
In Theory

Diplomatic Interactions and Negotiations

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This article examines the role of state actors, organization agencies, and individual agents in diplomatic interactions and negotiations. States as diplomatic actors, organizations as diplomatic agencies, and individuals as diplomatic agents enter into complex and interdependent relationships. Proposing a three-level analysis of interstate interactions and diplomatic negotiations, I argue that no diplomatic negotiation happens without interactions between parties at the state, organizational, and individual levels. The agency-structure paradigm provides a conceptual framework for understanding behavioral and structural properties of international interactions and their influence on diplomatic negotiations. Diplomatic negotiation employs specific forms of interaction, using a distinct language, protocol norms, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals. The state's "self" (as a social conception of its identity, values, and interests) affects the process of diplomatic negotiation. By managing, organizing, and improving international interactions at the actor, agency, and agent levels, negotiating parties can advance the process and effectiveness of diplomatic negotiation.

Key words: negotiation, diplomacy, diplomatic negotiation, interaction, state-actor, organization-agency, individual agent, state identity, values and interests, interaction position, interaction manner.

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Introduction

Diplomatic relations occur between states, but diplomacy is not achievable without the activity of organizations and individuals. Authorized organizations such as governments, parliaments, ministries of foreign affairs, and embassies, and official individuals such as heads of states and governments, ministers, ambassadors, and others play important roles in conducting international diplomacy. Scholars have extensively examined both the role of states as unitary actors as well as the roles of state's institutions and individual representatives in diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations. But the threefold — states/organizations/individuals — nature of negotiations in diplomacy has not been sufficiently addressed in the scholarly literature.

This article analyzes interactions in international diplomacy at macro- (state), meso- (organization), and micro- (individual) levels with the goal of developing a comprehensive understanding of interactions and negotiations in diplomatic practice. Focusing on interactions and negotiations at these three levels, I will discuss actor–agency–agent relations in diplomacy, the cohesion of the selves and interaction/negotiation behaviors of the diplomatic actors, agencies, and agents, and the organization and efficacy of diplomatic negotiation interactions.

Interaction, Communication, and Negotiation

The term *interaction* is widely used in the study of international relations and diplomacy to refer to how actors act on each other. The concept, however, has been developed and theorized primarily in sociology and social psychology. In other words, current interactionism as a conceptual model is mainly socially defined interactionism or social interactionism.

Thus, an interactional approach to the study of international relations, international politics, and diplomacy inevitably draws on elements of social thinking. Most notably, Alexander Wendt used a social-interactional approach to international relations to develop his social theory of international politics (Wendt 1999). According to Wendt, by interacting with each other, agents (actors) create a socially determined international system. For Wendt, the agency–structure problem in international relations is a social problem because international structure is a social phenomenon, and states are socially determined entities.

Applying an interactional perspective to negotiation analysis makes sense because negotiation requires interactions between parties. This is particularly apt when taking a psychological approach to negotiation (Rubin 2002). In the diplomatic context, the term “engagement” fully expresses the idea of interaction and denotes not just communication between the states but the range of their actions and influences on each other — whether to engage with certain countries might be a question of morality, of interests, of the assertion of identities, or a combination of all

these. Diplomatic engagement requires parties to listen and take into account the views and concerns of the other side — it was the diplomatic engagement of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 that saved them from military engagement.

When analyzing negotiation, scholars often refer to “communication” and “interaction.” These are closely related concepts, but communication primarily concerns the exchange of information, and interaction is about actions that parties take upon each other. Negotiation cannot take place without communication (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991), and it can be seen as a subclass of social communication (Jönsson 2002). Interaction refers not simply to communication but to interactive communication in which parties influence each other. International negotiation, in essence, is not only communication (Stein 1988) but “an interactive communication process” (Shell 2006: 6). Applying communication theory and research to negotiation studies but recognizing that “the term *communication* covers a wide array of phenomena, theoretical perspectives, and research methods,” Phillip Glenn and Lawrence Susskind defined their research as moving “from communication to interaction” (Glenn and Susskind 2010: 119). That is an essential theoretical point which provides a nuanced methodological *modus operandi* in the study of negotiation. Every interaction is a communicative process, but not every communication involves actual action upon each other, nor will the communication always mean that the parties will have real impacts on each other. For example, sometimes during international conferences, diplomats restrict themselves to reading prepared texts. But when negotiators simply try to act on the other side in this manner without accepting the possibility of being acted upon, it creates few opportunities for actual negotiation. Successful negotiation interaction will not occur when parties speak without listening or act upon the other side without being acted upon.

Herbert Kelman has described negotiation as interactive problem solving in which each participant tries to enter into the other’s perspective, gaining an understanding of his or her concerns, expectations, and intentions (Kelman 1996). Indeed, negotiation interactions are a two-way street: the best negotiators try to influence the other side while at the same time allowing counterparts to influence them. As Roger Fisher and Scott Brown suggested, “be open to persuasion and try to persuade them” (Fisher and Brown 1988: 38). Communication can lead to interaction, and interaction can result in joint understanding of mutual concerns and the creation of shared meanings. When parties find common ground, they can make a joint decision and conclude an agreement.

Diplomacy serves as the institutional framework of interstate negotiations (Jönsson 2002), and diplomatic negotiation is essential to the functioning of the system of nation-states (Starkey, Boyer, and Wilkenfeld 2005). As Paul Meerts pointed out, diplomatic negotiators are protected by many

rules and procedures that prevent one state from rising above the other, thus allowing diplomats from different national cultures to interact with each other in a “safe” manner and in a specific “diplomatic culture” (Meerts 1999: 86). This culture may include diplomatic *protocol*, which generally regulates questions of precedent; *the rules of procedures* for international conferences, which typically specify the orders of presidency, speeches, debates, and decision mechanisms; and *diplomatic language*, which is known for its constructive ambiguity, nonredundancy, loaded omission, use of periphrasis, and diplomatic understatement (Cohen 1981). Diplomatic negotiations depend highly on internationally adopted social norms and are grounded on specific normative interactions accepted by the international community.

