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## Diplomacy's Value

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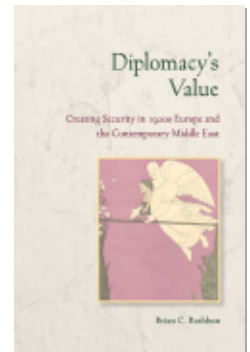
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## *The Value and Values of Diplomacy*

What is the value of diplomacy? How does it affect the course of foreign affairs independent of the distribution of power and foreign policy interests? Despite the centrality of diplomacy to international affairs, little is known about how it works. The notion that diplomacy matters probably strikes most as intuitively obvious, yet most accounts of diplomacy are personalistic accounts of the triumphs of particular state representatives, with little effort made to disentangle the effects of their actions from the broader environment or to offer a general theory about the origins of their choices (Sharp 2009: 1–2; Sartori 2005).

Diplomacy is given little attention in international relations scholarship because of the structural bias of the discipline. Diplomacy is a process that individuals engage in. A theory of diplomacy must be a theory of agency (Cross 2007). If its successes or failures are merely a function of the larger geopolitical environment, then diplomacy per se is essentially unworthy of study. If power is the only currency in international politics, a focus on diplomacy adds little value to our understanding of international affairs.

International relations theorists are not good at theorizing about agency. Books and articles on international relations tell us more about what states cannot do or must do than what they can do or choose to do. By reducing important outcomes to structural features beyond agents' control, such as the ability to send costly signals, prominent traditions in international relations theory have long treated diplomacy implicitly or explicitly as automatic, unproblematic, and ultimately unimportant (Fearon 1994, 1995; Gartzke 1999; Schultz 2001). This raises an obvious question: If diplomacy lacks value, why do states spend so much time engaging in it?

A theory of diplomacy would offer a set of propositions about how states go about communicating and pursuing their interests, which in turn affects their ability to successfully negotiate agreements. Demonstrating that diplomacy matters in international relations requires showing two things. First, diplomats must have a choice about what to do. If those in a position of leverage always adopt coercive bargaining, then diplomacy matters little. Second, decision makers' actions must have an effect on outcomes independent of other factors. If the strong always get their way, diplomacy is not important. If states find agreement merely because their interests are closely aligned, then diplomacy does not deserve the credit for pushing on an open door.

Decision makers choose from a variety of *diplomatic styles*—coercive bargaining, pragmatic statecraft, and reasoned dialogue—in predictable ways. These different conceptions of diplomacy are found, generally implicitly, in the international relations literature, but we need to identify those who are predisposed to using them. I argue that they are the product of different psychological motivations revealed in decision makers' ideological predispositions.

The particular combination of diplomatic styles used by state leaders gives way to interactions of a certain character, what I will call the prevailing *spirit* of negotiations. Parties might engage in *value claiming* negotiation behavior, using leverage to extract the greatest benefits possible. Alternatively, they might engage in *value creating* behavior, an exchange of concessions and honest information in the pursuit of mutual benefits. Value creating is most likely when all parties embrace reasoned dialogue. A dialogue is not a monologue. Coercive bargaining not only makes value creating more difficult but also induces coercive bargaining on the part of those otherwise inclined toward integrative negotiation. Whereas value creating takes two, value claiming can be brought on by only one.

Most important, the spirit of negotiations has an effect on international outcomes independently of the distribution of power and interests. Behavioral research on negotiation in economics and psychology shows that, by holding their cards close to their vest, those engaged in value claiming are harder pressed to reach mutually beneficial outcomes, even in situations of potential integration, in which each side can obtain what it values most provided it concedes on items of less importance. Value creating helps avoid this dynamic by revealing the existence of joint gains in the first place. And individuals vary in their preference for different negotiating strategies, even given the same set of incentives. Negotiating behavior is not endogenous; negotiating outcomes are not epiphenomenal.

I find the same applies to international relations. Diplomacy cannot bring about agreements where there is no outcome that both sides prefer

to the status quo. It can, however, frustrate or facilitate agreement where there is the potential for success based on the underlying distribution of preferences. Diplomacy allows states to reach outcomes that might have been unexpected but also to miss out on opportunities that are within their grasp. This is the added value of diplomacy in explaining international events. And, as is the case in psychological experiments, individuals in the same strategic setting approach diplomacy differently. Their behavior is not reducible to their environment.

In this book, I demonstrate the role played by diplomacy using a hard case—relations among France, Germany, and Britain in the 1920s, in the aftermath of World War I. As is well known, the Germans deeply resented the punitive peace that, in addition to requiring reparations, dismembered their territory, permanently demilitarized the Rhineland, saw the country occupied in the west by tens of thousands of foreign troops, and disarmed the vanquished state to the point that it could have been easily overrun by Poland, not to mention France. Despite the condition of Germany, France was terrified of an eventual *revanche* by its more economically and demographically powerful neighbor and sought in the immediate postwar years to hold Germany down through every legal means possible in the Versailles Treaty. French fear was a “seemingly insuperable obstacle” to reconciliation in the 1920s (Stambrook 1968: 234). The French military even marched into the Ruhr area of Germany in 1923, seizing its industrial assets to force Germany to pay its reparations.

Yet it was in this environment, when the European powers were, in Lord Curzon’s words, “relapsing . . . into the deepest slime of prewar treachery and intrigue,” that Germany made a remarkably successful bid for reconciliation with its wartime adversaries (in Jacobson 2004: 17). The German foreign minister, Gustav Stresemann, announced what he called a “peace offensive on a grand scale,” proposing a treaty of mutual guarantee in which France and Germany would each renounce the use of force to change their mutual border. Britain would come to the aid of either country should it fall victim to aggression by the other. Stresemann’s proposal reflected his pragmatic statecraft. He believed that Germany in its weakened state had to seek mutually beneficial accommodations with its former adversaries.

