, and conclude that the largest payoffs will come from more inclusive and textured analysis, investigating multiple determinants and interactions between factors.[1]

How, then, do our three conceptual lenses interact? It is primarily through recognition that diplomacy contributes to the reproduction of international society, and diplomatic recognition has been a prerequisite for any polity to be represented to, and to communicate with, other polities. The triangular depiction in Figure 3 indicates that these are separate yet interdependent concepts.

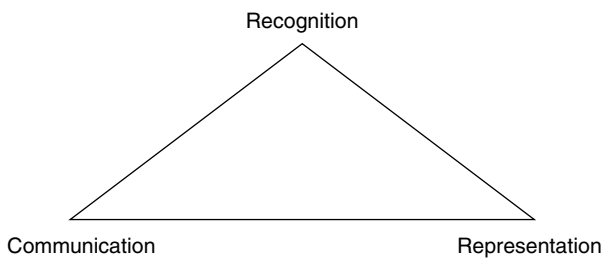

Figure 3 Interrelated dimensions of diplomacy

The fact that diplomats always collect and transmit information, signal and negotiate on behalf of others, their principals, constitutes the obvious link between communication and representation. Communication is contingent on recognition, insofar as regular, mutual exchanges of information and negotiations are possible only among polities that recognize each other. To be sure, polities may find ways of communicating and entering into negotiations with unrecognized units, individually or collectively, but then only on an *ad hoc* basis. Similarly, representation presupposes recognition, to the extent that only diplomatic representatives who act for and stand for recognized polities can be part of the diplomatic community. Again, diplomats may interact with other representatives intermittently, though not without complications.

The problems relating to diplomatic communication with, and representation of, unrecognized units are today illustrated by the enhanced role of NGOs in international affairs. Which NGOs are to be allowed into negotiation fora and international organizations? Who are the principals of NGO agents? Do NGO representatives act on behalf of, and stand for, their own organization only or the NGO community as a whole? What kind of commitments can NGOs make vis-à-vis states? Similar problems of communication and representation pertained to non-state entities after the Peace of Westphalia as well as non-Christian entities in the Middle Ages.

Each historic era, in short, has had its own combination of recognition, communication and representation. In the Ancient Near East, for example, the exclusive circle of rulers recognized as "great kings" exchanged ritually formulated letters, relying on trusted messengers; Ancient Greek *poleis* had more inclusive recognition practices, based on mythical kinship ties, and relied on the rhetorical skills of diplomatic agents of different ranks; and medieval Europe witnessed a paradoxical mixture of inclusive recognition, with all sorts of principals sending diplomatic representatives to negotiate with all sorts of recipients, and mutual nonrecognition between popes and emperors with conflicting universalist claims.

It is also worth noting that, by breaking down diplomacy into three component parts, we have also moved closer to the relational and processual perspective we advocated initially, insofar as we can use active verbs to characterize diplomacy. Through diplomacy, polities communicate, represent themselves to each other and recognize each other.

If our simple conceptual framework has proved useful in capturing the historical continuity and change in diplomacy and paving the way for a processual approach, what are some of the theoretical and methodological lessons of our study? As we stated from the outset, we do not claim to have developed a full-fledged theory of diplomacy; what conclusions,

then, can be drawn from of our study concerning future research? One fundamental point of departure of our undertaking was to view diplomacy as a perennial international institution. In other words, we propose that theorizing should not proceed from time-bound understandings of diplomacy, such as the common view that it is an institution of the modern state system, originating in Renaissance Italy. We agree with Smith Simpson, who underlines the need for a long historical perspective, arguing that

> there is no need of reinventing diplomacy every few decades, with a succession of one "new diplomacy" after another. The basis ingredients are as old as the hills, although differences in their "mix" result in different types of diplomacy. If a diplomacy emerges that appears different from that of the recent past, it would be risky to call it "new" or "modern," for it is likely to be best a reincarnation of an earlier type.[2]

Another principal choice we made was to distance ourselves from the bottom-up and substantialist approaches of mainstream IR in favor of a top-down, relationalist/processual vantage point. And we maintain that the understanding of diplomacy in terms of dynamic relations that help differentiate political space provides a fruitful platform for further theorizing about diplomacy. Moreover, we have pointed to historical sociology and the English school as useful sources of inspiration. We suggested institutionalization and ritualization as important processes, and believe that these may be fruitful fields of further theorizing. In addition, we have looked into the question of what happens to diplomacy in times of flux, when new types of polities challenge existing ones, around which diplomatic norms, rules and practices have been built. The evolution of the European Union as a diplomatic *persona*, in particular, is an intriguing and evolving case that warrants further study.

A further lesson concerns the benefits of gleaning concepts, ideas and insights from other fields than IR in analyzing diplomacy. In our case, we found literatures on institution, ritual and representation especially valuable. No doubt, there are other fields that might proffer analytical tools of potential value for the study of diplomacy.

Most fundamentally, though, our essay is an effort to build bridges between IR theory and the study of diplomacy, two islands that have too long remained isolated from each other. And we can think of no better way of ending our book than pleading for more bridge-building. As a core international institution, diplomacy deserves a central place in the future study of international relations.

Notes

Introduction

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