The Role of Symbols

Diplomacy and diplomatic negotiators widely use *symbols*, and *symbolic actions* and *interactions*, including *rituals and ceremonies* (Faizullaev 2013). The most important symbolic attachment of diplomatic negotiations are state flags. To create fair conditions for the parties involved, diplomatic protocol suggests rules regarding the use of flags during official meetings and negotiations. The equality of national flags, both in number and size, is one of the symbolic expressions of parties’ equality around the negotiation table.

Official visits, the exchange of gifts, the recall of ambassadors, the increase or reduction of diplomatic presence in a foreign country, and other aspects of diplomatic practice are full of symbolism. Often, states with conflicting interests enter into indirect bargaining through symbolic interactions. The significance of indirect bargaining increases when states, for whatever reason, cannot negotiate directly or arrange negotiations through a third party. They may use different kinds of symbolic gestures and actions, including ambiguous “body language” signaling, demonstrations of military might, contact with the other side’s enemies or friends, public statements, and publications related to the disputed issue, abuse of the opponent’s identity symbols, etc. (Cohen 1987; Morgenthau 1993; Jönsson and Aggestam 1999; O’Neill 2002). These actions, though not instruments of direct or mediated negotiations, may serve as tools of negotiation positioning and bargaining between states.

To interact effectively, diplomatic negotiators need to organize their interactions, including symbolic interactions, by paying attention to social norms, procedures, decision-making mechanisms, and the physical arrangements of the negotiation. Even food and cuisine can be used as instruments for “cross-cultural understanding in the hopes of improving interactions and cooperation” (Chapple-Sokol 2013: 161). Because sharing food can have symbolic significance and can foster affinity between people in every culture, “gastronomic diplomacy” (Constantinou 1996) or “diplomacy at the dining table” (Neumann 2013) or “culinary diplomacy” (Chapple-Sokol 2013) has always had its role in diplomatic interactions.

States, Organizations, and Individuals

Aggregations of state and non-state players are playing growing roles in international relations and politics. These actors negotiate together or form supranational bodies for dealing with a particular issue. Different kinds of contact groups could include states, including international governmental and nongovernmental organizations, political and donor groups, and representatives of civil society. For example, the International Contact Group for the Mindanao peace process in the Philippines was established in 2009 by the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). It comprises four states (the United Kingdom, Japan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia) and four international nongovernmental organizations (Conciliation Resources, Muhammadiyah, The Asia Foundation, and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue) (Conciliation Resources 2013).

Nonetheless, states remain the main actors of international diplomacy. States, not organizations or individuals, establish diplomatic relations. Such global or regional international organizations as the U.N. and the Organization of American States have diplomatic missions and staffs with diplomatic status, but “no international institution has any power other than the power conferred on it by States” (Plantey 2007: 308). A fundamental instrument of foreign policy, international diplomacy serves the political or other objectives of states in a civilized manner. These objectives may be related not only to the political and economic interests of the state in a narrow sense but also to the protection of human rights and the interests of civil society, poverty reduction, health and environmental safety in the world, and maintaining international peace and security.

Diplomacy is “the organized conduct of relations between states” (Henrikson 2013: 118), and diplomatic negotiation can be defined as an organized form of interaction between states aimed at a favorable agreement. Though states are the principal *actors* of international relations and diplomatic affairs, they do not act on their own in the international arena but rather through their *organizational agencies* and *individual agents*. One of the most important aspects of diplomatic effectiveness is the ability to coordinate efforts and activities at three levels: those of the state-actor, organization-agency, and individual-agent levels.

Actors, Agencies, and Agents in International Diplomacy

In international diplomacy, the concepts of “actor,” “agency,” and “agent” are different but sometimes overlapping. The terms “actor” and “agency” both express the ability of a subject to act or undertake an action, and we may thus consider sovereign states, diplomatic organizations, and individual diplomats to function as both actors and agencies. But because of the primacy of the state in international diplomacy and to clarify my terminology, it seems reasonable to apply the term “actor” to states, “agency” to

organizations, and “agent” to individuals. In other words, in diplomatic contexts states appear as actors (state-actors), relevant organizations as agencies (organization-agencies), and individuals as agents (individual agents). For purposes of this discussion, I refer to the actor-agency-agent framework as the “diplomatic interaction framework.”¹ Understanding this framework — the relations among diplomatic actors, agencies, and agents — is, I argue, essential for understanding international diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations.

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) refers to these three types of acting bodies in diplomatic intercourse. Thus, the convention points to the “establishment of diplomatic relations between States” (Article 2) and its various articles refer to “the sending State” and “the receiving State,” clearly highlighting the role of states as the principal actors of diplomatic intercourse. The convention also describes such entities as “government,” “ministry for foreign affairs” or “such other ministry,” and “diplomatic mission,” which could be considered organization-agencies representing the state. Finally, the convention uses such terms as “heads of states,” “heads of mission,” “ambassadors,” “nuncios,” “envoys,” “ministers,” “internuncios,” “members of the diplomatic staff of the mission,” and “chargés d’affaires” to refer to individuals acting as agents on behalf of states. According to Article 1(e) of the convention, “a ‘diplomatic agent’ is the head of the mission or a member of the diplomatic staff of the mission,” but in a broader sense we can consider heads of states, heads of missions, ambassadors, etc., to be diplomatic individual agents of states who work at different organization-agencies.

States may act as diplomatic macro-agencies for other states when they represent them in international organizations or with a third state. Switzerland is known for playing such an agential role for other states, for example, by acting as a “protecting power” for the United States in Iran (Switzerland’s Federal Department of Foreign Affairs 2014). The United States has an “interest section” in the Swiss Embassy in Havana, Cuba, and Cuba has its own “interest section” in the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, DC (Switzerland’s Federal Department of Foreign Affairs 2011). The Swiss executive director represents several other countries to the boards of directors of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. In all these cases, Switzerland acts not only as a macro-actor but also as a macro-agency.