His proposal found a favorable reception in Britain, whose foreign secretary was similarly pragmatically inclined, and in France, led by a liberal government that favored reasoned dialogue. The value creating negotiation that ensued yielded success in the Treaty of Locarno, signed and ratified in October 1925. The three protagonists identified an outcome that left them all better off. Despite its total lack of military power or any other type of bargaining leverage, Germany was able to achieve

all its aims. The agreement was followed by a significant alleviation in the occupation conditions of the Rhineland. To account for this unlikely success, a theory of diplomacy is necessary; this forms the bulk of the empirical focus of the book.

This case is not only theoretically hard for diplomacy; it is empirically important. An analysis of the 1920s corrects the often-mistaken impression that the period was simply a prelude to a second world war that was inevitable given the distribution of power and the outstanding grievances between France and Germany. In fact, the diplomacy of the 1920s offered the possibility of a lasting peace among the European powers. Only the twin tidal waves of the Great Depression and the rise of Nazi Germany overturned this new state of affairs. As Arthur Balfour, the elder statesman who had served as both prime minister and foreign minister of Britain, states, "the Great War ended in November 1918. The Great Peace did not begin until October 1925" (quoted in Grayson 1997: 35).

I also apply the argument to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, focusing on the rise and fall of the peace process that began in Oslo, with a particular focus on the Israeli side. The ability of my psychological theory of diplomacy to explain the initiation, consolidation, and subsequent decline of talks between the two sides demonstrates its relevance for a contemporary and still ongoing conflict.

## THE ARGUMENT

Although the existing international relations scholarship does not offer anything close to a theory of diplomacy as agency, we do find different conceptions of diplomacy, alternative styles that policymakers might use to realize their interests. Rationalists highlight *coercive bargaining*, in which states use threats and exploit their leverage to pressure other states to concede. They make high demands, refuse to budge to demonstrate their credibility, and hold issues dear to the other states hostage. Diplomacy is a game of high-stakes poker in which states have no incentive to show their cards or believe the cheap talk of others. Realists, in contrast, emphasize *pragmatic statecraft*. Here the far-sighted diplomat focuses on securing the most vital of interests, conceding on issues of less importance to avoid creating unnecessary conflict with others. Good diplomacy is chess rather than poker. Finally, liberals highlight the possibility of *reasoned dialogue*, in which diplomacy is a process of argumentation in which state representatives aim to persuade others of their point of view while listening closely to their claims as well. Reason implies

moderating demands to arrive at an outcome of mutual benefit but also indicates the primary instrument that states use—the giving of reasons. This is enlightened, civilized diplomacy of a liberal variety. It is marked by good faith and goodwill.

The first step in building a theory about diplomacy is to recognize that these different styles of diplomacy are a menu from which decision makers choose and that they very well might choose differently even in the same structural circumstances. This choice, of course, implies agency. From there, we proceed to link the adoption of these alternative styles to particular attributes of decision makers that lead them to prefer one style of diplomacy over another. To do so, I draw on the psychological literature on negotiation. Experiments show that, even in the same structural setting, individuals negotiate in different ways.

Psychologists point to the role played by two motivational goals: social motivation and epistemic motivation. These are attributes of individuals. Negotiators intrinsically have different preferences as to what they regard as the ideal distribution of benefits. Some are *prosocial*, valuing gains for others as well as for themselves. They are value creators who seek joint value for the pair. Others are *proself*, simply egoistic value claimers who think only of themselves. Proselfs make lower offers, reveal less information, and hold out longer than prosocials in negotiations. In terms of foreign affairs, proselfs think only of their own states, whereas prosocials think also of others. Those with a proself motivation are inclined toward coercive bargaining; prosocials are inclined toward reasoned dialogue.

Some proselfs, however, are more adaptable. Social motivations are based on heuristics, cognitive shortcuts with which individuals develop expectations about what interactions with others will generally be like. Heuristics impede the objective evaluation of one's situation at any particular time. Those with greater epistemic motivation demonstrate a greater willingness to transcend these cognitive obstacles and develop an accurate understanding of their environment—I call them pragmatists. This is the diplomatic style highlighted by realists. It is separated from coercive bargaining by a greater level of epistemic motivation. Pragmatists use both distributive and integrative tactics, adapting to the particular strategic circumstances in which they find themselves.

My argument therefore amounts to a behavioralization of existing international relations traditions. The question is not, *What is the nature of diplomacy?* Instead, it is, *Who acts like a coercive bargainer, a pragmatic statesman (or stateswoman), or a reasoned interlocutor?* We should think of realism, rationalism, and liberalism not as theories that capture the singular essence of diplomacy but, rather, as sets of prescriptions that

guide the behavior of some (but not all) decision makers. Psychology provides a microfoundation for more macro-oriented international relations theories.

One negotiating style alone, however, does not determine the character of the interaction among states. Diplomatic styles interact to create a certain spirit of negotiation. Prosocials' preference for value creating is driven by an expectation of reciprocal concessions and open exchange. It will prevail when both sides have the prosocial motivations that drive liberal diplomacy—it takes two. In the absence of this reciprocity, prosocials punish proselves by adopting the latter's negotiating style. Coercive bargaining by any one side prohibits negotiating pairs from reaching win-win outcomes that benefit both by inducing value claiming negotiation among all parties. Pragmatists adapt to their environment. They are likely to create value with prosocials but to claim value against those proselves with lower epistemic motivation who prefer coercive bargaining.