A special case of macro-agency is an international organization that acts on behalf of its member states — that is, as a “complex agency,” to use Manfred Elsing’s term (2011). In late 2011, the Arab League acted as a complex macro-agency for its member states by sending a monitoring mission to Syria (Fahim 2011). The complexity of this type of agency mission is determined by the joint and often complicated interests and

roles of the acting states, the political situations in these countries, the structural and personal characteristics of the delegation, and so on.

States and international organizations perform macro-agency functions through their organizational agencies and individual agents rather than directly. In fact, “a field interaction” happens only between individual agents who act within certain organizational frames and on behalf of their organization–agencies and state–actors. “State action is the action taken by those acting in the name of the state” (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 2002: 59), and diplomats are first and foremost the representatives of sovereign states (Sharp 1998). Ultimately, it is not the permanent representatives of the United Nations Security Council nations that vote for or against proposed resolutions but their governments, and that action is socially perceived as the action of nations as a whole.

The existing structure of the international interaction system, including its political institutions, legal frameworks, social connections, relationship patterns, economic ties, information channels, and physical infrastructure, provides a setting for diplomatic negotiations. The more developed the system’s structure, the more opportunities diplomatic players have for interaction and negotiation. Thus, the World Trade Organization gives the member states additional structural opportunities — legal framework, some venues, channels for information exchanges, rules of procedures, decision-making mechanisms, and so forth — for interactions and negotiations on relevant issues. But operating in such a structurally complex environment requires managing a great deal of complexity.

Based on their understanding of states’ identities, values, interests, and relationships, governments form state agencies, including foreign ministries and diplomatic missions abroad, and define their tasks. Describing the development of American foreign policy making in the twentieth century, Graham Allison and Peter Szanton wrote that “President [John F.] Kennedy formally proclaimed the primacy of the department in Washington and of the ambassador in the field,” naming the secretary of state as the “agent of coordination in all our major policies toward other nations.” President Lyndon Johnson reinforced this authority by establishing a formal system of state-chaired interagency committees, and President Richard Nixon reaffirmed the “position of the secretary of state as his principal foreign policy adviser” (Allison and Szanton 1976: 121). The official names of diplomatic agencies and agents’ positions vary according to each state’s tradition and history (like the U.S. Department of State and the Secretary of State of the United States of America in the U.S., or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in the United Kingdom, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Singapore).

Institutionalization of diplomacy directly effects diplomatic interactions and negotiations. Diplomatic negotiation “takes place within bodies

or networks that already exist and can provide it with procedures and facilities, and sometimes even set the goal it must achieve” (Plantey 2007: 281). A consequence of such organizational structuring is, using Alain Plantey’s expression, “bureaucratization of diplomatic negotiation” (2007: 504). The negotiation process is thus determined by such environmental or structure-related factors as “institutions in the broad sense of the term, comprising assemblies, norms, rules, values, ideologies, cultures, symmetric or asymmetric constellations, etc., hence all those factors that influence a negotiator’s action besides personal qualities” (Pfetsch 1999: 191). In diplomacy, the environmental/structural factors are complex and entangled with the features of diplomatic actors, agencies, and agents.

Diplomatic agencies established by governments set goals for their agents and provide them with support and guidance through infrastructure, finances, communication, legal and technical support, and so on, while also enforcing restrictions according to their norms and values. Organization-agencies are thus designed to play an organizing role in diplomatic relations and negotiations. Individual decision makers are heavily constrained by organizational pressures (Taber 1998), including directives, rules, precedents, and ideologies (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 2002).

Diplomatic agencies, such as foreign ministries and embassies, are not the sole state agencies that participate in formulating and executing the foreign policy of states. Military, intelligence, economic, trade, information, legal, cultural, and other state agencies may also play a significant role in international affairs and affect diplomatic relations between states. In addition, nongovernmental organizations, transnational and national companies, traditional and social media, religious and other special-interest groups, public opinion, experts, and private individuals have a growing influence on international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy.

Diplomats interact and negotiate not only with diplomats but also with other government officials, members of parliament, representatives of professional groups and civil society, and ordinary people. But whatever diplomats do, they always act as individual agents of particular state actors, and their behavior is also determined by the institutional characteristics of corresponding organization agencies. Also, at the individual level, in addition to “pure” diplomatic agents — professional diplomats — many other people take part in a state’s foreign affairs, including politicians, parliamentarians, military leaders, civil servants, and members of different state agencies.

Despite all the other organizations and individuals who influence diplomatic negotiations, however, diplomatic agencies and agents occupy the core position in states’ international relations, and they usually coordinate foreign policy, negotiate interstate agreements, help politicians and government officials clarify and execute their foreign policy goals, speak on behalf

of states, and represent them internationally. In short, diplomatic agencies and agents are essential components of modern international politics and diplomacy.

The individual agent's behavior falls within the boundaries of principal-agent relations. Traditionally, a principal and an agent are considered individuals who enter into a specific relationship: the first gives instructions and the second executes them in order to achieve the goals set by a superior. As Charles Freeman noted, diplomats act as agents of their state in other states and in international organizations, and that role requires the subordination of personal interests to those of the principal being represented (Freeman 1997: 111). Diplomats, as Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall remarked, "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" (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 84). Diplomatic agents need mandates or credentials from their principals to act on behalf of them or represent the country.