This spirit of negotiation, whether value creating or value claiming, in turn affects the outcome. Psychologists and behavioral economists studying negotiation have long found arguments relying on structural features incomplete. Outcomes in experiments do not vary simply as a function of the structural setting, such as the distribution of power and interests. Even in games of integrative potential, in which players value various items differently, only pairs of negotiators who both practice value creating are consistently able to maximize joint value.

I hypothesize that those whose diplomatic interactions are marked by value claiming are less likely to find a mutually beneficial agreement. This is true even in situations of potential integration, in which each side can obtain what it values most provided it concedes on items of less importance. The agreements reached in climates of value claiming will reflect the distribution of power and leverage in the situation.

I find that this combination of diplomatic styles affects outcomes independently of the distribution of power and interests by comparing the expectations of my argument against a structural baseline. Crude bargaining theories argue that diplomatic style should reflect the bargaining leverage of a state, with the stronger state engaging in coercive bargaining. The outcome of negotiations will reflect the interests of the more powerful parties, defined in terms of either material influence or satisfaction with the status quo. Value creating is more likely when parties' interests are asymmetrical, that is when they value different issues on the negotiating agenda differently and can engage in trade-offs and logrolls in which each side gains what it values most.

I find, instead, that states exercise agency, often *not* adopting the diplomatic style that reflects their structural position. Diplomatic style might enable states to punch above (or below) their weight. Structure is

important but not determinate. Depending on the combination of diplomatic styles, easily obtainable outcomes might go unattained while more unlikely successes are achieved. Even where the potential for joint gains is present, integrative deals are hardly guaranteed. Value creating negotiation is still necessary to reveal the very possibility of such agreements. And even when outcomes reflect the crude distribution of bargaining leverage, diplomacy is still a crucial part of the story. It is only when both sides embrace a coercive bargaining style that such outcomes emerge.

This still leaves an unanswered question: Where do the social and epistemic motivations underlying diplomatic style come from? And how can we generate expectations about who is likely to engage in which type of diplomacy, independent of their negotiating behavior? The difference between prosocials and proselfs is based on values. Those engaged in diplomacy can decide to reach their interests with or without regard for the interests of others. How states pursue value is a function of their values. Edward H. Carr (1964) famously claimed that politics are not a function of ethics, but ethics of politics. He was wrong. A theory of the value of diplomacy requires a theory of the values in diplomacy.

A prosocial motivation in international affairs reflects a particular set of "moral foundations" (Graham et al. 2011). Prosocials care for others, and they value fairness and equality in outcomes. They have a greater commitment to self-transcendence values than proselfs do (Schwartz 1992). This is liberal morality, based on Enlightenment thinking, which judges ethical behavior on how one treats other individuals regardless of what group they are in. A proself motivation in foreign affairs reflects a different set of moral foundations, those of respect for authority and loyalty to the in-group. Proselfs are convinced that in-groups must demonstrate solidarity and preserve order to protect the group from dangers both within and without. Conservation values of conformity and tradition help maintain cohesion and stability within the group. We must be careful to avoid a false dichotomy between ethical prosocials and Machiavellian proselfs. The behavior of the latter is also morally driven, just by different sets of considerations.

Social motivations and moral foundations are revealed in political ideology. The policy positions of the left and right emerge naturally from the particular set of values they embody and represent in politics. The left typically emphasizes self-transcendence values based on the moral foundations of providing and caring for others. Leftists believe in the equal worth of all individuals. The right, in contrast, values the community more highly and sees the need for strong authority structures, whether law and order at the state level or traditional values at home, to control bad behavior and protect the group from instability, diversity, and change. Armed with these insights, political ideology presents a way of



measuring social motivation independent of diplomatic behavior. We expect that those on the left will generally prefer reasoned dialogue, whereas those on the far right will use coercive bargaining.

Individuals also vary systematically in their degree of epistemic motivation, a cognitive rather than an ethical difference. Those without epistemic motivation exhibit a need for closure. They are less open to new information and more disinclined to question their beliefs. Although those who are ideologically extreme have a propensity toward closed-mindedness, studies consistently show that the right demonstrates a lower degree of epistemic motivation than the left. For this reason, variation in epistemic motivation is a particularly strong cleavage among conservatives. Pragmatic statecraft should find its support primarily in the center right, where the prosocial motivation is present but where epistemic motivation is somewhat higher, thereby facilitating pragmatic adaptation to different circumstances based on a more objective perception of the environment.

#### THE CASES

I present two cases. First, I show how my argument explains the pattern of diplomatic relations in 1920s Europe. Bilateral efforts to provide France the security it so desperately desired failed twice. In 1922, although there was a deal that both Britain and France preferred to no agreement, under which Britain would have issued a security guarantee to defend France against German aggression, it fell through due to distributive bargaining and coercive diplomacy on both sides. This value claiming was not a function of the structural circumstances but, rather, the product of choices about how to negotiate that were consistent with the conservative ideological predispositions of both governments. Britain, although it valued a security guarantee in its own right, decided to try to use its bargaining leverage to extract greater gains on other issues from France as a condition for negotiating. And even the much weaker France made high demands, refused concessions, played hard to get, and denigrated the British offer. This diplomatic style was unsuited to the circumstances, given France's lack of bargaining leverage.

Then, after both conservative governments were replaced by those with leftist ideological orientations, the liberal diplomatic style of both produced value creating negotiation and a tentative agreement on a win-win outcome called the Geneva Protocol, even though the foreign policy goals of the two countries were now actually further apart. Open, informative, and honest negotiations between two prosocial governments yielded a win-win outcome in the form of the Geneva Protocol, in which

the Labour government of Britain acquiesced to an extension of the sanctions of the League of Nations that the French government desired in exchange for the convocation of a disarmament conference and the institution of compulsory universal arbitration for all disputes among parties to the protocol. The agreement, however, was killed off by the British Tories when they returned to power because they had a different set of foreign policy goals.