Eileen Babbitt listed individual agents in international negotiations to include "ambassadors, agency officials, foreign service officers, military officers, special envoys, and designated leaders of subnational groups" (Babbitt 1999: 136). In the context of U.S. foreign policy, Babbitt also referred to such principals as the president and Congress. Distinguishing between *elected principals*, *appointed agents*, and *career agents*, Babbitt noted that "the most notable feature of international diplomatic negotiation is that it is carried out by agents who are working for a multiplicity of principals in a complicated web of relationships" (1999: 136). Diplomats often work in a multi-organizational setting that comprises a presidential administration, a parliament, a ministry of foreign affairs, an embassy, and other organizational structures affecting foreign policy decision making and implementation. Often, diplomatic agents find *intrastate* interactions and negotiations to be even more complex and confusing than *interstate* ones.

In diplomacy, interagency relations determine the features of principal-agent relationships between individuals in different governmental agencies. Those who represent higher office, for instance, the office of the president or the president's security advisors, normally act as principals, while those who work at the lower office, for example, at the foreign ministry would act as their agents. Written and unwritten rules regulate relations between these groups of individuals, however, such that not everyone at the top always directs those beneath them. Because such formal and informal rules and regulations are often complicated, sensitive, and partly depend on the reputations of the officials, relations between principals and agents become confusing.

For example, it is well known that relations between the U.S. National Security Council and the Department of State and their role in American foreign policy significantly changed depending on whether Henry Kissinger

was serving as national security advisor or secretary of state. As a National Security Advisor, “Kissinger clearly had the upper hand *vis-à-vis* Secretary of State [William] Rogers” (Hanhimaki 2004: 115), and he “remained a dominant force in his now sole capacity as secretary of state” (Burke 2009: 155). John Burke’s book on the role of the national security advisor in presidential decision making provides some illustrations of the fluctuating influence of individual agents on the functioning of organization agencies and vice versa in the context of U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy.

Diplomatic Interaction Framework

Though states are the main actors of international relations and diplomatic affairs, the diplomats and other diplomatic agents are the negotiators on the ground. Even a special international envoy representing a head of state who doesn’t belong to a foreign service or governmental organization requires the backing of the president’s administration or agencies such as foreign ministries and embassies; thus, he or she *de facto* becomes a part of a state agency or agencies. It is hard to differentiate the diplomatic activity of any foreign minister or ambassador from the activity of the ministry or embassy he or she represents. In diplomacy, individuals are institutionalized (a head of state, minister, or ambassador is not just an individual but an institution, too), and institutions are individualized (they may function differently when headed or presented by different individuals). Any new foreign minister or ambassador inevitably brings new human and organizational propensities to the job while also functioning within a certain organizational framework and carrying the state’s identity, values, and interests — an individual thus becomes a diplomatic agent of the state, as part of the state’s diplomatic agency. In other words, the diplomatic agency organizes the structure of the functional relationships between the state-actor and the individual-agent.

Diplomacy first emerged from primeval obscurity about 2,500 B.C. (Cohen 1999), but the first resident embassy was established only in 1450 between two Italian princely states (Padelford, Lincoln, and Olvey 1976). The first foreign ministry was created in 1626 in France by Cardinal Richelieu, but conducting diplomacy through a single ministry became the general rule in Europe only in the eighteenth century (Horn 1961; Berridge 2005).

Before the ministry took a role in the organization and management of a foreign policy of the state, international diplomacy had been mainly maintained by a small circle of individuals: the king or emperor embodying the state had to deal with a ruler or ambassador of another country either directly or through a personal representative. With the advent of the foreign ministries arose a diplomatic triad: the state (actor), a central diplomatic office (agency), and an individual diplomat (agent). Accordingly, all three elements of this trio began to play a specific role in diplomatic negotiations.

Ministries of foreign affairs have three vital functions: routine information gathering, policy making, and memory keeping (Hill 2003: 77). They direct and administer a diplomatic service, which includes “staffing and supporting missions abroad, policy advice and implementation, policy coordination, dealing with foreign diplomats at home, public diplomacy, and building domestic support” (Berridge 2005: 5). In many countries, a foreign ministry also manages (organizes) interagency coordination of all governmental organizations’ activities related to foreign affairs. Diplomatic agents use the resources and capacities of these ministries (agencies) to represent the state.

Governments can set up both internal and external (intergovernmental) organizations that can be instrumental in organizing their interactions and negotiations. The U.N. and other international organizations provide some organized forms of interaction for member states such as conferences, consultations, and working and summit meetings. States can use third (official and unofficial) parties or nongovernmental organizations and private individuals to communicate and negotiate with each other as well.

As principal diplomatic agencies, foreign ministries set up their own structures for communication, interaction, and negotiation. A foreign ministry is a complex agency that supervises a number of smaller agencies, such as embassies, permanent missions, consulate generals, and consulates, that in turn can establish their own micro-organization-agencies, such as a delegation, a negotiating team, or an inter-agency commission, to deal with a specific foreign policy issue, such as accession to a certain international organization or dispute resolution.

Robert Putnam (1988) analyzed diplomacy as a two-level — national and international, domestic and foreign — game played by the state. According to his model, entanglement between diplomacy and domestic politics manifests itself in state-to-state relations and in the state’s relations to its domestic constituencies. In my conceptual framework, diplomacy requires not only interactions and negotiations with external parties at the state-actor, organization–agency, and individual–agent levels, but also, similar to Putnam’s model, involves internal interactions and negotiations between the state and its domestic agencies and agents, as well as the diplomatic agencies’ and agents’ interactions with other domestic organizations and individuals.

Of course, the main task of foreign ministries, embassies, and diplomats is to interact and negotiate with overseas counterparts. To fulfill their missions, however, diplomatic agencies and agents often must interact with domestic agencies; for example, a foreign ministry can be a part of inter-agency negotiations, or an ambassador may interact with the representatives of other domestic government agencies or civil society.