It was Germany, despite a complete lack of bargaining leverage, that transformed the security situation in Europe. Under the center-right foreign minister, Gustav Stresemann, the Germans proposed a treaty of mutual guarantee in which both France and Germany would renounce the use of force along their mutual border, with Britain brought in to guarantee the security of either state in case it became the victim of aggression by the other. This was a realist strategy resting on the instrumental consideration of French interests and the pragmatic use of short-term concessions to secure vital interests in the longer term. Stresemann sought to gain the trust of France to facilitate an early evacuation of the Rhineland and, eventually, border revisions in the east. This effort at conciliation, however, cannot be reduced simply to the German structural position of weakness. Stresemann's proposals were opposed by his coalition partners on the far right. These conservatives shared the foreign minister's goals but not his diplomatic style.

Whereas the French right denigrated the value of the offer, the leftist coalition government in France was willing to engage in an open exchange of ideas, given its diplomatic style of reasoned dialogue. Although the left shared the foreign policy goals of the right and still feared and distrusted Germany, it nevertheless pursued liberal diplomacy. The center-right British foreign secretary, Austen Chamberlain, fit Stresemann's program into his own realist strategy of drawing a rehabilitated Germany into a new concert of Europe, returning the country to great power status safely. He took the far-sighted view that reconciling France and Germany was in British interests because Britain would inevitably be drawn into any renewed conflict between the historical adversaries. Consequently, he was prepared to pay the short-term price of guaranteeing the security pact. Chamberlain prevailed over more conservative critics in his cabinet, who, although sharing the goal of dampening tensions between France and Germany, favored a different diplomatic style. They again wanted to extract a greater price from France for the British offer of security. Under the foreign secretary's leadership, Britain set out to broker a deal between the two sides by convincing them to practice pragmatic statecraft vis-à-vis one another rather than the coercive bargaining that had marked their bilateral relations in recent years.

Stresemann's unlikely gambit paid dividends. The Treaty of Locarno was drafted at a conference marked by a spirit of value creating negotiation between realists and liberals in which good faith and goodwill prevailed. The security treaty was quickly followed by a package of alleviations to the Rhineland occupation that created the impression of a simple quid pro quo integrative deal of the kind that rationalists might expect based simply on the structure of interests. But Britain and France were prepared to offer such concessions only as a reward for the new pragmatic diplomacy of Germany. Indeed, had Germany proposed such an exchange at the beginning of its peace offensive, as Stresemann's far-right colleagues had wanted, it would have undermined the foreign minister's reassurance strategy by confirming French and British biases about the bottomless German appetite. Only careful pragmatic statecraft by Germany had made success possible.

The French leftist coalition tried to consolidate this new "spirit of Locarno," but the value creating that had prevailed previously among the three countries was undermined when the conservatives under Raymond Poincaré returned to power in France. Although the occupation was of declining importance to the French and there was a win-win outcome available in which France would offer early evacuation in exchange for a renegotiated reparations settlement, the conservatives used the occupation coercively to extract greater concessions from Germany. The coercive French diplomatic style induced value claiming by others. Stresemann, the pragmatist, adapted to the new situation and took a similarly confrontational line, demanding an immediate and unilateral end to the Rhineland occupation. When the parties convened at a conference on reparations and the occupation at The Hague, only the British threat to unilaterally withdraw their forces from the Rhineland induced the French to seriously negotiate an early end to the occupation. After an extended period of brinkmanship during which a breakdown of negotiations was a strong possibility, the two sides finally settled on an outcome weighted toward the more powerful French. The last chance of the European powers to consolidate the peace before the onslaught of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism in Germany was over.

In chapters 8 and 9, I extend my analysis to the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis, which demonstrates remarkable parallels to 1920s Europe. Pragmatists on the weaker side, in this case, the Palestinians, made efforts at rapprochement toward the stronger side, the Israelis, by renouncing claims to territory in the hopes of ending a military occupation. Pragmatic leaders in an interested third party, the George H. W. Bush administration in the United States, tried to play the role of honest broker, despite their greater historical ties with the stronger party. Nevertheless, true progress was made only when the pragmatic

Palestinians teamed up with the prosocial Israeli Labor government. The combination of diplomatic styles generated a value creating dynamic that fostered the two Oslo accords. Much as the return of coercive bargaining on the stronger French side contributed to undermining the spirit of Locarno, the return of the Likud Party to power in Israel changed the character of negotiating to value claiming. Benjamin Netanyahu's successor on the left, however, Ehud Barak, also failed to commit fully to a liberal diplomacy of dialogue, creating suspicions on the Palestinian side that impeded, alongside Yasser Arafat's intransigence and Palestinian mismanagement, a peace deal at Camp David.

Overall, the two cases show that diplomacy adds value to accounts of international relations. Diplomacy can both make agreements that should be easier to reach more difficult and make agreements that should be hard to achieve more attainable. The Locarno period is particularly well suited for analyzing the effects of diplomacy because it presents a hard case for value creating, given the distrust and discord that had characterized prior relations among France, Britain, and Germany. The same is true of the Palestinian-Israeli case (chapter 8). I address the difficult methodological problems faced by those who study diplomacy in the next chapter.

## DEFINING DIPLOMACY

In the remainder of this chapter, I review the academic literature on diplomacy. First, however, we need a working definition of *diplomacy*. This is a different question from how diplomacy works. All definitions of *diplomacy* use some combination of two primary components: (1) that diplomacy involves communication between states through the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of information about the interests of a state and of others (Bull 1977: 158; Watson 1981: 20) and (2) that diplomacy involves peaceful conflict resolution through negotiation when interests diverge or do not wholly overlap (Watson 1981: 33; Sharp 2009: 1).

Even though diplomacy involves the peaceful resolution of conflicts, this does not require the absence of the implicit or explicit threat of coercion or even force. Hedley Bull writes that the goal of diplomacy is to "secure [other states'] cooperation or neutralize their opposition in carrying it out—by reason and persuasion if possible, but sometimes by threats of force or other kinds of coercion" (1977: 158). Nor need the exchange of information be completely genuine and based on good faith. Yet this does not obviate the need for communication in diplomacy. In describing Niccolò Machiavelli's views on diplomacy, Geoffrey Berridge

writes of the diplomat: "Much of the information that he obtains will be false and misleading, but he owes his own prince his judgment. As a result, he must compare information from different sources, weigh it, and finally declare what he himself believes to be the truth" (2001: 89).

Going forward it is important to distinguish foreign policy from diplomacy. Diplomacy is a part of foreign policy but not identical to it (Nicolson 1980: chap. 1). It is important to distinguish foreign policy *interests*, the specific ends that states pursue, from the way they peacefully pursue them through communication and negotiation, which is diplomacy. Style is not substance, and we want to distinguish the independent effect of the former, looking for variation in diplomatic style among those who share the same conception of the national interest. Diplomatic style is also motivated by something more than hawkish or dovish *beliefs*, which reflect different attitudes about the nature of the adversary and the utility of military force (Jervis 1976; Tetlock 1983b). While doves might prefer a diplomatic style of reasoned dialogue, if diplomacy simply reduces opposition to the use of organized violence or a benign depiction of one's interlocutors, it does not add much to our understanding of international politics.

It seems uncontroversial, therefore, to adopt a definition of *diplomacy* as the nonviolent and negotiated pursuit of state interests through the communication and exchange of information, even if the threat of coercion, either economic or military, might be present or part of the process and if the dialogue might be less than genuine (Steiner 2004: 3; de Callières 2000: 6–7). Nevertheless, within this broad notion of diplomacy, there is still room for several different types of diplomacy. In a review of the limited international relations literature on diplomacy, we find three: coercive bargaining, pragmatic statecraft, and reasoned dialogue.

### THREE DIPLOMATIC STYLES

Those who have engaged the subject of diplomacy have attributed our ignorance to the role played by power in international relations theory. In this vein, James Der Derian writes, "It could well be that diplomacy has suffered from theoretical neglect to the extent that power politics has profited in theory and practice. When diplomacy is construed as a continuation of war by other means, as is often the realpolitik case, then little intellectual energy needs to be wasted on the illumination of power's shadow" (1987: 92).

If power is the only currency in international politics, diplomacy per se does not matter. The successes and failures of diplomats are reducible

to the distribution of material capabilities. Long before the advent of structural realism, François de Callières, in one of the classic works on diplomatic practice, explained this conception: "When a prince or a state is powerful enough to dictate to his neighbours the art of negotiation loses its value, for then there is need for nothing but a mere statement of the prince's will" (2000: 83). Diplomacy is epiphenomenal to power and serves as a post hoc window dressing, the "silken glove over the iron fist" (Sharp 2009: 58). Adam Watson describes this logic as the "cynical claim that the capacity and the will to use force is what 'really' influences the relations of states, while diplomacy serves as its instrument registering and clothing its verdicts" (1981: 55). Diplomats are substitutable and mere "transmission belts" for forces larger than themselves (Cross 2007: 2).

Recent international relations scholarship takes up diplomacy only to dismiss it implicitly or even explicitly. Rationalist bargaining theory argues that diplomatic communication is often uninformative and cheap since states have incentives to misrepresent their preferences. James Fearon writes that because of incentives to dissemble, "diplomacy may not allow rational states to clarify disagreements about relative power or to avoid the miscalculation of resolve" necessary to maintain peace (1995: 391). Signals must be costly to be believed, but this is something out of the control of diplomats or any decision makers. If, as some rationalists argue, effective diplomacy is equivalent to credible signaling and if, for instance, democratic states have an advantage in doing so given their transparent political institutions, those who are engaging in diplomacy are just as unimportant to the outcome as in neorealism. Anyone who can operate a telegraph could send a costly signal in a democracy, yet the most skilled diplomat would still be a useless bloviator in an autocracy. If domestic institutions do the work, then agency is unimportant. They are simply another type of structure.

I would also not consider recent rationalist work on "cheap talk" diplomacy to capture diplomacy as agency. The attempts by Sartori (2005) and Trager (2010) to demonstrate the effect of costless signals also implicitly rely on costs. Communication not accompanied by a direct and immediate cost might have an effect on outcomes, but only if it carries with it the possibility of a future cost for the sender, such as the interruption of other aspects of a mutually beneficial relationship or the undermining of a state's reputation for honesty. Sartori writes: "A cheap talk signal may have eventual negative consequences, but the message itself is costless to send" (2005: 10). As Trager points out, Sartori's model is only based on cheap talk in a semantic sense. The game theory literature counts as cheap talk any signal that does not incur costs directly and immediately upon its transmission. Sartori can claim cheap talk status only through a

technicality (Trager 2010: 349). Yet the same could be said of Trager's model, in which threats become credible only because they put at risk existing mutually beneficial relationships.

Paul Sharp captures the essence of a crude neorealist position, but it could apply just as easily to rationalism, which is also a structural approach.