Although in diplomacy, the state and its authorized agencies and agents try to form an integrated system, we can distinguish interactions between

all three parts of this tripartite body: state-to-state, organization-to-organization, and individual-to-individual interactions (symmetric interactions) as well as state-to-organization, state-to-individual, and organization-to-individual interactions (asymmetric interactions).² For example, when India and Brazil established diplomatic relations, we would typically perceive that an interaction occurred *between the states*. But obviously the activities of the Embassy of Vietnam in New Zealand, for example, involve interactions *between the organization and the state*, and the work of the Canadian Ambassador to Singapore would clearly involve interactions *between the individual and the state*. Political consultations among the foreign ministries of the Caribbean countries denote interactions *among the organizations*. A Swedish Ambassador who visits the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Uganda initiates interactions *between the individual and the organization*. A meeting of Romanian and Polish diplomats means an interaction *between individuals*.

Notably, all these diplomatic intercourses involve interactions at all three levels — the actor (state), the agency (organization), and the agent (individual). Interactions between diplomatic agents also always represent interactions between agencies and actors, and interactions between diplomatic agencies also always involve interactions between corresponding actors and agents — and no diplomatic interaction between states can occur without interactions at the organizational and individual levels.

Persuasion can be an important skill in negotiation, and one's ability to influence may depend on the quality of one's interactions at the actor, agency, and agent levels. During the American-Soviet arms-control negotiations, the Soviet negotiators were known for their "first position-then-delay" strategy (Druckman 1996). "They had specific arguments that they were instructed to make and they would make them even if the U.S. had already indicated that it accepted them," wrote Warnke and Earle (1966: 212). In their 1982 negotiations in Geneva on intermediate-range nuclear forces, Soviet delegates began indicating that they might walk away and develop new weapons to counterbalance new ones on the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) side (Talbot 1983). At that point, Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky, the American and Soviet negotiators, took their famous "Walk in the Woods" — conducting informal discussions during a walk in the Jura Mountains near Geneva. In contrast to the formal negotiations, these conversations were truly interactional and eventually produced a draft agreement that was subsequently accepted by both sides.

Parties can strengthen their influence in negotiation by organizing themselves and their interaction capabilities at the actor (state), agency (organization), and agent (individual) levels. Shortcomings on one level may be offset, to some extent, by strength on the other levels. A well-known example of this type of influence was the negotiation success of the French diplomat Talleyrand as a representative of France at the Vienna Conference

of 1814–1815. Overcoming the weaknesses of his country at that time, Talleyrand drew on his personality and skills to achieve significant benefits for France (Dupont 2003; Faure 2004).

Generally speaking, structural and behavioral factors may strengthen or diminish each other. Solid diplomatic agreements can be reached when they are supported at all levels, but sometimes states can reach an agreement without much support from key organizational or individual negotiators. In democratic and pluralistic societies, internal agencies and the individual agents often take different positions regarding the state's identities, values, and interests. Overcoming these differences in interagency and interpersonal negotiations, however, is vital for the success of the state's negotiations with other states.

The State, Self, and Diplomatic Negotiation

National self-determination has been a driving force in history and also a fundamental principle of international law. Contemporary nation-states are understood to be unitary and purposive actors with identities and interests — political and legal entities that can act in domestic and international arenas and interact with each other according to their goals and objectives. The international status of the state has risen over the last few centuries. “The absolute monarchs of the seventeenth century cast themselves as the state itself” (McGraw and Dolan 2007: 301). But with the development of a new paradigm of statehood, even the most selfish dictators have tried to convince their citizens that their leadership behavior is determined by the state's values and interests rather than by egoistic motives. If previously a state was a sovereign's shadow, or even his “servant,” nowadays it has become an ultimate “master” or “principal.” Among individuals who serve states, diplomatic agents occupy a special place: they work as professional international servicemen and women.

When states are socially recognized as unitary and purposive actors and attributed selfhood, they take on their own individuality, will, and capacity to act (Wendt 2004; Faizullaev 2007; McGraw and Dolan 2007). People begin to speak about the desires and feelings of states in the same way they discuss human individuals' motivation and emotions: we perceive that a state is “annoyed” by the behavior of another state or “anxious” about a particular issue. In international (social) contexts, states unavoidably acquire anthropomorphic qualities and become macro-personalities with distinct selves.

The state's “self” is a social construct that comprises its identity, values, and interests, and reflects the collective consciousness of its citizens and their feelings about their nation and its existence within a broader international context. The nations' values, dominant ideas, and sentiments affect the foreign policies of the state. And the state identity, expressed in narratives, official and unofficial symbols (such as the national flag and anthem,

maps, heroic images, national monuments, images of representative plants and animals, etc.) affect the identities of both the diplomatic agency and individual agents. The state's identity is reflected in basic legal documents such as a constitution, core values, and political narratives, and the state's self, deriving from different objective and subjective sources, tend to reinforce the unity and interoperability of the state-actor, organization-agencies, and individual-agents. As the symbolic interactionist framework stresses, identity is an interactive construction (Makros 1996). No "self" exists without "other," and no "other" occurs without "self." "Self-other" relations would thus seem to be a vital part of interstate relations.³

While most citizens might primarily be preoccupied with national sentiments and national identity issues, diplomats are more closely aligned to the state's self because they must represent it as well as analyze the behavior of their own and alien states and also negotiate with the representatives of other states. As Paul Sharp remarked, "diplomats are engaged in the construction, maintenance, and representation of different identities to one another" (Sharp 1999: 54). So diplomacy operates on terms defined by "us" and by "others." Essential questions for any diplomat — such as "Who are we as a nation?" "What are the core values, objectives, and interests of our state?" and "What should we do to defend and advance our national interests?" — inevitably lead to reflections on the state's self.

Diplomatic practice induces diplomatic agencies and agents to look at the state not only as a subject of international behavior but also as an object with its own identity, core values, interests, and historical, cultural, and moral imperatives. Identity formation factors, such as national symbols, rituals, ceremonies, historical events, achievements, heroes, narratives, system of governance, and allies and enemies influence people's perceptions of the state's identity and the ways in which the corresponding diplomacy is conducted.