Someone has to gather and disseminate information. Someone has to communicate threats, promises and bargaining positions. And, less certainly, someone has to perform the tasks associated with the more concrete aspects of representation such as negotiation. These functions occur automatically, however, and we lump them together as "diplomacy" for convenience. That term does not convey any sense that these functions, taken together, make an independent contribution to what happens, or explaining what happens, in international relations at the system level. . . . If diplomacy matters in systemic theories, therefore, it does so only occasionally as one of those contingent factors *about which it is neither possible nor necessary to theorize*. (2009: 54–55; emphasis added)

I argue instead that it is both possible and necessary to theorize about diplomacy. This is not easy. Diplomacy is shrouded in mystery (Sharp 2009: 2). It is frequently referred to as an "art," even a "black art" because it can be used for both good and evil purposes (Neumann 2003: 353; Morgenthau 1948: 15; Cross 2007: 1). Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Vincent Pouliot (2008; 2010) conceives of diplomacy as the most important "practice" of international relations. In his view, however, practices are intuitive feels for the situation that cannot be explained by those engaged in them, a common sense that cannot be articulated. He writes that "seasoned diplomats are at pains to explain their craft in abstract, social scientific terms" (Pouliot 2008: 258).

Diplomacy is undoubtedly an art in the sense that it a creative process of agency in which its practitioners make something new that did not previously exist. Even so, we might still say something systematic about it. Even as we struggle to explain how particular artists arrive at their specific results, we can at the very least identify certain common schools of painting and music. Next, I explore three such styles.

### Diplomacy as Coercive Bargaining

Even though most contemporary rationalist literature on coercive bargaining minimizes the role of agency, insights of great use can be recovered from the first generation of thinking in this vein. Thomas Schelling offers a particular conception of diplomacy, one marked by exploiting

leverage. "The power to hurt is bargaining power. To exploit it is diplomacy—vicious diplomacy, but diplomacy," writes Schelling (1966: 2). This might include holding issues hostage that are of importance to others as bargaining chips so as to obtain benefits for oneself, even if conceding those issues would be of little cost. Harold Nicolson describes coercive bargaining thus: "Fundamental to such a conception of diplomacy is the belief that the purpose of negotiation is victory, and that the denial of complete victory means defeat. . . . The strategy of negotiation thus becomes an endeavor to outflank your opponents, to occupy strategical positions which are at once consolidated before any further advance is made" (1980: 53).

The coercive bargaining approach is premised on a particular framing of the international environment, that of the deterrence model. As Robert Jervis (1976) and Philip Tetlock (1983b) have long pointed out, in this particular characterization of state interaction, the adversary is seen as implacably hostile. The environment is zero-sum and fixed-pie in nature. Therefore, any efforts to reassure or cooperate will be taken as a sign of weakness and exploited. This differs from the spiral model, in which conflict is seen as a product of the strategic situation rather than the inherent disposition of the other side. In the former, international relations is a game of chicken; in the latter, it is a prisoner's dilemma. Coercive bargaining theorists are not concerned about spirals of hostility as unintended consequences of state behavior because the malign intentions of the other are taken for granted (Jervis 1989: 192).

This framing leads to a particular set of prescriptions. States should start from the premise that others are misrepresenting their preferences and not reveal their own. A state should understate how interested it is in an agreement, inflate its reservation price, and engage in brinkmanship to obtain the best possible outcome. Refusing concessions and holding out demonstrate resolve. It is best if others make concessions first to avoid commitment problems with later compliance and to be able to pocket concessions made by others and to ask for more without spending any capital.

The challenge posed by diplomacy in coercive bargaining is making the other believe in one's resolve: "The hardest part is communicating our own intentions. . . . Nations have been known to bluff; they have also been known to make threats sincerely and change their minds when the chips were down. . . . A persuasive threat of war may deter an aggressor; the problem is to make it persuasive, to keep it from sounding like a bluff" (Schelling 1966: 35). Schelling's early hypothesis was that, by escalating crises and risking or even fighting wars over issues of little importance, states would indicate that they were highly resolute in future conflicts of more significance.



Coercive bargaining is not as simple as a crude neorealist argument in which the powerful state generally wins. In terms of card games, diplomacy is poker, not war. Schelling stresses the “difference between the unilateral, ‘undiplomatic’ recourse to strength” that we could say characterizes neorealism and “coercive diplomacy based on the power to hurt.” “International relations often have the character of a competition in risk taking, characterized not so much by tests of force as by tests of nerve,” he writes. “Particularly in the relations between major adversaries . . . issues are decided not by who can bring the most force to bear in a locality, or on a particular issue, but by who is eventually willing to bring more force to bear or able to make it appear that more is forthcoming” (Schelling 1966: 94).

Any observer of international relations is familiar with the types of behaviors that Schelling describes—saber-rattling and threatening messages—and the use of leverage to achieve more favorable outcomes. But I argue that coercive bargaining is just this—one style that does not describe all diplomacy or even the behavior of all diplomats in the position of being able to exploit their leverage. In other words, I seek to behavioralize Schelling’s insights, specifying more precisely who will engage in this type of behavior. As Erik Gartzke notes, “Winning at poker has as much to do with judging human personalities as it does with weighing the cards” (1999: 570). Schelling’s intention, after all, was not to describe how diplomacy actually worked but to admonish state representatives to practice better diplomacy (Jervis 1989: 188).

### Diplomacy as Pragmatic Statecraft

As previously noted, numerous students of diplomacy have attributed the dearth of knowledge about diplomacy to the dominance of realist thinking in the discipline (de Callières 2000: 83; Sharp 2009: 58; Watson 1981: 55). Classical realists, however, place significant importance on diplomacy, even as they articulate a particular notion of what good diplomacy entails (Berridge 2001). Hans Morgenthau offers the most compelling realist conception of good diplomacy as prudent statecraft, going so far as to offer several “rules of diplomacy” (1948: esp. chap. 31).<sup>1</sup> Above all, realist diplomacy is pragmatic in nature, which has a number of elements.

First, the practitioner of pragmatic statecraft focuses on securing vital interests while conceding others. Having identified the truly important state goals, Morgenthau cautions states to “promote the national interest

1. This is the same conception of diplomacy reviewed in Craig and George (1983: 11–16).

with moderation and leave the door open for compromise in the form of a negotiated settlement" (1948: 534). The distinctiveness of the pragmatic approach to diplomacy is most evident when it is compared with Schelling's coercive style. In pronounced contrast to Morgenthau, Schelling stresses the "interdependence of commitments" (1966) and advises states to take a hard and uncompromising line on matters of less importance so as to gain a reputation for resolve in matters of greater significance down the line. Being pragmatic, in contrast, involves setting priorities. Good statecraft is good chess-playing; one sometimes sacrifices pawns to protect the king.

Second, pragmatic statecraft is oriented toward the long term. The skilled chess player is able to see several moves ahead. Morgenthau describes "the mind of the diplomat" as "complicated and subtle. It sees the issue in hand as a moment in history, and beyond the victory of tomorrow it anticipates the incalculable possibilities of the future" (1948: 547). The realist should keep his or her eye on the prize, pragmatically making short-term sacrifices for long-term gains.

Third, pragmatic statecraft emphasizes the importance of cold and objective decision making. Diplomacy is "sang-froid," sober and emotional detachment that facilitates long-term thinking and the careful ranking of priorities (de Callières 2000: 12). The primary impediment to good diplomacy is what Morgenthau calls the "crusading spirit"—missionary zeal that distracts from the real national interest and needlessly inflates fear of the adversary (1948: 544). Moralizing distracts from the national interest. Morgenthau asks those engaged in diplomacy to "give up the shadow of worthless rights for the substance of real advantage" (1948: 545; see also de Callières 2000: 25, 94). The realist is not afraid to admit hard truths, even if they are emotionally costly.

Objectivity is also paramount in evaluating the intentions and power of others, a primary function of diplomacy. States want to avoid both understating and overstating the actual dangers in the international environment. Objectively evaluating the interests of other states requires seeing the world through their eyes. One of Morgenthau's rules is that "diplomacy must look at the political scene from the point of view of other nations" (1948: 553). Classical realist statecraft involves instrumental empathy. Truly understanding where others are coming from allows for more prudent decision making. This includes understanding that others might regard oneself as threatening. Ken Booth and Nicolas Wheeler (2008) call this "security dilemma sensibility." Without it, one risks unnecessary provocation not in the interests of the state (Jervis 1989: 193).

Fourth, pragmatic statecraft is situational, adapting to the particular environment and using the appropriate tools for the time. Morgenthau

describes diplomacy as “quick adaptation to new situations, clever use of a psychological opening, retreat and advance as the situation may require, persuasion, the quid pro quo of bargaining and the like” (1948: 530). Coercion and force are not necessarily the most cost-effective way of reaching one’s goals. Morgenthau recommends “not to advance by destroying the obstacles in one’s way, but to retreat before them, to circumvent them, to maneuver around them, to soften and dissolve them slowly by means of persuasion, negotiation and pressure” (1948: 546; see also de Callières 2000: 12). There is certainly a place for force and coercive bargaining, but there is no one-size-fit-all strategy.

As is clear by the prescriptive nature of so many of the passages quoted here, classical realists understand diplomacy as an agent-driven process in a way that rationalists often do not. For Morgenthau, good diplomacy is not something that occurs automatically or unproblematically. Statecraft is a craft (de Callières 2000: 69; Morgenthau 1948: 549; Sharp 2009: 55). Applied appropriately, diplomacy serves as a source of additional power for the state to reach its goals, independent of the threat of force. If used correctly, diplomacy is a “multiplier” that helps states punch above their weight (Morgenthau 1948: 591; de Callières 2000: 11; Sharp 2009: 64). On the other hand, when wielded ineffectively, states might squander their power by overstating national goals or creating encircling alliances (Jönsson and Hall 2005: 15). Power does not speak for itself. But classical realism, although it takes diplomacy seriously, does not yet offer anything like a theory of diplomacy that identifies who is likely to behave in this pragmatic fashion. It has not been behavioralized.

### Diplomacy as Reasoned Dialogue

Both coercive bargaining and pragmatic statecraft stand in contrast to what I call *liberal diplomacy*, by which I mean a conception of diplomacy that one can tease out of a diverse set of literatures, including the Grotian tradition of the English School and certain recent strands of constructivism. Liberal diplomacy is the pursuit of joint gains through the exchange of information and arguments. It is reasoned dialogue. Liberalism as a system of thought is predicated on the noncoercive pursuit of one’s interests that respects the other’s autonomy and interests. Individuals are regarded as fundamentally equal, with none superior to the other (Dworkin 1977). Reasoned dialogue is not like a card game but rather like solving a puzzle, trying to find an outcome that leaves both sides as satisfied as possible.

Liberal diplomacy proceeds in good faith and with goodwill. In terms of the former, those in the Grotian tradition prefer the term *dialogue* rather than *bargaining* (Watson 1981). The latter term implies, of course, a more

coercive process than do other terms, such as *negotiation*. As opposed to the Middle Eastern bazaar with buyer and seller far apart, shouting and disinclined to budge, the English School sees diplomacy as a “civilized” process of patient discussion. In diplomacy, states “transform crude bargaining about objects of interest and desire into discussions about the moral and rational bases for particular claims and policies” and “make those whose claims and policies are said to be inconsistent with any notion of restraint into shared problems” (Sharp 2009: 42).