In their service as trusted agents of states, which embody particular identities, values, and interests, diplomats often see themselves as serving a higher purpose. To serve well, an individual who represents the state in the international arena must fully or partly integrate his or her self with the state's self. Moreover, others identify individual diplomats with their respective states, thus binding the diplomat socially and by image to his or her state.

Diplomats, politicians, civil servants, and other experts may differ in their opinions about what best serves their state's interests and values; they may also disagree with the foreign policy decisions of their principals. Diplomatic agents, however, must implement the state's foreign policy decisions and obey organizational rules of their agencies — otherwise they should leave the job. Loyalty is a fundamental requirement of any diplomatic service,⁴ and no state-actors or diplomatic agencies tolerate an individual agent's disloyalty. Psychologically, it can be difficult for a diplomat

to act in accordance with a foreign policy that he or she rejects personally (though some unessential differences in this respect can be allowed). In such a situation, diplomats may practice adapting themselves to the self of the master-state and thus overcome the risk of cognitive dissonance. A diplomat acquires an individual “diplomatic self” that integrates his or her own sense of self with the socially constructed self of the state (Faizullaev 2006). The relationship between the state’s and diplomat’s selves affects the negotiation process. As Iver Neumann pointed out (Neumann 2012: 16), “negotiation is always done on behalf of a seemingly disembodied collective, namely the state, and as a result the ideal of being a negotiator is also a threat to the integrity of the diplomat’s self.” Legal as well as social and psychological obstacles hamper foreigners from serving a foreign state as trusted diplomatic agents, and most contemporary states assume that only citizens of a state can truly embody the state’s self.

A state and its diplomatic agencies and agents cannot function as an effective system unless they are congruent. The range and criteria of this consilience, however, can differ depending on the state and its political situation, for example, diversity of opinion will be less tolerated during war time. Some states have legally clear and publicly acknowledged rules for hiring individuals for diplomatic service, while others make such choices based on subjective preferences or personal loyalties, and some states do both. Depending on the state’s core values, in some countries people can work as diplomats regardless of their political views, religious beliefs, or gender; in other countries, these factors matter more. In general, countries that allow capable people from diverse backgrounds to represent the state are better equipped to create an effective diplomatic service. Inclusiveness based on professional and moral qualities clearly enhances the human capacities of diplomacy.

Any negotiation is a test of the negotiator’s self. The self-consciousness of diplomatic actors, agencies, and agents are instrumental in negotiations with international counterparts. As Paul Meerts pointed out, international negotiation can be affected by the state’s “ego,” by which he means a collective ego (2010). While self is used here to mean the ability of a subject to look upon itself as an observable object, ego means the prevalence of self-orientation in relations with others. (As Meerts used ego, it has a more negative connotation than self.)

According to Meerts, ego spurs emotion, and can have a distributive impact on international negotiation processes. Countries with a glorious past frequently have a stronger sense of identity which, in turn, strengthens their ego, and thus, noted Meerts, representatives of a country with a strong identity and a heroic past tend to be assertive. When negotiators see their states as superior to others, it can hamper the give-and-take of international negotiation (Meerts 2010). However, I distinguish self-related from ego-related problems in diplomatic negotiations. The first is connected to the

absence of self-consciousness in negotiation; the second is linked to ego obstacles that can narrow opportunities.⁵

Negotiation Behavior in Diplomacy: The Actor–Agency–Agent Differences

Position and manner are the two basic and universal characteristics of interacting subjects' behavior: any actors, agencies, and agents hold a certain *position* toward each other and employ a particular *manner* in dealing with counterparts. Positions adopted between state-actors, organization-agencies, and individual agents can range from *dominant* (leading, strong, powerful, high profile) to *submissive* (dependent, weak, powerless, low profile), and their manner may vary from *hard* (assertive, unfriendly, antagonistic, hostile) to *soft* (receptive, friendly, kind, gentle). The state-actor's and its organization-agencies' and individual-agents' abilities to express similar or diverse types of interaction positions and manners in negotiations can be a source of diplomatic maneuver and influence.

During the Bosnian War, the United States (state-actor), the U.S. State Department (diplomatic agency), and Richard Holbrooke (chief American negotiator) were widely seen as taking dominant positions and displaying hard manners. Holbrooke, "America's diplomat extraordinary" (Elliot 2010), "a brilliant, sometimes abrasive infighter" (McFadden 2010), was seen as the "toughest" member of this diplomatic actor-agency-agent triad at the time. Holbrooke "successfully argued that the [NATO] bombing [of the Bosnian Serb army] was necessary for a successful negotiation because it demonstrated the West's political will" (Seldowitz 2004: 54), and he "brought Serbs, Croats, and Muslims to the table in Dayton using military force" (Watkins and Rosegrant 2001: 266).

Holbrooke had a huge personal influence on the situation in the Balkans and played a key role in crafting the Dayton Agreement, but as an Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs (1994–1995), he was also a representative of his agency, the State Department, and had to deal with his principals and interlocutors in Washington, who included the president, the secretary of state, the national security advisor, and White House aides among others. As Michael Watkins and Susan Rosegrant wrote, in the Balkans Holbrooke "operated with an unusual degree of freedom," but nevertheless he "checked in with Washington every day" and "returned every few weeks to update officials and argue specifics" (2001: 257). Holbrooke had both admirers and critics in Washington, but during the Bosnian war he was quite efficient in dealing with his own organization-agency and other government agencies as well as the individual principals. According to some authors, that kind of agent-agency fit did not characterize Holbrooke's last appointment as the President's Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2009 (Alter and Dickey 2011; Mann 2012; Nasr 2013).

But why do organizations and individuals involved in a state's diplomatic activities who have, in theory, the same objectives sometimes work in concert and other times fail to converge? So far, little research has been conducted to determine what promotes and what hinders congruence between the state's diplomatic agents and agencies.

During foreign policy decision-making processes, some positional differences between such *vertically linked* organizations as a president's office and a foreign ministry, or a foreign ministry and an embassy, are to be expected and could even be seen as healthy — each entity may look at a particular issue from a different angle and thus help generate a fuller, more complete picture of the issue. The same applies to *horizontally linked* agencies such as different ministries, including foreign and defense.

Obviously, good working relations among the principals as well as agents of hierarchical and nonhierarchical agencies can be instrumental in enhancing the efficiency of interagency coordination and negotiation. Nevertheless, an uneasy relationship can develop between agencies even when their leaders work well together. Thus, according to Vali Nasr, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton “got along well with [President Barack] Obama, but on Afghanistan and Pakistan the State Department had to fight tooth and nail just to have a hearing at the White House” (Nasr 2013). So the domestic multiagency/agent environment of international diplomacy often requires multifaceted assessment and management of internal interactions and negotiations.

Sometimes the state, its agency, and individual agents can interact with their counterparts differently. During World War Two, the Allied Forces — the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States — generally were perceived as displaying relatively soft or friendly manners toward each other, but individuals (government leaders, foreign ministers, and diplomats) could turn hard when discussing difficult issues. Despite the political and military alliance among these three states, the Second World War was a personal struggle between their leaders (Fenby 2007), and the U.S. and British diplomats, military liaison officers, and journalists stationed in Moscow “deeply resented their personal isolation” (Costigliola 2012: 6). Correspondence between Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Joseph and Stalin during the Second World War reflected many nuances of not only the relations between the three countries but also the personal relationship between the three leaders (Correspondence between Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and Atlee during World War II 2001). Diplomatic language is notorious for its courteousness and concealed meaning, but those who understand the nuances and real meanings of this professional language may notice hidden signals that indicate the real positions and manners of interacting parties.

Reciprocity is an important principle in diplomatic relations in general and in negotiation interactions between diplomatic actors, agencies, and

agents in particular. Journalists often use a “diplomatic tit-for-tat” metaphor for describing interactions in a contentious situation. For example, “The United States has expelled two Venezuelan diplomats, the State Department said Monday, a diplomatic tit-for-tat following the Latin American oil giant’s expulsion of two American military attachés last week” (Gearan 2013), or “UK and Russia expel diplomats in spying tit-for-tat” (CNN Wire Staff 2010). In diplomacy, the reciprocity principle can be applied by symmetric or asymmetric means: by returning a favor or harm in the same or different way.

Diplomatic reciprocity can occur even when interacting states face disagreements between their major internal stakeholders. In light of the tension between the United States and Russia over the death of Russian auditor Sergei Magnitsky in prison, both sides took serious steps against each other in late 2012 and early 2013. The United States and Russia adopted “The Magnitsky Act”⁶ and “The Anti-Magnitsky Law,”⁷ respectively. In April 2013, Russia “banned eighteen Americans from entering the country in response to Washington imposing sanctions on eighteen Russians” (Heintz 2013).

But on the U.S. domestic side, there was discord: the Congress, the administration of President Barack Obama, and the State Department disagreed. Congressional champions of the Magnitsky act alleged that the State Department was “misreading the law, minimizing the act’s original power to punish those who have committed egregious human rights violations . . .” (Glover 2013). And while “members of Congress were eager to press Russia over human rights abuses,” the Obama administration “had opposed the Magnitsky legislation, fearing diplomatic retaliation” (Herszenhorn and Eckholm 2012). According to one expert, because of “acute sensitivity in U.S.–Russian relations, and with preparations underway for two upcoming summit meetings between Presidents Obama and Vladimir Putin, the administration is not likely to fire another broadside against Russian officialdom” (Rojansky 2013). More broadly, all the actions taken on both sides can be seen as representative of different elements of the United States’ and Russia’s complex negotiation/bargaining behavior on numerous matters. Despite the internal differences among the U.S. legislative and executive authorities and some opposition to the anti-Magnitsky law inside Russia, in the international arena the United States and Russia interacted as unitary actors.

Some mismatch between the behaviors of the state and its diplomatic agencies and agents can also be seen in the disparity between political goals and moral ideals. For example, during the Second World War, certain diplomats from Axis countries allied with Nazi Germany actually saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust. In Fascist Italy, despite the anti-Semitic laws and the actions that Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini’s regime took against Jews, “the Italian Foreign Ministry played a restraining

role in regard to official Italian anti-Semitism,” and “the diplomats considered Italian Jews residing in German-occupied countries as fellow citizens, entitled to the same diplomatic protection as any other Italian citizen,” so “the diplomats were devoted more to Italy than to fascism” (Fargion 1990). In other words, the diplomatic sense of self of these individual diplomats was primarily based on their attachment to the state but not to the regime. Diplomats are essentially called to serve the state; and the bigger the contradiction between the spirits of the regime and of the state, the greater likelihood that the diplomats will experience an incongruity with the requests of authorities.

Diversity in the behavior of state-actors, organization-agencies, and individual agents can lend diplomatic flexibility to the state. Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States from 1962 to 1986, was known to be more relaxed, flexible, and friendly in his interactions with American counterparts than his boss, the Foreign Minister Anatoly Gromyko. The ambassador’s personal behavior style was not typical in the context of the Soviet Union’s and the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Cold War behavior toward the United States. As Steven Miner (1994) pointed out, Dobrynin’s trademark affability demonstrated greater personal flexibility than that of his predecessors, but in sensitive negotiations he consistently adhered to the hardline positions of his government. These qualities played a role in Dobrynin’s important back-channel talks with American officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and in his close relations with six American presidents and other government officials during his postings to Washington. When Dobrynin was appointed head of the International Relations Department of the Soviet Communist Party’s Central Committee in 1988, President Ronald Reagan was amazed and asked, “Is he really a Communist?” (Dobrynin 1995: 600). So the Soviet Union and its Foreign Ministry benefited from their envoy’s more flexible style.