Liberal diplomacy overlaps considerably with Jürgen Habermas’s conception of communicative action, which has been used by some constructivist international relations scholars to capture how the process of argumentation might lead to a reasoned consensus (Müller 2004; Lynch 2002; Risse 2000; Mitzen 2005). Diplomacy in this conception is a process of talk and persuasion rather than threats. Reason entails remaining open to and objectively evaluating new arguments, as well as offering one’s own in an effort to persuade the other side. It means giving reasons for one’s positions. If reason is to be relevant to international relations, diplomats, like any other actors, must be prepared to change their views in the face of a good argument. Habermas conceives of communicative action as an ideal type rather than an actual description of politics, much less international politics. Nevertheless, we can easily conceive of empirical instances in which this type of diplomacy is more prevalent than others.

Liberal diplomacy also rests on goodwill. It is motivated by the desire to find value for both sides. In the liberal mindset, one does not regard the other purely instrumentally, as a means to an end (Doyle 1997: 217). Hedley Bull writes, “The extent to which diplomacy can play any role or serve any function in the international system is therefore bound up with the extent to which states visualize foreign policy as the rational pursuit of interests of the state which at least in principle at some points overlap with the interests of other states. Diplomacy can play no role where foreign policy is conceived as . . . the pursuit of self-regarding interests that take no account of the interests of others” (1977: 164). Diplomacy is more than “simply the determined assertion of the national will” (Neumann 2003: 353).

Liberal diplomacy is based on a sense of both equality and empathy. One must recognize that others have interests as well. The essence of being reasonable is to take the interests of others into consideration. Alan Gewirth writes, “A reasonable person is one who takes due account of the interests of other persons, respecting their rights as well as one’s own and maintaining a certain equitableness or mutuality of consideration between oneself and others” (1983: 225). Similarly, communicative action requires the ability to see things through the eyes of others (Risse 2001).

Marc Lynch writes, “strategic action is defined by the orientation towards achieving predefined egoistic ends, treating the other as an object to be manipulated, while communicative action is characterized by the orientation towards achieving understanding, treating the other as an equal participant” (2002: 192). In this ideal speech situation, in which reasoned dialogue can prevail, Nicole Dietelhoff and Harald Müller explain, “Discourses need to guarantee that asymmetric power resources of participants do not influence the discursive interplay: only converging perceptions and viewpoints of the participants lead to a rational consensus. Everyone affected must be able to take part and should have an equal opportunity to speak and to listen to others. These criteria underline the necessity that actors empathise with each other; they are required to . . . emancipate themselves from the egocentricity of their preferences so they are able to reflect about them as one among alternative sets of preferences” (2005: 169).

This is not, however, pure altruism or the suppression of one’s own interests. Liberal diplomacy involves the pursuit of fair compromises and win-win outcomes through creative problem solving. John Owen writes, “Liberals have transformed, rather than transcended, selfishness” (1997: 35). Francis Watson writes, “It is a function of the diplomatic dialogue to mitigate and civilize the differences between states and if possible to reconcile them, without suppressing or ignoring them” (1981: 20). Sharp writes of “dampening passions and moderating egos by reducing ignorance and elevating reason” and “the resolution of conflicts by procedures that encourage fair compromise” (2009: 39). Liberals are not teleological utopians who believe in the natural harmony of interests (Doyle 1997: 211; Zacher and Matthew 1995: 110; Keohane 1989: 11); however, unlike in realism, others are not regarded as pure means to egoistic ends. Nicolson writes of this style, “There is probably some middle point between the two negotiators which, if discovered, should reconcile their conflict interests. And to find this middle point all that is required is a frank discussion, the placing of cards upon the table, and the usual processes of human reason, confidence and fair-dealing” (1980: 54).

Coercive bargaining stands in clear contrast to liberal dialogue in that the former is a process of information gathering rather than information sharing through argumentation or deliberation. There is neither good faith nor goodwill. Indeed, the foundation of the rationalist bargaining approach is that information cannot be shared credibly unless it is backed by a costly signal. In coercive bargaining, actors start from the assumption that others are not negotiating in good faith. “Actors know each other as *strategists*, and they must thus fear that apparently innocent and useful information is untrue” (Müller 2004: 398). And the goal is to seize

as much of the pie as possible by inflating one's demands and using pressure to secure an individually beneficial outcome.

Liberal diplomacy potentially allows state representatives to reach mutually beneficial outcomes through communication. "Relative power may play a role in determining whether or not state leaders decide to try to cooperate, but persuasion is, to a significant extent, out of the grasp of power. The ability to persuade is in the hands of the diplomats," writes Mai'a Cross (2007: 4). Yet liberal scholars have not articulated a theory of diplomacy. Grotians are more taken with broader historical trends in the practice of diplomacy. For their part, Habermasian constructivists have been content so far simply to conceptualize a kind of diplomacy distinctive from coercive bargaining without specifying when and by whom it is likely to be adopted (Reus-Smit 1999: 28). Again, the solution offered in this book is to behavioralize the insights of liberal international relations scholars, identifying those diplomats who are more inclined to engage in the kind of reasoned dialogue they highlight. Liberal diplomacy should be facilitated by egalitarian-mindedness and genuine empathy, a prosocial stance toward international relations. In the next chapter, I begin this task of converting the insights of international relations theory into a theory of diplomacy.