Often, states position themselves as firm international actors, while diplomatic agencies interact with counterparts in a softer way. Individual diplomatic agents can be even more flexible in terms of hardness or softness, and the word “diplomat” itself connotes such flexibility. The level of autonomy will vary, however, from country to country.

Because diplomacy requires significant tactfulness and politeness from individual diplomats, treaties on diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations traditionally have paid considerable attention to the personal qualities of diplomatic agents related to their manners and communication skills (Callières 2000). Modern diplomacy requires from diplomatic agents not only the art of skillful conversation and negotiation but also the ability to debate in international organizations and different forums, especially in events covered by news media.⁸ Such discussions and debates are not “pure” formal negotiations, but because they serve as components of

nations' efforts to influence each other, they can be considered elements of the states' international negotiation behavior.

Conclusion

Negotiation is a key instrument of diplomacy based on organized interactions between states through their official representatives. With its culture, rules, and traditions, diplomacy provides states, their organizational agencies, and individual agents a way of organizing interactions in order to manage interstate relations and make joint decisions. International law and such peculiarities of diplomatic practice as diplomatic immunity and diplomatic passports, diplomatic correspondence, conferences, protocol, symbols, ceremonies, and specific language play a significant role in organizing diplomatic intercourse as a whole and negotiations in particular.

Negotiation is a joint decision-making process that occurs as parties act on each other. Interaction is a condition and means of negotiation. No diplomatic negotiation happens without the participation of all three acting entities of diplomacy: state-actors, organization-agencies, and individual agents. No individual diplomat can act without the backing of his or her organization agency; no foreign ministry or embassy can function without individual agents and the state; and no state-actors can interact without agencies and agents who represent them.

In diplomacy, the state-actor, organization-agency, and individual agent reinforce and constrain each other. The efficiency of diplomatic negotiations depends on the organization and quality of both interstate and intra-state interactions. In diplomatic negotiations, the organization-agency's strength is derived to some extent from the state's resources, structure, decision-making mechanisms, communication capacities, and legal foundation; and the individual agent's strengths are powered by his or her knowledge, skills, status/rank, personal relations, and political backing. Each part of the actor-agency-agent system can strengthen or weaken the others.

Although in international diplomacy the state-actor, and its authorized organization-agencies and individual agents form inseparable tripartite acting bodies, all the three parts of the system may have a particular autonomy from each other: the state as actor, organizations as agencies, and individuals as agents can sometimes differ in their stance and disagree. Such relative autonomy presents both risks and opportunities for the diplomatic actor. On the one hand, any inconsistency between its parts can harm the state's foreign policy, but on the other, that might give the actor and its agencies and agents some flexibility and complementarity. Dynamic equilibrium and congruence among diplomatic actor, agencies, and agents contributes to the negotiation efficacy of the state.

The state's self is one of the sources of diplomatic negotiating power. States with well-defined and stable selves have certain advantages in diplomatic negotiations over states that have a weak comprehension of their

selves. A strong sense of self — a clear awareness of identity, values, and interests — makes a state-actor, organization-agency, and individual-agent stronger. This doesn't mean that states with strong selves always prevail in diplomatic negotiations because the outcome of a given negotiation is determined by various factors. The state's ability to negotiate with others depends not only on its enduring self, on effective diplomatic agencies, and on competent diplomatic agents, but also on how it can organize internal and external interactions as well as its relative bargaining power which, in its turn, depends on both the capabilities and relationships of the state (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014).

The organization, process, and outcomes of diplomatic negotiations are affected by state-actors' selves, structures, and resources; by organization-agencies' policies and attitudes, which are based on their installations, functions, and goals; and by individual-agents' knowledge and skills, which are based on their information, education, training, and understanding of the state's aspirations and organizations' guidelines. The way diplomatic negotiation is managed, however, depends not only on the "up-to-down" connections between state-actors, organization-agencies, and individual-agents but also on "down-to-up" forces within this triad: individuals can make a difference in organizations, and organizations and individuals can greatly affect states' international behavior.

Further analysis of the relationships between the state and its diplomatic agencies and agents, and the impact of that relationship on interstate interactions and negotiations could particularly focus on studying the factors that (a) help or hamper synchronism between these three entities and create cohesion among them, (b) the social and political forces that promote or inhibit coordination at these three levels, and (c) the influences of the set of competing discourses and practices that define the state's self in international interactional and relational contexts.

NOTES

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1. The term "diplomatic interaction framework" was offered by the reviewer, and I accept it with appreciation.

2. These interactions can also be considered in legal terms although that aspect is not discussed in this article.

3. Alexander Bukh (2009) has described an interesting case of post-war Japan's construction of the Japanese "self" *vis-a-vis* the Soviet/Russian "other."

4. Loyalty is one of the qualities of the ideal diplomat described by Sir Harold Nicolson in his seminal book *Diplomacy* (Nicolson 1963).

5. M. Kotur (2010), in her Master's thesis, examined the relationship between the Serbian ego and negotiations over the Kosovo status. According to her, the Serbian ego, understood as a pride and dignity and close to the concept of state self, was manifested in these negotiations in three ways: Serbian language and culture, history and historical myths, and emotional attachment to a piece of territory.

6. In November–December 2012 the U.S. Congress passed a bipartisan bill named the “Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012,” and President Obama signed it and it became a law on December 14.

7. On December 2012, the Federal Assembly of Russia passed the bill named “On Sanctions for Individuals Violating Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms of the Citizens of the Russian Federation,” and President Putin signed it on December 28.

8. On Sunday, August 10, 2008 the Russian and U.S. Ambassadors to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin and Zalmay Khalilzad had a public exchange of sharp words over Georgia, and according to some observers this was one of the most heated debates within the United Nations Security Council.

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